

Chapter 1 - It seems I came back

The place regarded as the most important location of the Kunugi Margraviate was Klinge, the city where Margrave Renya Kunugi's castle stood.

Even though there existed many big and small cities on the human continent, it received an evaluation of being abnormal by those of an established reputation. It went even as far as Klinge being titled as the strangest city on the human continent within almost not time. Moreover, that status was in the process of being set in stone at an astounding pace.

This city, which was surrounded by a wall covered in ivies as it was also the city closest to the Miasma Forest, had become the center of attention, be it inside or outside the principality.

Of course a considerable number of spies had been dispatched to this city, and originally all these spies should have provided a huge amount of information, disregarding whether that information would be true or not. However, after a short time those, who had dispatched those spies, started to doubt their eyes, ears, and sanity. That's because not a single of the spies, who had been sent out in droves, returned to their employer. Not one, without even a single exception.

A man-eating city.

Klinge had reached the point that it was called like that by those living in the dark areas of society, but on the other hand, it was also a city that received high praise by those living in places the sun reached.

Just going by its living environment, Klinge possessed very decent, full water and sewer services, and any building in the city could benefit from their blessings. Even if you looked at the public order, soldiers with somehow strangely good movements continuously patrolled the city, and slums, which you'd find in any city, didn't exist here at all. The existence of poor people simply wasn't permitted since there was work to be found at each corner, as long as one wasn't too picky.

Above all things, the taxes were low.

If you were to ask how low they were, it could be described with the comparison that three families could cover the taxes in Klinge with the tax amount of one family in any other city. The answer as to why the taxes were so low was simple: The treasury of Margrave Kunugi was bursting with all kinds of jewels and money.

The magic stones produced in heaps within the Kunugi Margraviate, the produce imported from the elven country, the processed goods based on that produce, the monster resources yielded by the forest with its fortress which Keith and the others built during their previous training session by Renya, and the lumber produced by the forest itself brought about a mountain of riches for Klinge.

However, Renya, who should normally be the one to invest and manage those riches, had absolutely no talent in that field. On top of that, because Renya had the disposition of being interested in the things he could buy with money but having absolutely no interest in money itself, Mayria and the civil officials under her were currently managing all those funds, allowing them to pay those funds as taxes to the Trident Principality.

Renya had no clue about the detailed account of this amount of money, but it was an amount any other noble would never be able to surpass. Moreover, as territory closest to the Miasma Forest, its taxes had been set to be cheap with the argument of its location, which in lieu allowed Renya to pay most of the taxes out of his pocket, which was another reason for the low taxes in Klinge. Of course it's not like he could cover all costs, so it went without saying that the rest became the people's taxes, but still, with the taxes being less than half that of other territories, it was a natural outcome for people trying to somehow settle down and merchants trying to get into the wallets of the residents, which they concluded to be full, endlessly streaming into the Kunugi Margraviate.

"Is it really all that bad if I just run all of this over by coincidence?" Emil muttered with her fingers tapping the steering wheel in the driver's seat of the car, which she had built, while looking somewhat irritated.

In response, Shion and Rona, who had been sitting in the backseats, got startled and were about to lean forward, but as the backseat - originally intended for two people - had become slightly cramped with Kilie having joined them, both of them ended up wriggling around without being able to move as they wanted.

Emil let the car fly across the well-maintained street in sections with few people on the way back from the Gordonal Barony, but as they got closer to Klinge, the number of travelers, merchants, and adventurer-like people started to increase, giving Emil no choice but to slow down their speed. Driving in a situation where she couldn't bring out the car's speed seemed to be quite stressful to her. Those words just now escaped her mouth unconsciously, but if they were to change the road into a splatter scene from hell for such a reason, it would start nasty rumors about the margraviate being very dangerous.

"Should we put away the car and walk?"

While believing that he still didn't get too stressed, Emil frowned at Renya's suggestion while shaking her head, "This way is still better than walking."

"Please endure then."

Even if the pace was slow, it was faster and more comfortable than walking. Given that they sent all their luggage ahead of them through the katurul-based transfer facility that was apparently put into operation, the group's load was light, but as they felt that not having to walk would be quite relaxing stamina-wise and on a mental level, the three in the backseat also agreed with Emil's bitter words.



"Rather, how about forcing them to make way by telling them that Margrave Kunugis is coming through?"

"I don't really care much about incurring the enmity of others, but that still doesn't mean that I want to provoke it deliberately, you know?" Renya cast a glare at Kilie who said this as if having just come up with a good idea.

It'd be another matter if they were to have some kind of urgent business to attend to, but Renya didn't have the slightest intention to wield his authority as lord for fun. In Renya's eyes, this way of thinking was only natural, but it couldn't be called common for the nobles of this world. Knowing that, Shion and Rona smiled being somewhat proud of him, and the sullen face of Emil turned into a wry smile.

"...What is it?" Renya was bewildered by the suddenly changed atmosphere within the car.

As if acting as the representative for the women in the car, Shion answered with a laugh, "Nah, we just thought that it's very like you, Renya."

Revealing a faltering look for an instant in response to Shion's reply, Renya turned his eyes at the landscape outside the car, and remained silent without answering.

'It's pretty obvious that he's pondering whether Shion's words just now count as simple praise or if they contain some kind of hidden meaning', Shion and the others somehow grasped and didn't comment on Renya's behavior in any way. With a visibly, slightly improved mood, Emil adjusted her hold on the wheel once again.

"By the way..."

As long as there was nothing in particular to talk about, silence naturally dominated the car's interior during the drive. After Emil's dangerous muttering, their car slowly advanced along the road for a while again while dodging people, carriages, and wagons, but the one who broke that silence was Renya.

"Somehow I think that we will reach Klinge very soon, but how about you?"

"Let's see...it should be anytime soon, I'd say?"

No matter how highly efficient and far beyond the standards in this work the car built by Emil might be, Emil's skill didn't go so far that she could reproduce a navigation system as it was added to cars in Renya's former world. In the first place, that was only reasonable since it wasn't as though they had launched any satellites into space for that to be feasible. While calculating the direction and distance on the map as driver, Emil somehow inferred their current location by intuition.

"Are you sure about the city being in that direction?"

