

Chapter 2 - It Seems to Be an Escape from the Town

Once Renya quickly freed up the place with the finger-like object by brushing the soil away with his hands, he managed to confirm that it was doubtlessly the finger of a young man. Predicting the position of the head by making an estimate from the finger's location, Renya dug up the ground with a wooden splinter, which must have belonged to furniture or similar before, in place of a wooden spatula. After a while of digging, he found the head of a person with violet hair.

The world was vast, but only demons possessed violet hair. In short, what was completely buried beneath Renya's feet right now was a demon.

"Hmm?"

As far as Renya knew, demons should be quite powerful in this world when you only compared the races by ability. He didn't know the reason behind it, but in front of him such a demon had been completely buried in the ground.

Just as Renya was about to consider what it could mean, he noticed how Frau and Shion, who had been watching Renya's work in disgust from a slight distance, were both pointing at something.

"What's wrong?"

"Master, I feel like...that finger is moving ~no."

Being told so by Frau, Renya looked down at the finger he just dug out. The finger, which protruded out of the ground like some kind of joke, hadn't moved at all when Renya dug it free, but now it moved as if scratching at something, albeit slowly. The head next to Renya also started to move as if writhing.

"R-Renya...?"

It was creepy, or rather felt really nasty. Either way, Shion uneasily called out to Renya after seeing something that would make anyone want to get away as quickly as possible.

Renya looked up to the sky, closed his eyes while feeling like something completely irrational was going on, and after brooding for a while, opened his eyes and headed over to Shion and Frau with a sigh.

"Well, it's as you can see. I guess we'll run away..."

The instant he started to speak, a flash that seemed to burn one's eyes and an explosion that tore one's eardrums hit Renya's group. With a ripping shock wave, several of the buildings that had been barely left standing crumbled apart with a clattering after succumbing to the impact.

Once Renya looked in the direction, which was very likely the origin of the explosion, after all of it settled down, he saw how black smoke billowed into the sky with the flames, which Croire should have extinguished earlier, blazing up once more.

"What was that? What do you think, Renya?" Renya asked Croire, who had drawn close after getting surprised by the noise, trying to check back with her, although he somehow had an idea about the true identity behind all of this.

Having become teary-eyed, probably because her fine ears were fully affected by the explosion just now, Croire answered while rubbing her long ears, "It's just a guess, but...wasn't that Dra-kun's breath exploding there?"

"Because of this, huh?" Renya pointed at the thing squirming at his feet.

Croire lowered her eyes while wiping the tears out of her eyes, and immediately backed off in surprise.

"It's alive?"

"It'd be weird to call it alive in a state like this, wouldn't it?"

"I-In other words, it's undead..."

Renya also didn't know what triggered it to move. However, since one was buried beneath his feet, it wouldn't be strange for others to be buried all over the town either. Rather, if he assumed that the residents of this town hadn't vanished like smoke, it'd be actually natural to conclude that all of them were buried in the town.

"Demons as undead...that's the worst."

"I'm with you there."

Even though he didn't know what logic it followed, the demon buried at his feet dragged its body out of the ground in one go, and tried to stand up. In an instant, Renya's katana flashed after he drew it from his waist, drawing a scarlet line on the neck of the demon. The demon's head slid down alongside that line, falling to the ground.

The headless torso stopped moving, and when it collapsed to the ground, Renya's katana, which he should have drawn moments ago, was already hanging at his waist again. Due to the speed of his technique, including not only him drawing the sword but also him sheathing it in a fluent motion, Croire stared at Renya's face, having completely forgotten about her earlier surprise.

"It looks like they'll stop moving if you behead them." Renya commented while kicking the head away, probably for caution's sake.

The demon's head, which drew a parabola in the air, dropped to the ground without flying too far, and the area where it fell suddenly bulged.

"Ah, just as expected, more of them are buried around here..."

