

## **Chapter 299 - Farewell and Reunion**

Bringing Crow-san along, Kaldo has come to my home's main building. In tow, the Blood Beast Corps who has been training on the courtyard.

"Milord, my travel preparations are done."

"Where are you planning to go?"

"We will head for the Empire's Labyrinth City Souther'Darley while making a detour through the south, heading northwest. Once there, we will build some personal connections to amass power. Using that power, we plan to advance to the war-plagued Florseil Seven Kingdoms - well now they have dwindled down to six though - and acquire some fame over there."

Hmm, yeah, I guess it's smarter to bypass the direct route that leads through battlefields by detouring through the south.

"...So it's gonna be the far western lands after passing through a labyrinth city, huh? Makes sense. I suppose that's also the reason why you got some information from Kilie after getting permission from the second prince and Fran, right?"

"Yes."

"Also, I heard that you invited her to join your new guild, but I haven't been told how it turned out."

"I was turned down."

Well, although Kilie has said that she wants to live on, there's no way that the prince would simply let her wander off. I suspect Kilie's position as an important source of information might also serve as a guarantee for her future.

"Personally...I wanted Kilie to join me as she owns Demonic Eyes and has experience in combat, although she was defeated by you, Milord, but the prince and Fran were clearly against it. And even Kilie herself refused, saying, "A subordinate of Shuuya-san? If the one asking was my savior Shuuya-san, I'd gladly tag along, but I'd like to avoid returning to a place so overrun with wars." So, yes, it was in vain as you hear."

"I see. So, what kind of information did you obtain from Kilie?"

"It's about the underground arena of the Strategic City Tandate, the human experiments carried out in a prison run by the Second Black-Hairs Corps, and the man-made labyrinth built by Heretic Galmodeus."

"Human experiments, you say?"

"Yes, it's something about the bodies of death row convicts being used to test new products."

What crazy fuckers.

"The Galmo-something guy kinda interests me as well, but what other information did you get?"

"As one of my objectives, I asked her about the underground activities of Labyrinth City Souther'Darley. As far as I understand, there seems to be a vast underground world right beneath the Mahaheim Mountain Range. Down there you can find the **【Demonoid Empire】** which owns a path leading to the Prison Dimension Godrone, and nearby, also a Tear of the Spirit World. Probably because of their influence, the battles against demons and monsters have even reached all the way to the surface of Souther'Darley in the past. I also asked her a bit about the situation in Florseil and about her battlefield experience against the infantry using Echelon formations as it's practiced by the Tartime Country and Redline Country."

"I see. Okay, make sure to contact me through a blood message if something comes up."

"Yes, milord."

"Dad, I might join up with you later, too."

"You'd be okay with that?"

"I also want to get stronger. Besides, if I tell him through a blood message that I want to see him, I'm sure he'll come right away..." Yui fixes her eyes on me.

"Sure, I'll visit you together with Rollodeen."

"Oki. Having said that, Crow-san, please take care of Dad for the time being." Yui bows towards the black-haired woman.

"We're stuck to each other anyway, so please leave it to me." Crow looks at Kaldo with a smile.

Kaldo laughs. I can totally feel the atmosphere of a couple that has been married for many years.

Then Kaldo's expression becomes grave as he turns my way, "Milord, I shall be off then. I will get stronger, create a dark guild, achieve deeds of arms, and acquire a turf...or work towards an independent country. In other words, I shall lay the groundwork in preparation for your coming days."

Groundwork, eh? Let's answer those feelings.

"The future is full of dreams. Kaldo-sensei, I'm looking forward to all your exploits."

"Yes, my eternal lord!" Kaldo salutes like a soldier.

I reply in kind, forming the "Ra Kelada" mark. Kaldo looks at me with a smile all over his face and tears blurring his eyes. After bowing, he turns on his heels, and walks towards the entrance hall. Crow-san bows to me as well, and then chases after Kaldo.