Although you might summarize the terrain as plains in a word, there were quite a few ups and downs. Hence the city of Klinge wasn't yet visible from the location of their car. And yet Emil was sure about Klinge laying in the direction pointed out by Renya according to her own intuition.

"I don't think I'm wrong, but why are you asking?"

"I see...somehow...I feel like something similar to smoke is rising over there." Renya said while narrowing his eyes.

In response, the atmosphere in the car immediately became tense.

Since Klinge was a city inhabited by quite a few people, it was normal for smoke to rise up there to some extent. However, something that would cause smoke to be visible at a distance, where the city itself wasn't in sight yet, couldn't be quite considered as a frequent occurrence. Going by that thinking, they couldn't think of whatever was causing the smoke in Klinge right now as being an overly good omen.

"Ah, you don't need to worry. The smoke's color is white, so it's probably water vapor."

'It's not 100% clear yet, though.

Although it was a result from the distance still being fairly high, Renya judged that the true identity of the smoke, which he caught sight of, didn't seem to be one what would occur when something was being burned, but rather something similar to steam rising from a bath.

"Water vapor?"

Although it felt like no real surprise here, it was Shion who asked back. Going by the fact that Rona was also pulling a somewhat questioning face, Renya perceived that this word apparently wasn't common in this world. Because it didn't look at all like that, if going by Emil's reaction, Renya thought that there might be some who know about this word, and on top used some time to brood over how he should explain it. In the end he came up with a somewhat passable reply.

"Would you understand if I told you that it's the smoke occurring during baths?"

"Ah, you're talking about steam. If it's that, I know about it, but...was there any facility in Klinge that would release so much steam that it'd be visible this far away?" Shion asked curiously, but even Renya couldn't think of any such place.

'At the very least it shouldn't have existed at the time when we left Klinge. In that case it'd follow logic that it'd be something built during our stay in the Gordonal Barony, but there's too little information to conclude what might have been built there.

"Frau, huh...?"

"Frau, for sure."

"It's gotta be Frau~"

Three people voiced out the same name in three different ways. Shion turned her eyes towards the outside with a gloomy face, Rona sighed while placing a hand on her cheek as if troubled, and Emil fell prostrate towards the front while draping her body over the wheel. Any of them basically commented, "That girl again, huh?" As expected of Renya, he had to at least come to her defense here, and thus he was on the verge of saying that it'd be unfair towards Frau, who was working so earnestly for their cause. After flapping his mouth open and shut for a while, and then remaining silent for a further while, he closed his mouth in the end for some reason.

"Renya?"

Seemingly worried about Renya who had a somewhat dispirited air hanging around him, Shion bent herself forward from the backseat and tried to peer at Renya's face from behind.

"I didn't find any counterargument." Renya muttered with a disappointed tone while covering his hand with both hands.

As a result, Shion tapped his shoulder, obviously telling him to not mind it.

Whenever some kind of big incident took place in Klinge, the ones behind it were most of the time either Renya or Frau. Renya himself had fully grasped that fact. Since one of the two possible ringleaders wasn't in Klinge right now, the possibility of it being the other one was extremely high. Going by his experience so far, Renya couldn't identify any words capable of denying Frau's involvement.

By the way, another candidate would be Lepard, and the dark horse would be Shion. Emil was someone who had the potential to jump up high in that ranking if things were to go west for her, but because of her position as researcher, she would usually take measures so that things wouldn't totally go out of control even if she were to fail in some kind of experiment, and otherwise conceal everything in secrecy, so it didn't happen often for her name to come up whenever these kind of stories came up.

"For starters...it's wrong to make decisions based on nothing but possibilities. Even if we know that the probability is extremely high going by past examples."

"You're right. It's wrong to jump to conclusions. It's not like the possibility of it being something completely different is zero."

Shion immediately agreed with Renya's words, which he had somehow managed to come up with after some time had passed. No matter how low her ability to read the mood was, Shion apparently had scruples to deliver the finishing blow at the remark, which Renya had squeezed out after being unable to bring up even one counterargument in the defense of Frau who idolized him so dearly.

Shion tried to soften the mood at least a bit by immediately agreeing with Renya on this as she didn't have the heart to kick him while he was laying on the ground already anyway, but just then Kilie dropped a bomb.

"But, if that's the most likely case here, acting under that assumption might also have the highest probability to avoid the situation worsening any further, I thi...moguuhh!?"

Apparently having a bad premonition the instant Kilie opened her mouth, Shion blocked Renya's ears with her hands from behind, and Rona, who had judged that it would be better to shut up Kilie after letting her talk for a bit, forcibly silenced Kilie by grabbing her head and pushing it into her chest.

Renya, who had his ears blocked by Shion, didn't even try to look at the state inside the car, and kept staring at the landscape outside as if not having heard anything. Kilie, who was embraced by Rona, struggled for a while, but eventually became obedient after her limbs lost all power, limply dropping down.

"Jeez, this before we reached our destination. This is gonna be a pain, I can tell." Contrary to what she said, Emil smiled happily.

While stepping a bit stronger on the car's accelerator as she believed that it might be better for them to get back to Klinge as fast as possible, Emil drove the car off the road, continuing to plow across the grassland with its intense undulations.



As soon as the car arrived at the gate of Klinge's wall, guards immediately ran up to it. Even for Klinge, the car built by Emil was unusual, but it wasn't anything that was kept completely hidden. Since Emil was occasionally taking it out for a drive through the city by herself, the soldiers weren't surprised to see it, but as it was a machine which people, who had come to Klinge from outside, could have never seen before, it gathered the attention and astonishment of those waiting outside the city for their turn to enter through the gate.

However, in the eyes of the four sitting in the car, the fact of drawing attention each time they did something wasn't anything that wouldn't cause them to think anything of it as they were already used to it. Only Kilie, who had little experience in that area, let her eyes restlessly wander all over the place in a way that looked somewhat suspicious.

Among the soldiers stationed in Klinge, there wasn't anyone who didn't know Renya's face. That was something that could be considered natural seeing as he was the feudal lord, but among the nobles, there were also some who almost never left their own mansions, and in this world it was still normal for information about their lord's appearance to not be passed on to the soldiers at the lower end of the hierarchy.