One hand after the other was thrust out from underground while clawing at empty air, just to hold onto the ground's surface to drag up the bodies connected to the hands. Similar scenes could be seen around Shion and the other women, causing Rona to yelp next to Shion.

"Isn't this your field of expertise, seeing how they're undead and all, Rona?" Renya said wondering whether it was the time for her to scream around.

In response, Rona complained while smashing the head of a demon that emerged from the soil with her mace, "Even if I'm a saint, the visual impact of stuff like this is just too intense!"

"You can complain all you want, but you do have some at disposal, a divine art against undead, or some such, right? Please use that."

Kicking down an undead young female demon, who had approached him, Renya crushed her forehead with his heel after she fell face-up. Next Renya sent the arms of another undead, who came grabbing at him, flying by cutting them off at the shoulders, and then he blew the torso away with a turning kick that used plenty of strength and centrifugal force, resulting in the undead drawing a bloody flower on the wall of a worn building after slamming against it.

"O-Okay. Umm...Impurity, leave in the name of Giliel-sama!"

In accordance with Rona's hurried divine prayer, her mace started to gleam as she held it up. Renya wondered whether some kind of holy seal wouldn't appear at times like these, instead of normal light, but once he considered it, he corrected his thinking as the goddess Giliel, whose name hadn't been worshipped so far, might not have anything like a holy seal.

Anyway, the divine art unleashed by Rona continued to fill the vicinity with pure light, and the undead began to groan in anguish as soon as they got touched by that light. However, while things appeared to proceed smoothly, only Rona raised her voice in panic.



"It's useless, Renya! The divine art is being resisted!"

If the basis of the undead had been normal humans, just the light released by Rona might have been enough to purify them. However, even if their enemies were literally rotten, they were still demons. To begin with, they had possessed much higher abilities than humans before their death, which apparently endowed the undead with a high resistance against magic and divine arts.

"They're getting damaged, but...I can't burn them to cinders!"

At a glance, it was obvious that white smoke was rising from the skin of the undead, who were touched by the light, which meant that their skin had begun to burn hideously, but although it was only slowly, their bodies started to move again within the light even while being burned.

Renya pondered about the fairly delicate issue whether this was owed to a lack of Rona's power, a lack in ability of Giliel who lent her the necessary power, or the extremely strong abilities of the demons while cleaving yet another undead apart.

"Renya, there's too many of them!" Shion yelled while randomly slashing the undead, who were trying to surround them, apart with her katana.

Even if her enemies looked somewhat gross, Shion didn't seem to have an issue with it as long as she could cut them with her katana. With her movements being completely different from when she trembled in fear of ghosts, she slew one undead demon after the other as they crawled towards her from the ground, but still, the number of undead crawling went beyond what she could handle with her katana. While yelling with panic clearly dyeing her voice, she ran all the way behind Renya.

Frau, who had been continuously scurrying around Renya's feet, seemed to weave her way through the undead encirclement unarmed while capitalizing on her small body.

"Retreat to the plaza! We'll join up with Liari, Az, and Dra-kun, and escape! I don't know how many residents have been buried in this town, but it'll be endless if we try to take on all citizens of a town!"

Another flash and explosion reached them from the plaza's direction. Apparently Liaris' group was also in combat with undead who had crawled out from somewhere, but that was all Renya could tell from here.

Given that Liaris herself shouldn't possess any abilities allowing her to cause an explosion, Az and Dra-kun ought to frantically push back the undead with their magic arts and breaths. Renya believed that nothing extreme should happen with both of them working together, but in some cases, numbers easily bridged the gap in individual ability. If they were to lose Dra-kun here, they'd also lose their means to travel across the vast demon country, thus Renya couldn't afford to be careless.

"Shion, Frau, guard Rona! Rona, release as much light as you can!"

"Got it!"

"Okay, master ~nano."

"Croire, we'll open a path together."

