

Chapter 290 - The Two Matters of Remrona

A/N: The beginning is 3rd PoV.

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Oseberia's Light Magic Cavalry had decreased to a measly few dozen as they continued escaping towards the Griffon Hill. Blended among those cavalymen are members of Bloody Long Ears who have thrown Radford's rear unit into chaos.

"——For Back Nails Belly and Iraboe of the Magic Flute to have been done in..."

"——Curél? That's not what was promised, though."

The one talking to the highest leader of Bloody Long Ears while riding a magic beast is the second prince's spy, Fran.

"Hold your horses. It was completely unexpected for the Empire to field a special force led by such a strong, black-haired commander."

"I sure have no luck to run into a surprise attack right after joining up with you guys."

"Please don't say that. I survived this because of your arrival, Fran."

"However, now we're in this mess, right?"

Curél looks behind him. His blue eyes look gloomy and dispirited.

"——I suppose the rear unit, which was late in retreating, has been completely annihilated."

"That means, it's only us left now..."

"However, we've obtained some crucial, confidential information. We'll retreat all the way to the fortress located beyond the hill."

They keep riding across the slightly sloping ground beneath a leaden carpet of heavy clouds, looking as if it's reflecting Curél's depressed mood.

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The Empire's special force **【3rd Black-Hair Corps】** and the 10th Special Ground Brigade are chasing after Oseberia's fleeing forces. Three people are leading the Black-Hair Corps, all riding magic beasts. Just as the corps name suggests, the one commanding the unit has black hair.

His name is Takebayashi Yoshiyuki, a former Japanese. He uses the two magic swords crossed on his back. The curved hilts peeking out at the tips of his shoulders have a skull design.

An urbane and good-looking woman rides next to Takebayashi, who's clad in the aura of a swordsman.

"Isn't it our first time during this war to encounter opponents strong enough to live and get away after facing us?"

In spite their previous victory, she fears a bad outcome from having let their enemies slip away as it's said: 『...Calamity isn't necessarily triggered by a single enemy spy, but it always strikes when it's many of them』.

"...Yeah, they had some skilled fighters who fought cleverly. I managed to kill the flute player with the illusions and the nail advance guard, but..."

"The elf managed to get away. Even though we'd have been able to kill him if not for that red-haired longsword-user on his side."

"I guess they were members of the Kingdom's special forces or a mercenary band. I've heard Oseberia also has to deal with skirmishes in the far east, in addition to this war front. Well, it's because they're one of the prospering countries."

"You're right. Each of them was oddly powerful."

"However, Tartime, which has transferees whom we fought during the disturbances in Florseil, and Ledrain were better trained as countries."

"..." The woman knits her eyebrows and stays silent in response to Takebayashi's remark.

A white, cloudy vortex of mana is swirling in her left eye.

"What's wrong?"

"I don't want to be reminded of those transferees."

"Did it make you recall the betrayal of our friends...? Including the former "Black War God," wars are ever-changing. I can fully understand your feelings on this."

"Even after we came to the Empire, it's war, war, and nothing but war." She sighs.

"I think the Empire is much easier than back there, don't you?"

"Definitely, but you know, it makes me wonder whether our lives will be filled with nothing but battles..." For a change, the black-haired woman shows her weak side.

"...Now you ask? That's certainly no comment I'd expect from the woman who's tortured the scholars who escaped Florseil."

"Sheesh, isn't it fine for me to whine a bit every once in a while? You're too sarcastic, Take! Besides, don't make me recall that trash."

"Hahaha, for Kilie the Soul Devourer to get sentimental...I'd say you caught Tamaki's bad habit there."

"Shut up! Look, the fortress is already in sight. Tamaki, don't stay silent all the time, and say something to this guy as well?"

"Don't mind me."

The small woman called Tamaki has a modest demeanor. However, contradicting that, she's carrying a huge magic tool. It's a loop with a big pointed spike, a ranged weapon which has many crooked claw blades affixed to its edge.

The Black-Hair Corps with those three in the lead comes to a stop. Ahead of them lay Oseberia's fortress. A small, simple fort, despite being barricaded, and a single defense tower with a broad roof.

"...We've arrived. That's the place to where Oseberia's battalion escaped. General Shiran said that capturing that fort would connect to gaining a foothold on Pelneet and Luluzack."

"But, since there's also an important castle between the Griffon Hill and the Dragon Cliff, we might become sacrificial pawns even if we capture that fort, depending on the war results of the Special Ground Brigade's main force."