However, because Renya was frequently leaving his mansion to stroll through the city or eat something at restaurants and stalls, most of the soldiers had seen Renya from nearby on several occasions, and thus such a concern didn't exist.

"Milord, welc..."

One of the soldiers, who rushed over, started to say when he recognized Renya, but he stopped in the middle of it, surprised by the weight and the light impact he felt from the helmet on his head. Even Renya, who was about to answer the soldier, became speechless after turning his eyes slightly above the soldier's face. All the women except for Kilie smiled bitterly, and Kilie was bewildered as if witnessing something unbelievable.

"Welcome back, master ~nano."

Any resident of Klinge, ranging from little babies to old men on their deathbed, knew the name connected to that voice, with around 70% of them harboring heartwarming feelings, 20% feelings of respect, and 10% fear. The little girl lightly pinched the hem of her skirt, and while making the hemline draw a gentle curve, she performed a bow to welcome the return of her master, which anyone would describe as flawless. However, her having chosen the head of a soldier for that wrecked almost all of the mood.

By the way, the soldier used as a foothold tightly pressed his eyes shut with a frozen expression, and stood completely still without even twitching a bit, just as if he had turned into a stone statue.

'I cannot imagine that she's not heavy,' Renya thought absentmindedly.

Going by the whole situation it was vanishingly unlikely, but if the soldier opened his eyes and looked upwards, or even if he pointed his face upwards just a bit, something that mustn't be seen by him might be reflected in his eyes. Or, it might happen that his head would get stuffed inside her skirt if she were to slip on top of his head, missing her footing.

If any of that were to take place, he'd die. Most likely he would be killed.

The cruel nature owned by humans was occasionally described as being so nasty to look at that it made even the gods draw back, but he would doubtlessly killed in a way so repulsive that it'd be hard to put in words and that even looking at the cruel acts mentioned above might still be much better than watching the scene that would unfold.



Exactly because the soldier managed to instinctively grasp that fact somehow, he didn't move at all while acting as foothold. Persuading himself that he was a stone statue, he was stoically enduring something that was far more dreadful than a death god to the point of giving up his own humanity.

"Thanks for coming to welcome me. But, isn't the place way too poor? Get off him right away. You're troubling the soldier, you know?"

Once Renya ordered her like this while worrying that the soldier might voluntarily stop breathing any moment now if he didn't throw him a lifeline at once, Frau, the reason why the soldier had transformed into a stone statue, casually hopped off his head like a rabbit.

For an instant the soldiers got entranced by the gentle scent of an unknown flower wafting through the air in concert with her jump, but immediately understanding in the next moment just what had happened, all of them turned right about-face with a speed and force that it looked as if smoke was raising at their feet, turning their backs on Renya and the others. Their behavior was triggered by them having caught sight of the hem of Frau's skirt having been faintly blown up by the wind pressure alongside Frau's hair, which scattered a floral aroma into the vicinity as it spread out due to the force of her jump. But then again, on top of it not having been blown up to a dangerous extent, it wasn't as though Frau had jumped off without considering all that, but sometimes the worst case scenarios also came true.

What would have awaited them if they ended up drawing that possibility, which hadn't a probability of zero, might have been a future where they would have no choice but to appeal to get killed at once. Thus you could call the soldiers' reaction very reasonable.

In reality, the extent of the soldiers' thoughts was well within Frau's assumptions. If something like that had actually happened, Frau had planned to hug Renya while complaining to him about her underwear having been seen while blushing out of embarrassment with tears in her eyes, and certainly not what the soldiers had been imagining.

'If it had played out like that, Renya would have likely forgiven the soldiers since it was an accident while consoling Frau. With Frau forgiving them then, it would have resulted in the soldiers obtaining a good impression of Renya, who would have smoothed things over in their favor. After all, Frau can fully behave like a spoiled child towards Renya without having any scruples about what others might think about her. It'd have been the truly best plan without anyone losing anything from it. If it's for that sake, Frau wouldn't mind showing her underwear,' Frau judged, but at the last moment she gave up on it with her reasoning kicking in, 'Frau probably shouldn't act so shamefully as Renya's maid.'

The retort that she shouldn't land on top of a soldier's head but instead on the ground in the first place didn't even occur in Frau's mind, and there was no way that someone, who could give her such retort, existed in the Kunugi Margraviate, except for Renya.

Frau, who had executed a soundless landing while suppressing the flapping of her skirt by releasing a faint amount of mana, ran up to Renya, who got off the car, with noisy footsteps, the exact opposite of her quiet movements just now, and energetically hugged him at his waist area.

"Welcome home, master ~nano! I missed youuu ~no!" Frau, who embraced Renya with such a force that he let a groan escape, rejoiced as she ground her face against Renya's belly.

The surrounding people were puzzled whether they should stop Frau's rubbing and hugging which made one think that any common soldier might easily faint from just the rubbing damage, but seeing Renya shaking his head, indicating that it was no issue, while accepting Frau's body, the soldiers returned to their own stations, and Shion's group got out of the car.

Frau fully immersed herself in the sensation of burying her face in Renya's abdomen, but noticing that the number of people getting off the car had increased compared to how many had mounted the car at their departure, she suddenly stopped moving altogether.

"Did you increase the number of girls again, master ~no?"

"It's not 'again,' stop using that word. It sounds so scandalous."

Pulling back her arms which she had put around Renya's waist, Frau turned around and made a short bow towards Kilie who had left the car.

"Hello, I'm the super beautiful peddler Kilie."

Just as Renya wondered whether he should go ahead with the introductions in this place, Frau responded to those words while lowering her head, "How polite of you. Thank you. I'm called the transcendental beautiful maid, Frau ~no. Nice to meet you ~nano."

"That's where you compete...?"

Renya rolled his eyes, and Shion as well Rona laughed dryly. However, Frau's next words caused the blood to drain from their faces.



"Over there is Frau's master, Renya-sama, the super militaristic noble ~no. And next to him are the super-disappointing beauty Shion-ane-sama, and the super-fleshly-desires beauty Rona-ane-sama ~nano."

"It's not necessary to introduce me, is it!? Or rather, you don't need to throw me in the mix there, do you!?"

"Disappointing? You're talking about me!? ...Renya, what's the meaning behind the second half of your remark?"

"Flesh...I'm...fleshly..."