While catching at the edge of his visual field how Croire silently nodded, Renya silently cast <Flame Lance>. Renya invested a great amount of mana into the fire spell, which had forcibly overpowered even an evil dragon, causing countless lances to appear above his head.

"Gooo!"

The swarm of flame lance followed Renya's will, rushed off, and stabbed the area in front of Renya's group, as if performing a carpet bombing all over the place. Buildings, undead - anything and everything touched by the lances was swallowed up in a vortex of red flames. At the same time, the wind spell cast by Croire blew through the thunderously roaring flames, creating a wind corridor through a squall.

"Run!"

With the flames that would burn anyone's skin being reflected, everyone ran through Croire's wind corridor upon Renya's order. Some of the undead tried to break through Renya's firewall, relying on their high resistance and stamina they had possessed while still alive. But, their movements became sluggish as soon as they suffered the effect of Rona's divine art which she kept up desperately, and with Reny shooting new flame lances at them, they turned into torches before falling apart to ash.

Buildings blocking their path were burned away by Renya, and lost their shape after being blown away by Croire's wind. Renya's group ran in a straight line for the plaza, and as soon as they arrived there, they became speechless upon seeing the spectacle unfolding in front of them.

"Whoaa..."

A fireball hurled by Az caused an explosion, mowing down several undead. Dra-kun's breath pierced into the middle of the undead who tried to advance further while stepping over their fallen comrades. The undead, who got roasted by the high-temperature flames, lost their shape within the conflagration without even the chance to groan.

And yet, more of them followed on the spot. Due to the swarm of undead that endlessly flocked into the plaza trying to completely surround them, Az and Dra-kun were evidently worn down. Liaris gave instructions to Dra-kun while overlooking the situation from atop his back. Dra-kun mowed down undead with his tail and pushed them back by flapping his wings powerfully, somehow managing to prevent them getting surrounded.

Neither Az nor Dra-kun used any big techniques as they didn't know where Renya's group was at, and thus feared to get them dragged in. But, even if they could get rid of a big number of undead with a big technique, the number of undead was simply too huge. Renya realized that both had judged that it would be smarter to prevent the undead from approaching by using small and compact techniques.

"Az! Sorry for making you wait!"

Noticing Renya's group as they approached while cutting a path open, relief showed on Az's face. Dra-kun breathed through his nose as if saying, "You finally showed up, eh?", and Liaris loudly

yelled on his back.

"Everyone! Hurry and get on Dra-kun's back!"

"It'll be a pain if they cling to Dra-kun. I'll unleash one big shot. All of you, use that opportunity to get on Dra-kun's back!"

""""""""You're the wrong guy for this!""""""""

Everyone besides Renya stopped him from preparing a full-power shot with the intent to buy everyone enough time to get on Dra-kun's back. While Renya froze as he hadn't expected to be voted down here, Rona swiftly ran up towards Dra-kun's back, and released a brilliance overshadowing the light so far by investing a big amount of divine power. With a sidelong glance at the undead whose movements had become slow while being burned by Rona's dazzling light, the other members jumped on Dra-kun's back.

Once Renya jumped on Dra-kun's back as the last one while still feeling somewhat unsatisfied, Dra-kun immediately kicked off the ground, and soared up into the sky while flapping his wings.

"Renya-san, please form a path to Dra-kun and lend him some mana!"

"S-Sure."

Doing as told by Liaris, Renya connected a mana path to Dra-kun, and infused it with his mana. While blending Renya's mana with his own, Dra-kun poured it into his muzzle, kneading a high-power fire breath he wouldn't be able to produce by himself.

"Dra-kun, shoot as you see fit!"

As Renya had experienced a disaster when he did something similar with Rubydra before, he had somewhat lowered the speed and amount of mana he poured into Dra-kun. After having gained enough altitude and refined the mana amply, Dra-kun spat the breath out of his mouth at the point when he almost lost control over it. The breath transformed into a red flash, burned through the atmosphere, and pierced into the plaza where Dra-kun had just taken off. One beat later, a deep crimson flower, big enough to swallow up the whole town, bloomed.



