

## Chapter 289 - Meeting

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A certain place in Pelneet.

"Mother, everything is ready for the meeting."

"Okay, good work. I've received word that Adolian-sama is headed this way, too."

"The war seems to be intensifying. Is he going to come here through the southern route?"

"That's what I heard. He might also use the opportunity for some business in the capital and Lalarbuin. Anyway, what about the inn where the Eight Lights are going to lodge?"

"Perfect. This year we also booked a special inn exclusively for them, using the power of the religious organization. The goods for the auction are in the middle of trickling in as well. Still, the number of goods we put aside is somewhat bigger this year, isn't it?"

"Indeed. It happens each and every time, but things will be bought up before the auction even starts. The maneuvering of the enterprises has become fierce, too."

"Yes. When are we going to contact Shuuya-sama...?"

"Mirai, I'm sure I told you to build some connection with him?" Kazane glares at Mirai sharply.

"...I'm terribly sorry. A chance to do so..."

"Mirai, get it done as soon as possible."

"As you wish, Mother."

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"Yo, I'm back." I make my usual greeting, loosely lifting a hand.

"Welcome back~" Rebecca answers cheerfully.

"Nn, welcome back." Eva follows.

"Guildmaster~♪"

Mel and Bennett are also present, standing behind Veronica. I wonder whether Veronica still hasn't shared her blood with them.

Kaldo isn't present. He seems to be busy with the preparations for his own journey.

"Shuuya, I've heard about some of the events that took place on the 20th floor, but I'd like to get some more details." Yui requests while shouldering her Legendary Fierce God - Spirit Wind.

"Could you tell me a bit more about those silver horns you got?"

"The monsters that dropped the horns are definitely the predator-type on the 20th floor. The horn's quality seems to be fairly decent." Viine says next to Misty.

"..."

"Guildmaster, the reports in regards to the dark guild..." Mel makes an effort to speak as calmly as possible.

Only Bennett is bowing her head deeply. I guess this is about the matter of them going to Hekatrail with Yui as escort.

After showing all of them the Tiny Orbital, I concisely explain what happened on the 20th floor. Everyone reacts differently. The one reacting first to the orbital is Misty, the bespectacled beauty——

Full of energy, she briskly moves, getting close to the orbital. Her eyes are bloodshot due to her excitement. She even allows for her vampire face to show as she keeps touching the orbital's tires, engine, and the metal of the nozzles with her slender hands.

"It feels nice and cold."

"Don't disassemble it, okay?"

"...Don't worry, I won't."

"Nn, I'm going to touch it as well." The other metal lover in my little party, Eva, joins the fray while smiling angelically.

She moves her magic wheelchair next to Misty and the bike, touching the thrusters in the back with her fingers.

"Nn, is something going to come out of here?"

"I don't know since I can't see it myself when riding, but probably."

Given that it's a square tube, she might have considered it a weapon.

"It's a mysterious magic tool vehicle, but it looks like several people can ride it."

"Around three, I'd say?"

Rebecca and Yui whisper amongst each other. It sure appears that the battle over the seats has

already started.

"Of course, the front seat suits me."

"I wonder. I'd say that it's better for me to sit there as my small frame won't obstruct the front view during the trip, wouldn't you agree?"

Sparks fly between Viine and Rebecca as they stare at each other.

For a while, the girls get all riled up, talking about the Tiny Orbital.

"...Alright, I'm going to put it away now." I put a stop to it, storing it away into my item box.

Next I tell them about the white mist, the sacrifices, the Goddess of Chaos Libas Arua-sama and her golem Ishytes who are related to the matter of me saving Dawk and Towa.

Everyone seriously listens to me. Especially, when I reach the point of talking about the beautiful, three-eyed Towa and Ishytes...their looks definitely become stabbing.

Suddenly Helme appears from my left eye, crossing atop the table as she heads to her meditation zone. This causes everyone to calm down at once.

I elaborately recount my encounter with Crazy Eye Togma, giving a vivid display of how he stood on my Magic Halberd with gestures, as if the battle is being carried out once more now and here. However, everyone's interest in this is far weaker than I had expected. They all look as if it was a very natural outcome.

"Figures that it'd turn out like that," Wearing a good-looking, long dress, Rebecca-san, who's been recently striving in her martial arts studies, blurts out arrogantly while pressing her hands against her waist, seemingly intending to act like someone experienced enough to make such a statement.

While charmed by her outfit...I tell them about the Dofuadon hunt, and the souvenirs. Using that opportunity, I place a large amount of meat, silver horns and claws on the table. A part of the fresh meat I pass to the maids.

The smell of blood hangs in the air, but no one minds it. The maids pass the raw meat to the kitchen staff, and while carrying it together, give detailed instructions.

Blood is still flowing out of the lump of raw meat left in a pile atop the table. It forms trails, and then drips off the table, but immediately vanishes thereafter.

Yep, my <Head Servant Leaders> are snatching it away, competing over who sucks up the blood quickest. However, even they don't go as far as directly going for the meat itself.

On the other hand, Mysty examines the claws and silver horns without concerning herself with the blood sucking.