"Ah, somehow I got totally left out there as if it's very natural? Renya, since I kinda feel like crying, lend me your chest or back, okay?" Emil laughed loudly without even showing the slightest hint of such a tragic feeling.

"Nothing came to mind in regards to you, Emil-ane-sama ~no."

Once Frau said so to Emil without any shyness, even Emil pulled a somewhat pitiable expression, seemingly affected by Frau's words. "Look, isn't that the moment where it's okay to come up with something related to the relationship between you and me?"

"Excuse me for not having come up with anything ~nano. Rather than that, let's go back home instead of standing around here talking ~no."

Completely cutting down Emil with a smile that showed to everyone that she didn't feel sorry at all, Frau tried to lead the party to Renya's mansion, but just as she was about to leave, Renya called her to halt.

"Frau, there's something I'd like to check with you before going back home."

"If it's today's color of Frau's underwear, it's pink with frilly lace ~nano."

Frau declared nonchalantly something, which surprised everyone around them and drew the looks to both questioner and replier, but seemingly having anticipated that Frau would give some kind of silly comment, Renya responded to this indifferently with no visible change in his expression and while ignoring the looks of those around him, "All's fine as long as it's cute. It's not my favorite color, though. Anyway, what I want to confirm is not that, but something else."

Frau, who had been easily brushed off, pulled a slightly disappointed face, but tenaciously hung onto it as if unwilling to lose here.

"Then, Rona-ane-sama's ~no?"

"Black, right? No matter how you think about it."

"Shion-ane-sama's?"

"On a first glance, it'd be white, but somehow I've got a feeling that it's light blue."

"E-Emil-ane-sama's?"

"Pretty sure, violet. Wanna bet on it?"

For Renya all of these were quite unserious and casual answers, but the members, who had their names called out, reflexively pinned down the hems of their clothes, looked down while blushing, or laughed weakly and foolishly. Going by all of those reactions, it looked as though Renya hadn't been that far off with his guesses. However, the soldiers, who had keenly listened to their conversation, applauded in their minds at Renya's mental strength to dispassionately and boldly talk about the colors of women's underwear without even minding the looks by the spectators waiting in front of the gate to enter the city. It would be nothing they could imitate even when told to do so.

Having been brazenly warded off up to his point, Frau, who had been unable to tease Renya, unleashed what she considered her game-changer blow in order to somehow tear down Renya's

calm facade after lightly chewing on her lips.

"Then, Kilie-sama's..."

"I'm not wearing any, you know?"

Faster than Frau could finish speaking, and before Renya could even react, Kilie's short comment instantly quieted down the noise around them, and at the same time, caused an effect as if time had stopped just then and there. While everyone doubted their sanity and their own ears while unable to move and speak, Kilie restlessly looked around her at the situation in the frozen space, and then suddenly said in a somewhat troubled voice, "It's a joke. A joooke. Ha ha ha. There's no way for that to be true, is there?"

Kilie's voice was extremely flat and false-sounding, but for Renya it was impossible to check the authenticity of her words. Denying Frau's questioning look, implicitly asking him whether she should undress Kilie, with his eyes, Renya sighed deeply as if to pull himself together, and once again stated to Frau that he wanted to confirm something after turning around to her.

"When we were driving back to Klinge, I saw smoke rising in the distance. I don't think there was a facility that would cause something like that when I departed. So, did something happen?"

After pondering about it for a little moment, Frau suddenly clapped her hands together.

"Master, come to think of it, Klinge's famous spot was finished ~no."

Frau's words seemed to be completely unrelated to Renya's question. While suspecting that she might possibly intend to dodge his question by avoiding the topic through vagueness, Renya reminded her just in case.

"That's your answer to my question?"

"Of course ~nano. I'm certain that you have seen the steam from far away, master ~nano."

Hearing the term 'steam', Renya grimaced, looking somewhat displeased. That's because when he combined the fact that he had made the heroes dig a huge hole for the transfer device and the information he obtained from Frau just now, that it had really been water vapor he saw from far away, it allowed for only a single conclusion.

On the other hand, the only places causing phenomena corresponding to that in Renya's former world would be areas with volcanoes which were active to some extent. Renya couldn't quite believe that such phenomena would occur in an area like Klinge which didn't have any places like that. However, Frau's next words downright denied those considerations of Renya.

"Once we dug up the ground, hot water gushed out ~no!"

Renya didn't recall having given them any instructions to dig that deep into the ground, but he thought that maybe it was something that would appear even if digging shallowly. While pondering about that, Renya led everybody to his mansion, in order to get further details from Frau, and to move to another place where they wouldn't stand in the way of other people by occupying the

space.



After moving from in front of the gate to Renya's mansion, the party took a rest in the parlor prepared by Frau. While Frau gallantly laid out tea and tea-cakes for everyone, Renya asked about Mayria and Croire who were nowhere to be seen. In response, Frau gave him the silly reply that Mayria was mowing the lawn in the mountains, and Croire had gone out to wash the laundry at the river.

After Frau flashed a smile lacking any ill-will at Renya, who fixedly glared at her, she chose the instant when Renya fleetingly looked away with a doubtful expression, to turn around her body in no time and switch to fleeing with a dash. However, that ended in a tragic failure as Renya's right hand, which lunged out with a movement similar to that of a flying swallow, grabbed the back of Frau's head with an eagle grip.

While wondering as to how the information of a fairy-tale from his former world found its way into this one, Renya immediately put strength into the hand holding Frau's head. As the back of her head was immediately assaulted by a brutal pressure, Frau screamed, struggled violently, and before long ran out of strength with her limbs powerlessly hanging down.

"Are you happy now? So, let's return to my first question, okay?"

"Assaulting an innocent girl, that's an act of savage violence ~nano." Frau uttered with her legs and arms swinging back and forth as her body was only supported by Renya grabbing the back of her head.

Renya narrowed his eyes immediately. Seemingly sensing that from his presence, Frau, who shouldn't be able to see Renya's face, hurriedly put power into her limbs and adopted a stance of standing at attention.

"Croire-ane-sama is in the bath, and Mayria-ane-sama is swamped in paperwork, as usual ~no!"