It was something Renya had always thought ever since coming to this world: in short, this world was way too big. It was so tremendously huge that any idea of traveling it on foot was bound to make anyone give up right away. Occasionally Renya also happened to feel fed up by this fact, but even if he were to complain about it, he wouldn't be able to do anything about the reality stretching out widely in front of him anyway.

He felt like wanting to punch that little goddess once more, telling her to do her best at making the world a little bit more compact, if he could visit her space ever again. Either way, right now it was fine since they had Dra-kun around, but Renya shuddered when he imagined being told to walk

through the demon country to look for Emil.

Even though Dra-kun did his very best at flying, he still had his limits. After Renya's group turned one demon town into embers, around the time when the sun began to sink, Liaris appealed that Dra-kun had reached the limit of his flight time, and that it would be dangerous to keep flying during the night. This resulted in them searching for a suitable place for pitching a camp, and soon after, following Renya's recommendation, she had Dra-kun land on top of a slightly elevated hill.

"Doesn't this place stand out too much?"

"Well, it's not possible for us to not stand out with Dra-kun anyway."

As they were in enemy land, Shion's worry was very reasonable. But, hiding the huge body of Dra-kun so that he wouldn't stand out was next to impossible, and thus Renya decided to prioritize a place with a good outlook over an inconspicuous location. He believed that surprise attacks would be difficult as long as they could properly keep watch in a spot with a good overview of the area, but you could also claim that they didn't have any other choice.

"Can't he shrink down through magic arts or something?"

"It's a different story if it comes to magic, but magic arts aren't almighty." Az curtly answered Renya who tried asking since he had nothing to lose anyway.

Given that he couldn't change it, Renya decided to get the camp ready while using Dra-kun's body, whom he had lay down sprawled, as windbreak.

"Renya-san, what are we going to do about Dra-kun's food?" Liaris approached Renya as he was getting dinner ready after putting up the tents, digging a hole, and setting up a cooking stove.

A dragon like Dra-kun didn't put much importance to what he was fed, but Renya couldn't help but deeply nod at Liaris comment - very befitting of a dragon's owner - that it'd be pitiful for only Dra-kun to not be able to eat anything while all the other members were dining next to him.

'First of all, eating a proper meal is important. Moreover, even if he might be a dragon, Dra-kun is still a member of this search team, so it'd be too evil to simply leave him out in the lurch,' Renya judged.

"Aren't any evil dragons flying around in this area?"

"You're telling him to eat his own kin!?"

"Huh? That's a no-go?"

After Liaris timidly checked back with Dra-kun, he told her that he'd like to be spared from that option, if possible. According to Dra-kun, even humans would avoid eating goblins and kobolds although it wasn't as though they couldn't eat either, if they tried to do so.

Since Renya could fully understand his feelings on this, he couldn't force Dra-kun to eat an evil dragon either.

"Didn't several of the demons from that town cling to him?"

"Honestly, even dragons would get a stomach ache if you make them eat undead..."

According to Frau's diagnosis, the demon-based undead, who had attacked Renya's group, were buried underground after previously getting killed by some kind of method, but on top of them not having received a proper burial ceremony, many ghosts infested the area, which pointed towards the demon country being in a bad state. Those ghosts must have possessed the corpses, and turned them into undead.

"Usually demons cremate their dead, I heard ~no." Frau passed on information she had very likely obtained through Emil.

"Burning the corpses, how savage." Croire said without even trying to hide her disgust.

The elves believed that the dead would return to the forest. Hence they buried their dead in graveyards inside forests, and customarily judged anyone meddling with the corpses in any way as savages.

As it was normal for corpses to be cremated in his former world, Renya sided with the demons on this one, if he had to pick, but he deliberately didn't comment on that, thinking that this was yet another difference in customs between the races.