"We just have to run away if there's any sign of us being discarded. But, this time it'll result in something else. It's obvious that our group of transferees and summoned folks has brought about huge military gains for the Empire. I doubt that they'll be able to simply crush our momentum. And, once we return to the Empire, we'll definitely be rewarded with land and nobility. Fuhaha, I'm really looking forward to that... We're going to be nobles, you know? Fuhahaha."

"..."

Staring at Takebayashi who lets free reign to his desires, Kilie harbors complicated feelings in her heart, but she doesn't voice them out.

Since the language spoken among the Black-Hair Corps is Japanese, no one else can understand them. The imperial soldiers consider it to be an eerie language.

However, including Takebayashi's unit, the Black-Hair Corps remains undefeated and peerless. Not to mention the Blue Iron Knight Order, they even repelled the ancient dragon, Guardian Beast Aldit, ridden by Oseberia's crown prince, and since they achieved the huge accomplishment of routing a company of the Magic Dragon Riders, their morale is high.

The military force riding such a momentum is about to swoop down the front-line fort of Oseberia to add it to their trophies.



"It's a stone like those! The stone held by you, Shuuya! No, wait, aren't they smaller than the one I saw before? However, their shapes are similar..." Remrona yells while pointing at the stones lined up on the shelf as decorations.

"Held by me?"

"Yes. I've seen this moment, created through the <Residual Demonic Eyes> - a derivation of <Larson's Eyes of Destiny>, over and over again..."

Her skill allows her to see a fraction of an event happening at some place over a limited period of time through a gray view. It appears that some overlapping actions caused her to see me...

"...I don't know the location since the background was blurred out, but Shuuya, you had a desperate look."

I was desperate...? While holding one of these beautiful Twin Stones? As a test I grab both, but nothing happens. Let's try to have Remrona hold them.

"Remrona, here, take them——"

"Okay."

I hand over the two stones, but nothing unusual happens. It doesn't seem like anything has changed in particular.

Akemi-san said, 『According to Soju, it's an item related to the space-time attribute. Twin stones. It will exhibit its true worth if you have both of them. It appears to be rare』.

"Is it alright for me to pour mana into these beautiful stones? Shuuya, you had a strange look, feeling like you were trying to put something into this stone with a frantic look."

I'm going to do something like that?

"Go for it."

Remrona nods, and the instant she pours her mana into the stones on her palm, the stones respond to her mana, and combine into one, becoming true Twin Stones.

"Ohh! This is what I meant! This is the stone you held, Shuuya!"

Has the starlight twinkling inside the stones become stronger?

"You're saying you've seen the other me longing for this...?"

Remrona shows me the Twin Stone, pinched between her index finger and thumb.

I stare at it. But, just as before, the stone's interior looks as if stars are shining in something like a cosmos. It's a stone that would be rather popular if you turned it into an accessory.

"Let me give it back to you."

After taking it from her, I nod and try sending my mana into it as a test. The Twin Stone glows as soon as it receives my mana. However, nothing else. All that's changed is an intensification of the gleam.

For the time being I won't use it as decoration, but instead keep it in my item box.

"...I'm sure the illusion of you would have been okay with it, if the change in the stone was something he had desired." A slight shadow darkens the area beneath her eyes.

Is she possibly worried?

"...Somehow it looks like my illusion has caused you troubles. I'm sorry."

"N-No, it's fine..."

Suddenly Remrona notices that she's closer to me than usual, causing the half of her face above her mask to blush as she's apparently embarrassed.

"...Remrona-sama, here's some ten-ten for you."

As if to wedge herself between us, Viine casually holds out a goblet filled with ten-ten to Remrona.

"Thanks, I'll gladly drink some." Remrona lowers the cloth covering the lower half of her face, exposing her lips.

She presses the goblet against her lips, tilts it, and gulps down the ten-ten. It's a nice drinking style as it makes her expression change into that of a cute woman.

Going by her reaction, ten-ten seems to be popular among women, too. I guess it's easy money for the company to which Taichi belongs.

"Great——" Remrona reveals a satisfied expression.

Since it's not the "great" after drinking some yucky vegetable juice, she must have really liked it. Remrona passes back the empty goblet to Viine.

"By the way, there's one more matter. Between the two, I'd say this one is going to be the important one." Remrona puts her Great Knight face back on as she speaks to me with an aura of authority.

"...What is it?"

"Fran's transparent falcon has arrived. One unit of Bloody Long Ears, which had been doing military operations together with the Kingdom's surprise raid force, was instead attacked by an imperial unit and had to flee. They retreated into one of the forts at the Griffon Hill. Alongside

Bloody Long Ears, Fran is continuing to fight for dear life together with the few standing forces of Earl Luke in the fort, but they seem to be at a disadvantage."