Contrary to its location at the edge of the Trident Principality, an amount of people and goods streamed into Klinge that couldn't be taken lightly at all. In proportion to that, the complexity and amount of the paperwork had reached absurd levels. Moreover, with the influx of marine products from the Gordonal Barony thanks to the establishment of the transfer facilities, the amount of documents which had to be processed went up as well. According to Frau, Mayria was drowning in work, be it day or night. Due to her state having taken a shape close to that of a ghost, hardly anyone besides the civil officials, Mayria's subordinates, approached Mayria's office these days.

"It sounds like the paperwork of the Kunugi Margraviate would fall apart like a house of cards, if Her Majesty the Archduchess were to retire with Mayria taking the throne after her, doesn't it?" Rona said so as if it was completely someone else's problem while slurping her tea.

Renya responded to her with a faint tinge of teasing mixed into his voice, "Rona, you should take measures so that it won't happen while you still can. After all you're the next candidate for the

paperwork, you know?"

"Me!?"

Renya nodded his head at Rona, who was all panicked, with a serious look.

"Why me!? Renya, do you bear some kind of grudge against me!?"

"There's no one else qualified to do it."

Speaking about abilities, even Croire and Emil should have very likely what it'd take to get it properly done. However, it was unthinkable that Croire, who had a symbiotic relationship with the forests, would be suited for a work that would lock her into a dim room for extended periods of time. And since Emil possessed high talents and abilities as a researcher, the merit of having her stop that to put her in charge of office work was extremely low.

Given that Frau was the Head Maid, she should devote all her power in that field. As for Shion, Rona had no choice but to admit that Shion was completely unfit for this kind of work, after adding the annotation "while she's my mistress."

As a result, Rona became fully aware, while shocked by that revelation, that there was no one besides her suitable to succeed Mayria, going by the process of elimination.

'In that case I must come up with some kind of method while the breakwater called Mayria is currently managing the paperwork of Klinge, otherwise all that will await me is an eternal hell of documents and stamps.

However, there existed a simple method to avoid that. It was called abandoning anything and everything, escaping from Klinge. But, that would mean for Rona to leave Renya, and it would also result in her having to bid farewell from Shion.

Rona felt that she wanted to avoid that future as much as possible. Bidding farewell from Shion was unthinkable for her, she didn't even want to consider it. And on top of that, Rona loved Renya quite dearly. Moreover, Rona, who had grown accustomed to life in Klinge that allowed her to spend her time a lot more comfortably than any other city could offer her, didn't want to part with her current life because it was so pleasant.

Renya nonchalantly gazed at Rona's state as she started to come up with plans how to immediately take measures. In reality, if only Rona owned a bit of shamelessness, the option of staying in Klinge after rejecting Renya's demand existed, too.

He didn't put it in words, nor did he commit the foolishness of showing it on his face, but there was no way for Renya to tell Rona to leave just because she had turned down his own demand. Furthermore, there should still be around twenty years left until the current archduchess would abdicate, as long as there weren't any troubles. As long as they had this much time, it should be plenty possible to gather a reasonable number of civil officials possessing abilities above a certain threshold, but Renya deliberately didn't point that fact out to Rona.

'By some chance cornering Rona might lead to a slight reduction of Mayria's workload because

Rona comes up with some kind of ingenious idea. And even if that's not the case, it's not like it'll worsen the current situation either.

"Enough of that. Frau, you said something about hot water appearing, but just what happened? I don't recall having instructed you to dig so deep that you'd find hot water, following my common knowledge about these things."

Rather than depth and so on, as far as Renya knew, there was no place with a heated ground that would create hot water around Klinge. According to Renya's knowledge, hot water gushing out after you dig only corresponded to something like a hot spring. And he believed that hot springs mainly existed in areas close to volcanoes. Apparently hot springs also existed in places other than that, but no matter how much you might say that underground water had a tendency to go up in temperature the deeper it was located than the sea level, it should still be necessary to dig down several kilometers to reach a water temperature so hot that steam would rise from it.

After pondering for a short while how she should answer Renya's question, Frau started to speak fluently, seemingly having determined that she should explain everything she knew from the beginning.

According to her, the heroes, who had been ordered to dig the hole, dug obediently as instructed at first. They used tools called pickaxes and shovels for that. However, the scheduled size of the hole was far too big for only four people to dig manually, no matter how much higher the physical abilities of the heroes might be compared to ordinary people. As might be expected, the first to throw the towel at this job was Leopard. Throwing away the shovel in his hands with the reason that he had simply enough of this monotonous work rather than his body having tired out, Leopard made a certain suggestion to the other three heroes.

"Since any more of this is the height of boredom and doesn't suit us anyway, wouldn't it be way easier to get its shape or whatever manually fixed after blowing up the ground so that the hole would get a reasonable size?"

Looking at it based on efficiency, it wasn't a bad suggestion. But, Renya clicked his tongue at this smart way to cut corners, considering that this work was supposed to also serve as training.

'It looks like it had a big influence that I wasn't present then and there, but no matter how I look at it, it appears beastmen tend to try getting things done roughly and noncommittally.

Renya considered that annoying, but pulling himself together as it had already happened anyway, Renya focused on Frau's explanation once again.

It was Kurz who opposed Leopard's proposal. In Kurz' eyes, they were told to dig, and not to blow away. Kurz' claim was that doing something he wasn't told was unnecessary, and doing something unnecessary wouldn't result in anything decent.

"Isn't his trust in me a bit too strong?"

"But, he's an honest and good boy. Right?"

Even Renya didn't feel like denying the words of the smiling Shion. While still thinking that it'd be

fine for Kurz to be a bit selfish seeing as he was still a young boy going by his outer appearance, Renya prompted Frau to go on.

As always, Grün stuck to remaining neutral while calmly continuing with his work. As Grün declared his neutrality with a smile, saying that he would obey whatever they decided, the decision of the heroes fell into the hands of Albert, the one possessing the final vote, but although it was unexpected in Renya's eyes, Albert supported Lepard's suggestion. Hence the heroes' course of action was decided with two agreeing, one disagreeing, and one abstaining.

"Hmm, why did Albert...?"

Renya believed that Albert had a bit more prudent character, but the following words of Emil made him understand Albert's reasoning, albeit only somewhat.

"Maybe various things built up within him...? Isn't that what you'd call a backlash of a serious person who accumulated a certain level of bottled-up feelings?"