"But, what are we going to do, Renya? Do you have any food that you could allow Dra-kun to eat?"

"That's gonna be a bit difficult, I think." Renya checked his inventory upon Rona's question.

Since Renya had prepared himself while not knowing how long the search for Emil would take, he had stored a fairly big amount of food in his inventory to cover for all seven members, excluding Dra-kun. However, if they started to share that food with Dra-kun as well, the stored amount wouldn't last long.

"We will attack a demon city around here..."

"Let's stop that, okay? I'm pretty sure explosion traps are just going to await us there anyway, so let's choose another method."

The demons were their enemies. Attacking a city only for the sake of procuring Dra-kun's food caused Shion, who seemed to have reservations towards this idea, to frantically stop Renya who brought up something so dangerous. She feared that it'd result in them leaving Dra-kun's strengthened fire breath as a parting gift again, at the time of making their escape after attacking a city. Moreover, in Shion's eyes it'd make it difficult to tell apart who the good and bad guys were, if they eradicated a whole city each time they took some kind of action.

Even Renya couldn't force it after being entreated by Shion to give up on that idea if he didn't want to be called demon king by the demons. He sank back into brooding with a scrunched expression.

"Then we're in a deadlock, no?"

"Renya, I see a flock of something over there."

"Alright, I'm going to hunt those."

As soon as Az informed Renya about having discovered something, Renya broke into a run without even checking what it might be. Since the sun had completely sunken beyond the horizon by now, the area had turned dark. So, even if they might realize that something was afoot, it was impossible to know what it might be with only the moon and stars serving as illumination.

And yet it was Renya alone who ran off. Everyone else agreed that Renya would be able to handle anything as long as he didn't run into the demon king over there. Thus they returned to their previous work, trying to finish the camp before Renya would come back.

'Even with my draconic knowledge, I find it difficult to judge whether the humans are acting like this because they trust him, or because they've given up on him', Dra-kun pondered.

Before long the tents had been put up, the preparation of a cooking stove were finished, and even a toilet consisting of a hole surrounded by a partitioning screen of sticks and cloths had been created. Renya returned just when Frau and Rona were clinging to Shion to stop her from digging a bath.

"I wonder, can you actually eat this?"

What Renya dragged along while asking with somewhat lacking confidence were two huge turtles. They had a length of several meters. Two bloody trails, that seemed to continue endlessly, followed behind Renya as he dragged the shells along after having cut off their heads - obviously because it'd be impossible to bring them along while still alive. Usually one would prevent the stench of blood to hang in the air as much as possible since it'd lure in other predators, but Renya apparently let the blood flow freely since he carefreely believed that any carnivore approaching would just serve as another meal for Dra-kun.

Seeing the huge turtles under the light of the campfire, Az named them, "I think those are young Land Emperor Turtles..." Az further explained that it was a species of turtle living on land, continuing to keep growing bigger during its very long life span. According to records, adult turtles would exceed a length of 100 meter. They were so big that a whole forest would disappear each time they ate, and that they looked like walking mountains.

"There exist such specimens, but since the turtles have many natural enemies during their infancy where they don't go beyond several centimeters in length right after birth, the number of turtles reaching adulthood is fairly low," Az supplemented. "Even here, two of them died."

"You're the natural enemy of most edible creatures, aren't you?"

Because of its excessively big body and its sturdy shell, despite being younglings, it wasn't easy to hunt those turtles. Given that the turtles would cause quite a big damage to forests and fields if they were allowed to grow big, and as their meat was fairly delicious despite its toughness, the young turtles were immediately hunted down on the human continent. It wasn't prey that could be easily hunted as it often took the lives of its hunters, but with Renya as opponent, their heads had been quickly cut off before they could withdraw them into their shells, and even assuming that the turtles

had managed to pull back their heads, Renya's katana would very like chop up the turtles alongside their shells. In other words, they were simply unlucky to encounter Renya.