Kaldo...you're really damn cool. It might also be the reason why Crow-san has fallen in love with him.

"Kaldo-sama! Us of the Blood Beast Corps won't ever forget how much you have taught us!"

"Farewell, sensei."

"I won't forget you! Sensei! I won't ever forget how you treated me to moose meat!"

To be honest, I'm sad as well. However, his way of departing is very awesome and manly. Also, him striving towards his own goals is something I fully respect, no matter what bloody future it might bring about.

"Kaldo-sama, Crow-san, good luck...the meal over at Totola's butcher was superb."

Fuu alone looks like she received some kind of shock.

"Although we can always get in contact with Yui's Papa-san...it's saddening."

"Nn, the Blood Beast Corps has been idolizing him a lot. The training in the prairie was harsh."

"His well-trained voice thundering across the courtyard will be missed. But, going to Florseil means he's going even further west of the empire, right?" Mysty mutters anxiously.

It's far away, but unexpectedly...it might be a location where I can go with my 24-faceted orb. It's quite possible that one of the mirrors is set or buried in one of the countries in the Florseil region.

"...That's correct." I agree with Mysty without mentioning the matter with the mirrors.

"Hmm, I remember having seen books about the seven kingdoms surrounding a big lake in the library. Among them, some demolish religious ruins, actively contort explosive potions, and use Sage Art based on multiple crest spells. All while being frequently wrapped up in wars."

"Potions are a skill I'm actively pursuing, but among them, explosive potions seem to be extremely difficult to handle. Small amounts of those potions are sold by the Refined Gold Department in Oseberia." Viine reacts to Mysty's comment.

"It's a country where such potions are intensely used in battle. If Black Hairs like Takebayashi, Tamaki, or Kilie, who we defeated some time ago, operate in that country, even Kaldo might be hard pressed to deal with them."

"Dad will be okay." Yui declares confidently.

It might result in hard battles, but it'll also lead to Kaldo getting stronger.

"If there's only skilled fighters as opponents, the experience of squaring off against them will become a treasure in itself. You could say, it's something to look forward to, when it comes to the question as to how far he can evolve his power as <Servant Leader> in the future, including his swordsmanship. I must also put more effort into training myself than language studies and business research."

"Since I've been studying the Kulbul Boxing Style recently, I've gained some confidence when it comes to thrusting techniques."

Rebecca shows off her biceps to Viine. It doesn't look like there's any muscles on it, though...

"Nn, no need to hurry. It will be fine as long as everyone does what they can. I want to reach a point where I can juggle balls."

"Eh? What about thrusting techniques? Juggling balls means..."

"I gave up on that. Right now I want to become able to directly juggle Sergilon's Steel Orbs with my hands."

"Booh! And I was so happy that I had finally found a training partner..."

"Eva-san, you wanted to become a performer?"

"No, I just thought I'd make the neighborhood children Lily is recently bringing along happy."

Eva's objective is lovely.

"Okay, the Underground Auction is up. Our escort is soon going to arrive."

I should also be able to meet Melissa and Dino-san. I'm looking forward to that. I should put some gold coins into Hal'Konk's pocket to pay back the contract's fee. Since Chardonnay might show up as well, I should also take the marquess' ring with me.

Just as we finish our preparations, Mirai's subordinates arrive at the front gate with several carriages to escort us. After all of us get on, the carriages take off.

"At long last the Underground Auction is going to begin."

"Yes. I'm proud that we attend as part of the Eight Lights." Viine says while sitting next to me.

She's wearing chic, jet-black armored clothes as if to emphasize her silver hair. When she changed clothes earlier, she said that there might be battles, despite it being an auction.

"I'll also be able to meet my acquaintances."

"The people of the thieves guild and the marquess, right?"

While looking at Viine's long, slender legs, "Exactly. It's Melissa, Dino-san, and Chardonnay-sama."