"He had been continuing to follow orders while wondering why he had to do so, but beastmen and dragonoids seem to have the fundamental trait of preferably choosing brute force approaches since they have many areas where they are above in abilities compared to humans and elves." Kilie said as if adding some trivia, but everyone, who had listened to her, agreed that it wasn't a good idea to go along with everything and anything.

Putting that aside, now that they had decided on an opinion, they had only to put it into practice. Thus a destruction spree by two heroes apparently started to unfold in the vicinity of Klinge.

"Two?"

"It looks like Kurz-kun ran away, and Grün-san also took his leave to a quiet place."

It would have been fine if Kurz running away would have actually been owed to the pretense that he ultimately did it because of his opposing view, but Renya was sure that it was an action based on Kurz hating the possibility of getting harshly scolded by Renya if some kind of trouble occurred.

In contrast to that, Grün should have originally stuck to following the suggestion they agreed upon since he was neutral, but it was plain as day that he ran away to avoid any harm triggered by being involved with this. Renya believed that he should have opposed the suggestion in the first place then, but as the vote tally would have had very likely ended up becoming even in that case, and since Grün hated to drag out the decision unnecessarily, it was very likely a truly self-preserving thinking that he would be troubled if he caused bitter feelings by making the mistake of getting in the way of the two, who had cast a positive vote.

"I have no basis for it, I don't think you can call the two's characters all that great."

"Where are those two right now?"

Frau shrugged her shoulders at Rona's question.

"Both haven't still been found ~nano."

'There was no need to go out of the way to search for them, but even if we tried to force a search, the probability of actually finding them is probably rather low,' Renya judged. 'Just like Kurz can store away the two priestesses, who always accompany him, in that black fog of his, Kurz himself will be able to hide anywhere as long as he can store himself away as well. It's obvious that hiding forever will be impossible, considering things like food etc., but still, I think it's pretty clear that finding him will be a pain as long as he doesn't show up by himself. As for Grün, he's a hero specialized in concealment and covert actions to begin with, so it'd be a lot harder to find him than Kurz.

Rather, unlike Kurz, Grün was far worse as he was equipped with all necessary abilities to live by himself as long as he simply stuck to hiding the fact that he was a hero. If things went west, it was possible that he would never be found.

'In that case I'd likely have no other choice but to ask Croire to get him to come out through persuasion', Renya sighed.

"With that said, as a result of the two heroes continuing to blow up the ground..."

"They dug a hole deeper than they had to, and in the end struck on hot water, you're saying?"

"Before that, the earth and sand that was blown up, and the vibration of their attacks caused damage to the surroundings ~no. We're being approached by Klinge's residents with reimbursement demands over broken windows or tableware, and destroyed furniture ~no. Also, there were a considerable number of complaints about the noise...petitions stating that it was troublesome as babies couldn't sleep arrived at our place ~no."

"...Apologize politely, and pay for the damages."

If heroes started to attack the ground at full power right next to a city, the fact of damage spreading through the scattered earth and sand hitting the wall or flying above the wall and hitting buildings close to the wall was obvious without even any need to think about it. Moreover, the vibrations of those attacks were mostly similar to tremors of earthquakes. It was quite possible for tableware to fall off cupboards, windows breaking, and the walls of buildings developing cracks. Furthermore, it went without saying that the sounds of explosions would trouble the surrounding citizens if attacks boasting this much power were carried out.

"We will precisely record the amount of money paid, and slap the bill in the faces of the beastmen and dragonoids."

As Renya laughed with a low, subdued voice, obviously suppressing his anger, Frau roughly calculated the amount of money claimed by the residents, who had approached them until now, in her mind, and after further considering the financial standings of the beastmen and dragonoids, she reached an amount they would probably pay without a word. In case they were unwilling to pay even a little sum of money, she would add a short comment of "My master will be angry ~no." It wasn't as though either race didn't know Renya to the extent they would remain unwilling despite that indirect threat.

"So, where are those two idiots right now?"

"When the hot water gushed out, both were basked in boiling water, resulting in them getting scalded across their whole bodies...they're being hospitalized at the medical ward ~nano."

The hot water seemed to have quite the temperature, and moreover gushed out with a considerable force. While it was just bad luck for them, or rather, paying for their own mistakes, it meant the two heroes got swallowed up by the boiling water, unable to evade as it was directly after they had just released big techniques and thus got nicely boiled together by hot water like the two friends they were.

"Tell the medical ward personnel to tie the two to their beds, hindering them from moving around for a while."

"Okay, master ~nano. But still, that didn't bring about only bad results ~no." Frau continued to explain to Renya, whose anger subsided to some extent as he apparently thought that they got what they deserved.

"You're saying you built a bathing facility?"

"Correct ~no. Although I had someone observe the hot water that was dug up for a while, there's quite a bit of hot water, and the water temperature wasn't as high as at the beginning. But since it was gushing out while maintaining a considerably high temperature, I thought that it would be a waste to not use this ~no."

Because of the water gushing out of the recklessly dug up ground, the hole had become quite big at that point in time, and the hot water, which had accumulated there, looked unusable as it was mixed with mud. Frau drained this water into a tank, which had been built by neatly joining building stones together, and by letting the mud settle inside the tank in addition to installing a filtering device at the tank's drain, she processed the muddy water into fully usable, clean, hot water.

She then decided to use this processed water for bathing by drawing it along waterways. The bathing facilities were constructed by Frau and Keith's group at high speed. The finished facilities were covered by a single, huge building, resulting in a gigantic bathing facility, which was very like the first of its kind in the world, right next to Klinge's wall.

Given that it was naturally impossible to allow hot water blended with mud to continuously gush out indefinitely, Frau single-handedly took care of servicing the hot spring source, reaching the point that it had become possible to provide clean hot water, although little-by-little.

It was a story that couldn't be told to other people, but since the temperature at the hot spring source was definitely nothing where a person could simply thrust in their hands, making it very difficult to service it at this rate, Frau mostly made sure that no mud would get into the water by stacking up stone blocks and maintaining the shape of the hole using Puchiyog-kun. Still, because the water blew out from the ground instead of seeping out from in-between rocks, getting completely rid of the mud was impossible. And thus the necessity of a settling tank didn't change.