"Why has Fran gone out on the battlefield?"

"It's because of the connection between His Highness Fals and Bloody Long Ears. Additionally, there's also the matter of supporting Galkiv who was dispatched to Southerion..."

Remrona stays rather ambiguous.

"What has happened to Galkiv's soldiers?"

"There was a report that they clashed with the Special Ground Brigade's forces close to the Dragon Cliff. Since the earl's army also joined in to intercept the imperial forces from the castle, they're in no condition allowing them to head over to the southern fort where Fran is cooped up."

Fran is in danger...I guess I'll go and save her.

"Of course, since it's still a situation where they can contact us through Rino, I think it's still possible that they will come out on top, but..."

"Remrona, please tell me the exact location of the fort."

"Oooh, are you going to save her?"

"Of course. Now don't waste any time, and tell me what I need to know. Viine, and all of you, you've listened, right? Get ready for combat."

"Okay—— I've got Gadorices and the bow I received from the goddess with me, so I can go at any time." Viine flips her coat open.

A red, scaled scabbard hangs in the sword belt affixed to her tight waist. She looks very confident in her handling of Magic Sword Gadorices. And because she's exposing her pretty, model-like ankles while also baring her bluish white thighs, my eyes are naturally drawn not to her sword, but her legs.

"...Your legs are as beautiful as ever."

"Fufu, I'm happy to hear that." Viine openly shows her feelings of joy.

Her vanilla scent drifts over to me, making me want to return her feelings, but that's got to wait for another time.

"Nyaa."

"Nyao."

"Nyaa."

The cat corps shows a response, too. Rollo and the big tiger duo run out onto the courtyard.

"Shuuya, I'm ready." Yui nimbly whirls around once while holding her magic katana.

At that occasion I notice that she's wearing the special garter belt. It's the item we obtained from a treasure chest, said to boost flexibility. It's something Kaldo wanted to have.

It appears that she's prepared to be able for battle at any moment. And, it's a true blessing that Kaldo hasn't taken the garter belt.

As I'm looking at the incarnation of seductiveness, Yui, "Your Excellency, shall I come into your left eye?"

"Sure, come."

Helme spirals into my left eye, and although I'm already used to it, the eye-drop-feel sure is nice.

"If it's going to be a battlefield, it'd be better to wear reasonably high-quality armor, right? That's why I'm going to change my clothes."

"Nn, me too."

Rebecca leaves through the corridor. Eva slides after her across the wooden floor after making her magic wheelchair transform into its metallic legs version.

At that point, I address Remrona, "...Remrona, our dispatch this time is ultimately limited to rescuing Fran. That doesn't include us helping Oseberia. Please tell this to the prince as well."

"I know. Really...I keep getting more and more indebted to you..." A single tear drop streams down from her cheek.

"It's too early for you to start crying."

"...Y-You're right. This is the map of the west. Over here is Griffon Hill. The mark here symbolizes the fort." Remrona wipes away her tears, and spreads out a map on the table.

"A plane map, huh?"

As I'm confirming the details of the hilly terrain, everyone gathers in the living room, ready to go.

"I've remembered the location of the fort situated between two groves of trees. We're going to head out for Fran's rescue right away. What are you going to do, Remrona?"

"...I want to come with you as well. But, I'm a Great Knight under the prince. I can't leave Pelneet at the moment...even after this, there's a council at the prince's mansion." Remrona looks mortified.

I'm sure she actually wants to get on Sirjes and immediately head over to the fort.

"Roger. Well, we'll do what we can."

"I place my trust in you."

After nodding, I take out the bottle with Fran's blood from my item box. While at it, I also retrieve some healing and mana potions, putting them into my chest strap. Then I open the bottle's lid, and activate <Blood Chain Search>.

A bloodstained chain appears from the factor on my left wrist. A chain dripping scarlet blood...with its tip looking just like a ship's anchor, suspiciously swaying like a cobra, death scythe or pendulum clock. I trickle a drop of Fran's blood on that pointed end. The chain independently rises up, like a cobra would rear its head.

While bobbing up and down, it turns around as if pointing towards its prey.

"Let's go, everyone."

After closing the bottle with Fran's blood, I store it back into my item box.

"Okay."

"Nn, I plan to use my steel orbs, preserving my metal."

"Sure, I'm going to try out my swordsmanship in a place with many enemies."

"It's going to be a great opportunity to showcase the results of my martial arts training."