"If people can eat them, it should be no issue for you either, right Dra-kun?"

Being asked by Renya in a way that made it clear that he wouldn't allow being picky, Dra-kun quickly nodded his head in panic. However, it wasn't as though he could sink his teeth into the turtles just like that, and thus it created the additional task of dismantling the shell, which didn't seem edible no matter how you looked at it. Because the shell wasn't anything that could be simply removed with a knife, Renya silently cut the turtles up into chunks of suitable size with his katana, strengthened his knife with mana, and dismantled the meat.

"Umm, it doesn't look like it's edible even if you beat it into dumplings...as long as you don't process it with fire like grilling it on skewers or cooking it in a soup since the raw meat looks a bit too scary ~no."

Once turned into chunks of meat, the turtles could be cooked normally. Frau began to briskly make dishes out of it while complaining about the turtle meat Renya finished up in succession. Since the turtle's intestines weren't eaten on the human continent, all of them became Dra-kun's dinner, and the other parts like the skin, bones, and shells were tossed into an appropriate hole and buried. The skin and shells were valuable as crafting materials, but since their objective on this trip was to search for Emil, and not to gather crafting materials, Renya decided to not take along what appeared to be troublesome to carry.

"I'll store the rest into my inventory, so you don't need to force yourself to eat up everything, okay?"

Because the amount of intestines was fairly big and as it wasn't possible to hunt food for Dra-kun at any time, Renya offered to set aside some of the intestines for later consumption.

One of many other scenes in this whole turtle meat business hosted Frau attempting to roast big chunks of meat whole by stabbing it on the katana she had snatched away from Shion, after feeling that it had become a chore to carefully prepare the meat, and then giving back the katana to Shion, who was on the verge of crying, with the meat still stuck to it.

"Renya...Frau has..."

"Just don't let her take it away from you so easily..."

Renya turned a fed-up look at Shion, who had approached him with the meat-laden katana in both hands, and once he perceived that she apparently couldn't get the meat off the katana thanks to its toughness, he took the katana off Shion, and carelessly swung it sideways with a flash. With just this one swing, the meat slid off, and flew towards Frau, as if Renya had aimed it at her from the very start. With another swing of the katana, he flung the grease and blood off, and returned the katana hilt-first to Shion.

"Make sure to maintain it. Also, if you call yourself a swordswoman, then don't allow your katana to be stolen so easily, got it?"

"Okay, I got it. Thanks."



"Wai-!?! You're terrible, master ~no!"

Hit by the chunk of meat that unexpectedly came flying at her, Frau screamed in protest while sticky with blood and grease, but immediately fell silent when Renya sent a glare her way. She apparently understood in an instant that it was his punishment for her having tried to use a katana as a replacement for a skewer.

Even after being fully covered by a chunk of meat, Frau didn't allow for a single piece of it to fall to the ground, probably because of her disposition as a fairy specialized on housework. After completely wiping the blood off her face with a handmade towel, she capitalized on her traits as silky, making her clothes return to their previous, clean state without even taking them off.

For Frau it took some time, but didn't require much of an effort, and thus it was a much better option than being scolded by Renya.

"Tentatively...we're in the demon country, in enemy land, right? We just recently eradicated a town, didn't we?" Liaris asked Az, who was diligently preparing grilled meat next to her, with a voice that lacked confidence.

Az stabbed the meat on proper metallic skewers he had brought along for camping, and after adding some seasoning, stabbed the skewers around the campfire.

Without stopping this work, he answered, "I'm sure you might have some things you want to say about it, but give it up. We're dealing with this kind of people, after all."

Az passed a skewer with nicely roasted meat to Liaris before stabbing a new skewer on its spot. After staring fixedly at the skewer which gave off a fragrant aroma and was covered by a sheen of savory oil, she silently bit into the roasted turtle meat, seemingly having lost out to her appetite.