The temperature of the water that gushed out wasn't suitable for bathing, but as its temperature was lowered to some extent through the settlement of the mud and the time needed for streaming, it had the completely unforeseen side effect of the temperature being fit for bathing at the time when the

processed water was poured into the bathing area, even without deliberately adding cold water to it. Otherwise it would have likely been necessary to construct something to draw water for cooling the hot water from somewhere.

"Was it also Keith and the others who finished the hole for the transfer facility?"

'If so, it'd mean that we have exploited Keith and his men quite a bit, making it necessary to give them some days off in addition to a monetary reward, or in other words, paying them an extra corresponding to what's called a bonus,' Renya thought while asking, but Frau denied this.

"Obviously Keith and the others would have collapsed if I had forced them to dig such a hole ~no."

"Who dug it then? Don't tell me! The katural? If you made that thing do something like that, I wouldn't know how to pay it back at all."

'I don't think that it needs money, and even if it comes to sending over food, I haven't the slightest idea about its tastes.

Renya couldn't think of anything but to head over to the Gordonal Barony once more, and use himself as a tea bag.

"Even if I wanted to get 'that' to dig the hole...Frau doesn't know how to communicate with 'that' ~no. The ones who dug the hole for the transfer facility were Kurz-kun and Grün-san, who had run away before ~nano."

The common grounds between these two heroes was that they would likely be caught sooner or later, even if they escaped, as they couldn't stay away from Renya for an indefinite amount of time. In that case, it'd mean that these two, who would be trying to escape, and the other two, who acted like idiots, would be the same in regards to not having dug the hole as instructed. Hence they believed they might be able to file for extenuating circumstances at the time of getting caught, as long as they did their best in one go and at least finished the hole as they were told.

Once they saw that their views aligned up to this point, the rest was simple. Kurz and Grün dug the hole at the instructed size as fast as they could while wrecking a considerable number of pickaxes and shovels, and then escaped.

"So what's their reason for running away in the end?"

"They fear joint liability for the damages caused by their two comrades ~nano."

"...I don't feel like Kurz and Grün are related to this matter, so they don't really need to run away...please tell them, if you can contact them."

"I will ask the patrolling soldiers to keep spreading the news ~no."

It wasn't as though they had any liaison to contact the two heroes who had disappeared. Hence, the idea was to have Kurz and Grün, who were in hiding somewhere, hear about it by having the patrolling soldiers shout out, "Lord-sama isn't angry, so come out," all over the city, but Renya held his forehead over the fact that this was completely like searching for lost children.

"That means, right now there's a building for the hot spring source, which had been excavated by two idiots, outside Klinge's wall, and bathing facilities that had been built for the sake of using the hot water. In addition, there's one more building for the transfer facility. So, the number of buildings grew by three in total?"

"Leaving aside the hole, the buildings atop were built at a truly fast speed ~no. It was so quick that even Frau got slightly exhausted ~no."



If they had left the hole alone just like that, its walls would have crumbled down sooner or later since they were made out of earth. Thus they created a wall by piling up stones and bricks towards the bottom so that this wouldn't come to pass, but this was a task as difficult or even more difficult than actually digging the hole itself.

"Mayria-ane-sama threw a fit of anger since we needed more than three times the building stones initially scheduled ~no."

"I also wondered about it when you created Klinge, but you did really well to secure that many building stones."

Upon Rona's interjection, Renya and Frau averted their eyes in random directions for some reason. Seeing their reactions, Rona immediately realized that she was about to touch upon something that mustn't be spoken about.

"As expected of Mayria-sama. If the next archduchess is such an excellent person, the Trident Principality has a bright future ahead."

Rona, who probably thought that it was a somewhat insensitive comment after voicing it out, regretted her own slip of tongue. She had felt that she was about to touch upon something dangerous, but now, as a result, she had instead touched on something she didn't want to touch on.

Originally Shion should have become the next archduchess with Mayria not being a candidate for the post. While believing that it might be worthy of some consideration, even after the current situation came about by Shion declining on her own accord, Rona secretly took a peek at Shion's expression who was next to her.

Shion had started to sleep on the parlor's sofa with a soft, peaceful breathing without Rona having even noticed.

"You're right, Mayria did well. I think I should reward her in some way."

Pretending to not have noticed Rona being troubled that she might have changed the topic way too abruptly, Renya went along with her while paying attention that his voice would sound as natural as possible. From Renya's point of view, the topic almost mentioned by Rona was something he didn't want to expand on overly much.

For the sake of building Klinge, they had expended several smaller rocky mountains of the mountain zone not far off Kukrika to get the necessary huge amount of building stones. Although it couldn't be helped that he had forced the dragons to carry the stones, Renya himself didn't consider it an overly praiseworthy act either.

Given that no one had closely examined the area inhabited by the dragons, on top of the maps circulating in this world being very vague, it didn't turn into a serious matter. However, normally it should be an incident that would have turned into a huge uproar about the maps having to be completely redrawn and similar. Renya wanted to avoid doing a repeat of that, but no matter how excellent Mayria might be, pulling out something that didn't exist from somewhere was impossible for her as well. Renya wondered whether the area inhabited by those dragons might have shrunk this time again.

"This time it's not just an achievement of Mayria-ane-sama ~no."

"What do you mean?"

"While digging the hole, we ran into clay ~no. I gathered day laborers and had them bake bricks ~no."

If they had tried to cover all of the used building materials with stones, they would have never been able to gather the necessary amount without crushing the rocky mountains again, just as Renya feared. However, as there was something clay-like among the sand and earth carried out of the hole, it could be used to make bricks, which in lieu saved the mountains' life, so to say.

Having said that, even baking bricks had to expend materials of some sort. To be precise, it should be necessary to use a great amount of fuel to bake bricks, even if they were to use good furnaces. And it should have mostly been the forests that would provide that fuel.

"Well, there's a huge forest just outside the city, I suppose."

"Yep, there's a huge forest ~no."

Leaving aside its nature and name, the Miasma Forest was certainly a huge forest. The amount of wood brought in from there was nothing to scoff at. Even without deliberately felling trees, just focusing on gathering dead branches should allow for the acquisition of a considerable amount of fuel.