"You mentioned it some time ago, but you turned the beautiful marquess down when she invited you to become her subordinate."

"Nn, it was back when Shuuya participated in the dragon subjugation."

"Chardonnay..."

Mysty's mood takes a nosedive because of Rebecca and Eva's conversation. She and Hekatrail's Marquess share a cruel past.

"...You know, it'd be fine for you to not force yourself to attend the auction, Mysty."

"It's alright. I won't forget my resentment, but she's your acquaintance, and it's going to be the venue of the auction, right? I'll keep it peaceful."

"Nn, Mysty, good girl." Eva clasps Mysty's hand and praises her with a serious expression.

She might have perceived that those are Mysty's true thoughts after reading her mind.

"Then all's fine. It's a continuation of my past, but after Hekatrail, I headed over to Holkerbaum."

"Stories about Holkerbaum, eh...? It totally reminds me of how you calmly talked about the fun of making out with Melissa many times, you know!?" Rebecca mutters with her voice getting shriller towards the end. At the end she adds, "It really pisses me off, just so you know!", with her cheeks puffed out.

Rebecca's outfit on this occasion is a deep crimson dress. Her upper body is a smooth runway all the way down to her narrow waist. A conspicuous, black belt with a cute heart mark further tightens that waist of hers. Her small pouch is fittingly black as well, while having gold fittings added to it.

"Nn, he previously told us about all the sex-related stuff without hiding anything." Eva whispers.

She has dressed herself stylishly, combining Muntomi and a bluish-purple silken outer garment, apparently matching the colors with her violet eyes. Moreover, she's wearing a mini skirt designed to emphasize her unusual, metallic legs. Since it gives one the impression of being a futuristic costume, it looks great on her.

"...Would it have been better if I had kept quiet about my past?"

Though it's not like I could hide it from Eva anyway.

"No, that's not it. It's just the complications of a woman's heart, or rather, just read the mood, idiot! Humph!" After pointing her finger at me, Rebecca averts her face.

"Oh, we're going to arrive at the Noble District anytime soon now."

At the same time as Yui says so, the carriage stops. It's a good place to stop the grumbling about my past.

"We've arrived~! Rollo-chan, let's get off."

"Nyao."

Rebecca pokes the nose of Rollo with her finger, and climbs off the carriage first. All of us follow

her lead. The members of the Blood Beast Corps get off as well.

The street has turned into a spectacle you won't be able to witness often. Many carriages of nobles, dark guilds, and companies have all stopped in one place. Drove of finely dressed people have been leaving those carriages. I can see various major merchants enter the grounds of the Underground Auction, passing through the gate of the residence.

Staff of the mask-wearing Asura Religious Organization are orderly guiding the guests to the venue, resulting in the stream of people advancing smoothly. We also join that stream, proceeding across the grounds from the entrance gate. A broad, red carpet has been spread out from the mansion's entrance door. Brand-new, bluish-white stone monuments are lined up at the walls on both sides, and eyeball-shaped magic tools have been installed at the ceiling.

While checking out the many people appearing to be merchants, we walk through the corridor with them. Rebecca and Eva stare at the paintings and vases decorating the corridor's walls with keen interest. Mysty has her attention drawn by an armored group. On my shoulder Rollo follows the squirming eyeball magic tools on the ceiling with her red eyes.

The location of the previous meeting should be around here, but the wall has already returned to normal. In exchange, a new, broad stairway has been built next to the former entrance to the meeting room.

Everyone's heading downstairs.

As we continue downwards, the stairway suddenly opens up into a huge space - the Underground Auction's venue. What seems to be merchandise has been placed on a circular stage, like it'd be used by musicians to perform, in the center of the room. A transparent membrane extends from the stage's edge up to the ceiling. It looks like they've set up proper countermeasures against fighting and robbery.

As if to surround that stage, round tables have been installed in the room at uniform intervals. Dark guild members, nobles and their servants, staff related to enterprises, and masked people are already sitting around those tables, holding light chats.