"This is metallic, huh? Maybe it's something that can also be used with Refined Gold."

Mysty doesn't have an appraisal ability. But I think it's possible for her, as someone who's spent a lot of time on research, to ascertain whether a metal is usable for sorcery dolls.

My other metal lover stares at the meat and the silver horns, as if comparing both of them. The horns might be of use as metal for her legs. And she should be pondering right now whether the meat can be used at Dee's restaurant.

"——Rollo wolfed down the meat while looking very happy, but it might be better to cook it first."

"Nn, if it's meat similar to guniguni, I want to give it to Dee."

"I don't know its taste since I haven't eaten it yet, but we secured lots of it, and although it's still not clear how it'll work as an ingredient, I'd be happy if you used the Dofuadon meat for a new restaurant dish if it proves to be delicious."

Hearing me, Eva smiles, says her thanks, and immediately stores the meat appearing to belong to the Dofuadons' legs away into her item box.

Then the maids carry away the remaining meat to the kitchen.

"Well then, Yui, I got the rough gist from your blood message, but can you tell me the details of the events in Hekatrail."

"Sure. We ran into a leader of **【Bloody Long Ears of the White Whale】**, an elven woman called Clydossus. Since I've properly marked her with <Eyes of Baycala>, leave her to me if we're going to fight them."

Going by Yui's expression, she looks ready to assassinate her at any moment, kinda? Least that's the feeling I get.

"Clydossus as a leader, huh? I recall having been invited by her in the past. If I remember correctly, it was around the time I met Paulsen and Angie for the first time."

"It looks like Clydossus has been instructed by her boss to keep an eye on the Remains of the Moon office we just set up in New Town."

"Speaking of Hekatrail's New Town, it's a slum..."

Of course it'd draw attention if we built a brand new office over there. Though I believe Mel deliberately set it up in a place where it wouldn't matter even if it got destroyed, additionally to the cheap price for land there.

"That's true. We chose this place since the harbor is close." Mel supplements.

"Tell me your assessment as vice-guildmaster then."

"Okay. **【Bloody Long Ears】** doesn't seem intent on picking a fight with us. Just as you've heard from Yui, they've been obviously turning a blind eye on our office. Clydossus talked about it, hinting that we should see it as us owing them, but...since she also mentioned that Bloody Long

Ears has other enemies as well, it's quite possible that they don't actually intend us to get indebted to them, but instead don't wish to fight us for real. At the current point in time, that is."

I see. I guess that's more convenient for wars and various shady concessions.

"Why do you think so?"

"It fits the current situation. Currently Oseberia is at war with the western Radford, and has had various skirmishes with the eastern Zamalia."

"I'm also acquainted with Galkiv who had been dispatched to the western plains."

He's a cat-loving, muscled old man. He's a guy, but I don't dislike him.

"Guildmaster, you're not only close to that Great Knight, but also the second prince of Oseberia. At present, the second prince isn't just busy with the war, but also works hard at breaking apart the noble factions in the capital. He has some momentum. And, Bloody Long Ears has formed an alliance with Oseberia, and they haven't expanded towards Pelneet as they apparently had a pact with **【Owl's Fangs】**, a guild with deep connections to Oseberia's nobility.

She's right. Fran, the secret agent of the second prince and little sister of Great Knight Remrona, has connections to Bloody Long Ears as well.

In the past, Fran said, 『...Got it...I'll start from me having received a direct request by Clydossus, the leader of **【Bloody Long Ears of the White Whale】**'s **【Hekatrail】** branch. The content was for me to get close to the adventurer Shuuya, and probe for information about him. Moreover, I received the instruction to kill him if he proves to be detrimental for the influence of **【Bloody Long Ears】**』

The second prince and Bloody Long Ears might be in touch through that connection.

"Of course, they're likely cooperating closely with the first prince during the war, and as a matter of course, the second prince is staying in contact with them through Hekatrail's Chardonnay, I think."

"...Furthermore, even at Senapua, the base of Bloody Long Ears, they're in a power struggle with the councilors. Add to that, conflicts with other dark guilds, and disputes over their interests through Heim River's river route, and Tandar's land route, connecting the cities in their sphere of influence - Hekatrail, Senapua, and Halphonia."

"Interests, eh? Well, it sure looks like they are deeply involved in many things. I suppose that's the very reason why Clydossus said that she wants to talk with me."

"Yep, you can call Bloody Long Ears the strongest dark guild in Southern Mahaheim, but it also means that they have many enemies. I made that conclusion after putting all of those circumstances together and going by the fact that they wish to get directly in contact with you, Guildmaster, which also suggests that they plan to peacefully participate in the underground auction held in this city."

"Vice-guildmaster, you've analyzed them quite well."

"Also, because we made some profits with the ship trade, I've earlier passed your share to Isabell-san."

Once I turn my eyes at Isabell, she politely nods in silence. I'm pretty sure that she'll handle the money properly.

Eva nods as well. Come to think of it, she's been supporting the idea to turn Isabell into my bloodkin. However...unlike Mamani and the other combat slaves, she's originally a maid. I'm still not decided on whether to add her to my family as bloodkin.