However, being able to do this was owed to the fact that the wood was just laying around there. Originally the people living in this world wouldn't really consider gathering dead wood in the Miasma Forest to turn it into fuel. That's because it wasn't simply worth the effort, seeing how you'd need to gather the wood while being on guard against monster attacks. But, the soldiers of Klinge had the abilities and skills allowing them to completely disregard this issue.

Frau, who likely thought that they had no other way to handle it, mobilized a part of the soldiers, and had them gather dead branches as fuel. By using that wood to bake bricks, they somehow managed to overcome the lack of building materials.

"Since green wood doesn't burn well, we didn't use it this time around ~no."

"That's good to hear. It'd be really troubled if I got to hear from the elves that we're destroying nature here."

There should have been several such organizations in his former world, but Renya wondered whether it applied to this world as well. He wanted to try checking back with Croire, but unfortunately she wasn't present right now.

Going by their image, the word elf would make one think that this kind of activity might fall under their jurisdiction, but since the elves of this world largely deviated in many aspects from Renya's image of them, they might feel almost no resistance towards deforestation.

"The hot spring allows you to recover from fatigue and has an effect on skin care ~nano."

"You sure investigated that quickly."

After hot water, or rather, something like a hot spring gushed out, it should take quite a bit of time until it'd reach a level allowing it to be used for bathing, and thus Renya didn't expect that enough time had already passed since they could properly enter the bath.

Because he really doubted that methods to analyze the chemical composition of water existed in this world, he felt surprised over the fact that the hot spring quality had been identified so quickly, but since it was a world with medicines that would heal injuries upon consumption, Renya changed his thinking in the direction that it might be possible to immediately understand the effect of a hot spring upon entering due to some kind of different world correction.

"Until your return, Frau, Croire-ane-sama, and Mayria-ane-sama tried it out plentifully, master ~no."

"Oh I see, a beautiful skin is obvious from the outward appearance...and you predicted the recovery from fatigue by checking Mayria's condition, huh?" Emil nodded in a way that showed her comprehension of the validity.

'It might be what'd you call, no better method to judge than actually trying it out.

Rather than that, hearing beautiful skin being mentioned, Shion woke up, and the look in Rona's eyes changed.

"We'd also like to test the bath out no matter what, right Shion?"

"Indeed. Beautiful skin is essential."

"For women working as adventurers, skin care must be quite difficult."

Upon Kilie retorting while apparently having absolutely no interest, Emil replied in the same disinterested manner, "You just gotta stop working as an adventurer if you care about your skin so much."

"That's a different pair of shoes."

Once Rona insisted with glazed eyes while zooming her face in on Emil without any hesitation, even Emil raised her hands as if surrendering after bending backwards, seemingly overpowered by Rona's intensity.

"Shion, Rona, neither of you has such a bad skin that you would need to worry about it, right?"

The muttered words that spilled out of Renya's mouth, as he didn't understand why they were so frantic about this, had a dramatic effect. Rona pulled her face back from Emil, and started to fidget around with her face cast downwards while blushing. Shion broke into a really happy smile.

"Master, beautiful skin is one of the important, unresolved issues for any woman ~nano. You could call it a woman's nature to desire to become more beautiful even if they are already plenty beautiful ~no." Frau said with the air of a know-it-all, but in the end it was an issue that was difficult to comprehend for Renya. For the time being he decided to just accept it for what it was.

"Even Emil-ane-sama pretends that she doesn't care, but in reality she should worry about it as well ~nano."

"Emil was a being whose skin could deteriorate?"

"Renya, just what do you think I am?"

Seemingly unable to ignore Renya's comment, Emil raised her voice in protest with her cheeks cramping up, but after Renya and Frau looked at each other due to her objection, Renya replied while looking at Emil's face, "Something I don't quite get."

"I concur with master ~nano."

"Alright, can I have you two step outside for a moment? I'll show you my real protest for just a tiny moment."

Leaving alone Emil, who had started to crack her knuckles with a smile still clinging to her face, for the moment, Frau loudly clapped her hands together as if having remembered something.

"Oh right, master, I forgot to tell you something important ~no."

"What's up?"

When Renya asked as he held Emil, who had come grabbing at him, in an iron claw without any panic and hurry while keeping her at bay with the difference in reach as she swung her hands while enduring the pain, Frau told Renya what she had just recalled.

"We widely announced the establishment of a hot spring in order to draw guests to Klinge ~no."

"Okay."

That wasn't anything especially bad. It was unclear how much of an effect it might have, but if an

announcement that the number of tourist attractions in Klinge had increased were to draw in people as a result, just that would already increase the number of people spending money in Klinge. Mayria might be at her wits' end, but there was nothing wrong about it.

"Once we did, Her Majesty the Archduchess apparently heard of it as well...and ended up visiting in person ~no."

"...Isn't that something you mustn't forget?"

Renya didn't know what kind of business the archduchess might have with them that she would personally come all the way to Klinge from the capital. He somehow could predict that she might have been lured in by that thing with the beautiful skin, but either way, the information that Archduchess Lydia, the highest authority of the Trident Principality, had come visiting was news that originally had to be brought to Renya's attention before anything else.

While pondering whether it might be necessary to scold Frau, who said that she forgot about it, on this occasion, Renya asked, "So, where's the archduchess now?"

"She's currently enjoying the hot springs with Croire-ane-sama ~nano."

'Let's leave her alone for a while.

For just an instant, Renya thought that it might be bad to leave the archduchess alone, but once he considered it, he wouldn't be particularly troubled even if she deprived him of his noble rank after accusing him of disrespect. Moreover, he readily decided that it might be fine to ignore her, if the person herself was in the middle of enjoying the hot springs anyway.

Even if it was wrong to do so, there was definitely no way for him to intrude upon the archduchess while she was bathing.

"I see. Then, since it's like that anyway, Shion and the others can just join her in the hot spring."

"What about you, Renya?"

"There's no way that I can join you guys, is there?"

"The bath has a proper section for men ~no."

"I will go over there then. I have no interest in beautiful skin, but hot springs are nice either way. You guys, for now try to indirectly sound out the archduchess why she actually came here."

Renya said while thinking that she might surprisingly have no particular business with them, and just came to Klinge to personally experience the skin care effect while healing her fatigue from work.