As I look around restlessly,

"Eight Light-sama and companions, please come this way."

"N, nya?"

"Staff, this way please."

Masked employees of the Asura Religious Organization announce.

Rollo's greeting has been ignored, but the person in charge of us guides us to our seats.

"So the Eight Lights have been provided with exclusive seats, eh?"

"Mel is at another table, so would it be okay for me to stay with you, Shuuya?" Eva is looking at a

table where Mel, Benett, and Veronica are sitting.

All of them are wearing dresses as they wave their hands at us. I'd love to thoroughly feast my eyes on the cute appearances of the powerful ladies of **【Remains of the Moon】**, but...I guess I'll head over to the seat of the Eight Lights for now.

"...Sure." I answer Eva.

"Eva you owe me one, okay?"

"Nn, got it. I'll also throw in some free meal tickets for Dee's restaurant."

"Fufu, okay."

"Say, I'd like to give those tickets to my students as well."

"I'll give you some too, Mysty."

It looks like Rebecca and Mysty are going to join up with Mel's group.

"Okay, Rebecca, Mysty, Blood Beast Corps, see you later."

""Yes.""

The Blood Beast Corps members move stiffly as they're apparently nervous.

"Oki. Bye bye, Rollo-chan."

"N, nya."

"I understand. It looks like I'd be scolded if I took out my golem here, so I'll hold back on that."

"Nn, Mysty, you're making the metal of your bracelet melt."

"Oops..."

The liquid metal drips on the floor, but it's immediately drawn towards Eva's foot.

While listening to such exchanges, I take Yui, Eva, and Viine along, walking towards the table exclusively reserved for the Eight Lights. Thereupon I can see Chardonnay and her attendants sitting at a table beyond the Eight Lights' table.

I guess I should go and greet her. Even the seats of enterprises around here seem to be special seats.

"I spotted an acquaintance. I'll head over for a light greeting."

"Okay."

"We'll wait for you here."

"Nyan."

Rollo jumps off my shoulder on the ground, and walks over to Viine.

"Rollo-sama, you're going to sit down with me?"

"Nyaa."

Rollo jumps on Viine's knees while she's sitting on an armchair, coils about atop her lap, and looks at Viine's face.

"Nn, I lost. Shock!"

Well, usually Rollo would get on Eva's lap.

"How niceee. Rollo-chan, wanna come to me? I'll massage you."

"Nn." Rollo purrs as an answer to Yui's question.

Then she leaps off Viine's lap, jumps on the table, and heads over to Yui. In front of her, Rollo flops down on the table, and turns over to show off her belly.

"Fufu, Rollo-chan!" Yui begins to excitedly play around with Rollo.

Turning my eyes away from that heartwarming scene, I leave the seat for the leader of **【Remains of the Moon】**, and head to the table where Chardonnay, the beastman Kiki, and the white-haired Same are seated. [efn\_note]Same = Shark, but if it's written in katakana, it's usually read as a name, and not as the fish meant by 鮫 (Same)[/efn\_note]

Chardonnay is wearing a pink dress which is completely contrasting the pure-white tablecloth. It looks like it's made out of silk while also giving off the scent of her exposed skin at the upper part of her back.

"...Long time no see, Chardonnay-sama."

"Oh, Shuuya-sama!" Chardonnay turns around.

As she takes off the mask, her usual, pretty face of a lady becomes visible.

"It's really been quite a while, hasn't it? I've been hearing all the rumors spreading about you in the meanwhile, you know? Fufu." Chardonnay hides her mouth with a fan.

It's really a reunion after a long time. Though I bid farewell to Kaldo earlier, this is also a part of life. Reunions and farewells are unavoidable.