"Master, would it be fine to take these so that I can examine them in my workshop?" Mysty's reddish-brown eyes are sparkling.

I think it's how she looks when she wants to try out something she's come up with.

"...Sure."

"Thanks. Well then, I'll go to my workshop since I've also got my academy work to prepare."

"Roger."

"Nn, I'll come to your workshop as well."

"I s'pose I'll take a little peek then as well. Only until my Kulbul training starts, though."

I can understand Eva, but I get the feeling that Rebecca just wants to play around a bit until her training begins.

"Okay." Mysty flashes a smile at the two, stores the silver horns in her item box, and heads out of the room.

After watching the girls leave, I walk over to the living room's shelf. Let's place the stone I got from Ayra there as a decoration. I think I'll put it next to the stone I got from Akemi-san.

"Master, it's starting to become a collection of pretty stones, isn't it?"

"Yeah."

The two Twin Stones look so great next to each other that they fascinate Viine. It might be a nice idea to collect some more of those. Even the super-thin steel place, laying on a cowhide sheet, seems like an object of art, and is perfect just like this.

Oh, right, I also got <Tree of the Evil King>. an ability allowing me to create trees of the evil domain with mana. Maybe I should make new furniture, using the wood of those trees. It might be a nice idea to fiddle around a bit with the mansion's interior design.

Just when I'm pondering whether I should show to everyone that I haven't only inherited spearmanship from Master Achilles, Remrona with her red, semi-long hair appears at the entrance door.

"It's Lady Great Knight. I think it's about what Viine mentioned."

"..."

"I...I've been chased around by her a few times..."

"Fufu, Benett, you'll be fine." Yui laughs at the jittery Benett.

"Sheesh, don't be such a scaredy cat, Bene-ane."

"Who you calling a scaredy cat!?"

Veronica and Benett start to bicker over something trivial.

"Okay, the meeting is over then. Feel free returning to your own things."

I call the meeting's end, seeing how Remrona has come over as a guest, too.

"I'm going to return to my dark guild work. There's reports from our scouts over at the port's Warehouse District, and the southern Lalarbuin."

"I'll go back together with Mel, helping her with the work. There's many hoodlums lurking around in the Warehouse District and downtown."

"I gotta visit the stores under my charge, which are late in paying the levy. Now that I was told, "Benett-samaaa, please protect us," as there seem to be going on many disputes over there, I have to do my best."

"There are surprisingly many stores in the lower city, relying on your help, aren't there Bene-ane?"

"Vero-cchi, you're going to help me?"

"Why not. I also have to turn the two of you into my bloodkin!"

"That has to wait for a bit longer. Including the matters concerning the auction, we're currently swamped with work. I think it's also high time that a message will come from Kazane through Guildmaster."

"Okaaay."

Mel, Benett, and Veronica chat while leaving the room. I fix my eyes on Remrona, who's standing over at the entrance. The instant the core members of **【Remains of the Moon】** pass her, the atmosphere seems to become somewhat heavy, but nothing happens.

As usual, Remrona wears her special mask that covers her mouth and throat. Despite her small stature, the white cloak of a Great Knight suits her.

Moreover, a black, a yellow, and a black-white cat are loitering around at her feet. The three cats

are bumping their small heads against Remrona's shins and calves as she stands there dauntingly. The cats over and over again move their heads up and down, single-mindedly rubbing their whiskers against the surface of the hard-looking greaves covering her lower legs. The kitties seem to be bothered by her unfamiliar scent. All three of them are in the middle of expanding their turf, it seems.

"...Remrona-sama, I have heard that you would visit my mansion soon."

She nods at me, and approaches while ignoring the cats gathered at her feet. Rollo's little corps apparently thinks that Remrona is trying to escape, and chases after her. They've still not satisfied their rubbing urge?

At least that's what I thought, but the cats don't meddle with Remrona any further...pass her, and jump on my shoulders. Three cats have now seated themselves on my shoulders.

"Nya."

"Nyaa."

"Nyaoon."

As if competing with each other, the three cats bump their heads against my cheeks. It's an adorable gesture of courting. This cat paradise...is irresistible.

At that moment, the yellow cat slides off my shoulder alongside my leather strap, loses her balance, and falls off my shoulder on the floor. Unlike Rollo, she has no tentacles. But she still manages to pull off a splendid landing. As might be expected of an animal of the cat family, no, a magically created life-form.

After gently stroking Alray's head, I pick up the leather strap off the ground, and put it back on.

Remrona watches me and the cats playing around for a bit, before saying with a serious look, "——On this occasion, you don't need to add "-sama" to my name, nor do you have to use formal language with me. Leaving that aside, Shuuya, I've got two important matters to discuss. First, about the war...mmh?"

Her freckles are cute. Suddenly her mouth stops moving. She stares at the shelf I've been using as a playground for my fingers, her reddish-brown eyes widening.

What's up...? Does she have a finger fetish? Or is she curious about the cowhide sheet on the shelf?