

Chapter 287 - Interlude: Achilles and Leifa

A/N: It's short, but a commemoration for the first full year of releases. T/N: Yep, the author went nuts and released the content of 16 or 17 LN volumes in one year...lol. By the way, he started the web novel on June 3rd of 2016, so this one is from June 3rd of 2017 orz. Fun fact: This covers more than a third of the whole series (801 chapters in total as of June 6th 2021).

At the Goldiba village.

The elderly Achilles was doing his daily routine, his Wind Spear Style training. Rotating on his toes as he stood atop the stone paving, he thrust out the black spear in his right hand straight ahead while adding a twist to it. After this basic thrust, he switched the spear around between his right and left hands while performing the practical skill 『Staff Break』 of the Wind Spear Style which combined fluid motions and stabbing.

His spear techniques had definitely improved ever since he parted with Shuuya. His body build, which didn't remind one of an elderly man at all, hadn't changed either. Meanwhile Leifa was watching his training from hiding.

A daily sight at the Goldiba, no different from usual.

However, unlike usual, Leifa nodded once, and then approached Achilles as he was brandishing his spear.

"...Grandpa, I want you to teach me spearmanship properly!"

"You want to learn my spear techniques, you say? I don't mind if it's something at the level of the basic forms."

"No, that's not it. I want you to teach me the martial arts that you intensely practiced with Shuuya-anchan."

Achilles looked slightly troubled after hearing Leifa's plea.

"A mock battle then?"

"Yep! With the spear! Stab, one, two, three, four, five. Then swing to the side with a bam! See, I stole your and Shuuya-anchan's techniques!"

"Hahaha." Achilles laughed cheerfully.

"Grandpa! I'm serious here! Don't laugh!"

Achilles had laughed because he was fully aware that his granddaughter had been secretly doing practice swings with a stick. And exactly because he knew of it, he had increased the ratio of basic movements during his morning drills, all for the sake of his granddaughter.

"It's questionable whether you can call it "stolen," but I know that you've been watching me very intently. However...a mock battle is still much too early for you." Achilles returned to his strict expression.

"Eeh..."

"Even if you pull such a face, no means no. Practicing on the Training Path has to wait for now. Besides, you're still lacking muscles. Continue focusing on archery for now, and only do the forms for spearmanship."

"..."

"Got it?"

"Yea."

"Speak up."

"Okay! I understand!"

Achilles had scolded her harshly, but kindness filled his eyes as he looked at his granddaughter.

Afterwards he stopped his own training to watch the spear forms used by Leifa.

"The step work of your feet is wrong there. Take a look."

Achilles immediately repeated a weapon practice style using the basic step work, Single-Cut Wing.

"Grandpa, you're too fast for me."

"Oh, sorry. Then once again from the start."

"Oki."

Leifa executed the Single-Cut Wing Achilles had shown her. She repeatedly did her step work, capitalizing on her toes, as if dancing, while her light brown hair swayed.

"Those movements just now were perfect. It's clear that you've been watching my movements."

"——Seriously?"

"Yeah, but don't get carried away. I'll show you the next motions——"

Achilles and Leifa continued their training.

"Alright, that's all for today."

"Sure. I think mom has already started to prepare breakfast, too."

"I might be a bit late."

"Ah, medicine for the new Popobumu?"

"Indeed. Winter is soon going to hit for real. I got to apply the Good Web Herb (Yoymoy) and potions on their inner bellies and heads."

"I'm going to tell mom that you'll be late."

"Thanks." Achilles nodded, leaned his spear against the rack, and walked over to the place with the ladder leading down the cliff.

"Grandpa, just now you thought, what if Shuuya-anchan was here?, didn't you?"

"..." Achilles showed his unrest upon his granddaughter's perceptive observation.

He turned around after his shoulders jerked lightly.

"Leifa, you too?"

"Yeah, also about Rollo-sama..."

Her words overflowed with sadness.

Achilles smiled gently after seeing her teary eyes. He approached her, put his arms around her still small back, and pulled her into an embrace.

"Grandpa..."

"I suppose it's been almost a year now...since Shuuya and Rollo-sama left."

While fully realizing that his granddaughter's back had definitely grown, Achilles recalled his memories of Shuuya and the divine beast Rollo. Just as with his granddaughter, tears visibly welled up in his eyes as well.

"...He said that he'd become an adventurer, keep his promise with Rollo-sama, and enjoy himself as much as he can."

Leifa looked up to her grandfather's face. A single tear naturally ran down her cheek.

"Leifa, tears don't suit you." Achilles extended his wrinkly finger, wiping away the teardrop on her cheek.

"...I know."

"I think that he's at least become an adventurer by now..."

"Adventurer..."

"However, I wonder whether my spearmanship has been of any use to him."

"That's so not you, grandpa! The one who trained Shuuya-anchan as a spear user was you, wasn't it!?" Leifa cutely glared at Achilles while still teary.

Peering down into her stabbing look, Achilles surrendered, "...Haha, you're right there."

He smiled while recalling Shuuya and Rollodeen. Infected by his happy face, Leifa recovered her smile, too.

"I'm sure that he's keeping up with his spearmanship training to this very day."

Achilles nodded several times at her comment, and separated from her.

"...You're correct. It must be as you say. Even during a life full of laughter and weeping, Shuuya will continue his training and real combat once he makes up his mind on a martial art, freely aim to do what he wants to do, and probably accomplish all of it... Now then, I have work waiting for me. Please tell Rabi about the matter with the cattle."

"Sure thing——" Leifa replied in a somewhat womanly, cheerful way, nodding.

Then she headed over to their big house with her hair fluttering in the wind. Achilles watched her leave with a feeling of satisfaction, turned around after nodding once, placed his foot onto the ladder at the edge of the cliff, and started to go down.

His expression as he climbed down had a trace of loneliness, and the number of wrinkles on his face and white hair on his head had grown compared to the time Shuuya had seen him last.