While seriously pondering about life, I check out her clothes. Her outer garment mostly consists of a thin layer of cloth that reminds me of a cicada's wing. The cloth has a smooth, linear design to skilfully hide her breasts while at the same time having a plunging neckline. It's different from the

dress she wore during the dinner party, but still looks like it cost quite a bit of money.

"...Rumors are no more than that. I'm an adventurer, so it's only natural to have them spread about me."

"Oh my, so you're saying you haven't changed since our last meeting?"

"Of course not. I'm the same as back then when I received your ring." I show her the ring I had prepared in advance.

"Ohh...what a pleasant surprise! So you've been cherishing the ring I gave you back then! The Demonic Gold Artisan employed by our family will be very delighted as well, I'm sure."

"It's only natural since it signifies my bond with your influential Marquis family."

"I'm happy to hear that. I haven't been wrong about having an eye on you. Shuuya-sama, it's not too late yet. Let's go back to Hekatrail together, and cut Zamalia apart. And once there, you'll also marry me."

Just what is she talking about...

"Milady, I'll be troubled if you decide things without consulting me first."

"Your Grace, please stop joking around..."

"What was that!?" Chardonnay glares at Kiki and Same.

"I mean, Shuuya-sama isn't an Oseberian noble, is he? If you were to marry him all of a sudden despite that, it'd cause mayhem."

Chardonnay grins broadly, "You haven't heard? I don't know the details, but Shuuya-sama has been awarded the Dragon Eagle Medal by Fals-sama, you know? He has greatly participated in the war by recapturing a fort, causing even the earl families, duke families and the First Prince to take notice of him despite the war. I'm sure these news will reach the king's ears sooner or later. Moreover, he's the guildmaster of **【Remains of the Moon】**, leading an independent armed forces, and a warrior who has contributed to the killing of the Evil Dragon King as a solo adventurer. If these things are exposed on a grand scale, the nobles of the central government will be forced to turn their attention towards Shuuya-sama because of his military and political might. It's highly likely that he'll be employed by the king himself! Therefore, if Shuuya-sama and I form a personal relationship before that, my voice will gain in influence, and it'll become possible to tear through Zamalia's territory with Shuuya-sama's military power! It'd strengthen the foundation of the Anaheim family a lot!"

Chardonnay has apparently predicted the future developments in an instant. Though I won't point out that she has turned a dark guild into military forces there. Also, since I've got no interest in the king or such, I won't meet him in the first place.

"...I-Is that so? Milady, I'm very sorry."

"Kiki, are you still holding a grudge over not being able to attend your favorite Winter Cooking Convention because I forced you to attend the Underground Auction with me?" Chardonnay criticizes Kiki with an impish look accompanied by a faint smile.

"...It is just as you say, milady."

"Your Grace, was this you predicting the future?" Same asks with admiration in his voice.

"Of course. Cecily might put in great efforts, but the enemy also has a griffon unit. Although we've built bridgeheads around the former Frogman territory, Trimton, Musaka, and points across the Heim River, we must put a lot more effort into reinforcing our combat forces. Why did you think we came all the way to Pelneet? Do you believe that I'm simply here to enjoy the auction?"

"No, the connections to the Second Prince, First Prince, knight orders, central nobles, and royal palace, as well as enterprises..."

Chardonnay, Same, and Kiki continue talking as if a map of the territorial disputes with Zamalia is spread out on the table. Just as Chardonnay has said, the auction might not be the only reason why she came here. It looks like there's various matters like negotiating with the nobles of various factions, recruiting soldiers, and talking with the knight orders.

At that moment, I look around me. Thereupon I spot Melissa and Dino-san at the right edge of the venue. Melissa looks and smells just like before.

"...Okay, please excuse me then."

"Eh, you're already leaving?"

"Yes."

I quickly turn on my heels.

"Ah, but Shuuya-sama, the dream of territorial hegemony..."

Currently I have no interest in territory, and thus I ignore her. Rather than that, I'm going to see Melissa again after a long time. I'm really happy.