Leading my chosen bloodkin, I go outside through the entranceway. Remrona's back comes into sight while she's running towards our front gate.

I wonder, is she under some kind of regulation about her usage of Sirjes? But just then, as she passes through the gate, I spot Sirjes flying high up in the sky. It looks like he's been watching over her.

Rollodeen, who's changed into a huge divine beast on the courtyard, looks up as well. Even Sirjes as he's flying up there probably registers as no more than prey for Rollodeen right now...

"Rollo-chan, lemme ride behind your head~"

"——Nn, Rollo-chan, did you get broader?"

"——Since she's much bigger than the last time when we all flew on her together, I got a bit overwhelmed."

Rebecca dives into the spot where Rollodeen's fur is really fluffy. Watching that while laughing, Eva and Yui mount Rollodeen's back while talking about their impression of her divine beast form. As if lured by Rebecca, both of them also start to enjoy the soft feeling of Rollodeen's fur.

"...Master, Rollo-sama has turned into a huge divine beast, but has something happened?"

Mamani and her party also gather in the courtyard.

"We're heading out on the battlefield. It'd be a chain of battles after Hellrhone, but do you guys want to come along as well?"

"Affirmative, if it's a battle, my magic shield will be indispensable! I'll single-handedly take care of all enemy attacks!"

"Leave it to us! We're the <Servant Leader> Blood Beast Corps. Please allow us to freely exhibit our strength as Lucival vanguards!"

"Yeah, I'll do my best as well! I've become stronger after sucking blood! I want to protect my big sisters."

"I also want to contribute my best efforts to you, Master. Of course I also want to support my beautiful elder sisters."

I could sense a Burning Knights-like puff-puff from them. Anyway, I guess that the Blood Beast Corps is on board as well.

No matter how many arrows stab into them, Lucival won't die from it.

At that moment, Alray and Hueremy approach me as well.

"Nyaaa."

"Nyao."

The two loudly meow from my left and right. And then, with my waist between them, they bump their heads against me from both sides, and immediately return to small porcelain dolls. The dolls lay on the ground. I guess they mean to tell me to take them with me.

"It looks like Alray and Hueremy want to come with us as well, Shuuya."

"Sure seems so."

"I've heard from the servants that they've been crying in loneliness when you're not here, Shuuya. What if you carry them around without having them act as gatekeepers?" Yui suggests.

She's right. That might be fine as well.

"I suppose I'll do so from now on."

"Yeah, I definitely agree with that as well, but Popobumu might become lonely instead then."

Especially now with Bal gone as well. I'm going to buy another magic beast resembling Popobumu, if I don't forget. Maybe I should try finding a marriage partner for him, let him breed, or something...

Either way, I'm going to put away the cat dolls. If I wish for it, Hal'Konk can have pockets as well, but...

"...My bandolier's pocket, which housed the Blue Eye of the Evil Dragon King, has been free all the time, so I think I'll put them in there..." I say and do as told.

"Nn, nyao, nya." Rollodeen, who's watched me putting the dolls away, meows something that appears to have some meaning.

『You going to put my henchmen to use nya?』 is what she might be thinking.

"...I see all of you have gathered. Is something going on?" Mysty asks.

She's apparently come out of her workshop after hearing all the noise on the courtyard. I guess we ended up disturbing her work.

"We're going to head out for battle, to rescue Fran."

"Battle? What a surprise. But, if everyone's going, I think I'll come with you, despite having to go to work tomorrow."

"Then hop on Rollodeen. However, I think it's obvious, but the place we're going to now will be a surface battlefield. A war where people without magic stones lose their lives. You need to be prepared for that gruesome sight."

"Fufu, master, you telling me, a Lucival, all that?"

"Hmm, you got a point."

"Yep——"

Suiting her glasses, she's wearing casual clothes, a silken cardigan and trousers. She got on Rollodeen.

"Are you okay with that being your equipment?"

"It'll be fine, won't it? This time we're going with a big party, and although I'd like to use my sorcery doll, it's still far from being complete. That's why I'll contribute with the simple golems on hand."

She points at the many bags attached to the belt around her waist. It appears that sand-like metals and small ingots are inside the bags.

"I see."

"Nn, it'll be okay if you focus on handling your golem while staying close to me."

"Eva, thanks for always helping me out. I'll protect us with my golems."

"Nn."

"I shall protect my little sisters with Gadorices!"

"How unusual for you to say something like that to someone besides Shuuya."

"O-Of course I want to protect Master, but since I always end up being the one protected..." Viine looks at my face.

"This time we'll work all together."

Okay then, time to follow the direction shown by the blood chain.