

Chapter 306 - Reunion with Hankay



Rinabel Pusenarl, the guildmaster of 【Sparrow Tiger】, stood underneath a roadside tree on the right side of Dignified Heaven's Shrine, among the other members of his dark guild who were waiting outside.

"Konron and Ujit were killed...?" The guildmaster of 【Sparrow Tiger】 commented, more like a confirmation to himself.

The Card User of the Devilish Fanciful Concept, a member of the same guild, answered with an expression full of regret, "I tried to stop them, but you know how they were..."

"The brothers were incorrigible idiots, but that still doesn't change the fact that they were leaders in our guild. Tokman, what's the name of their killer?" The tiger beastman Rinabel asked with rage dyeing his face.

"Sein of the Peerless Sword, also, Earlobe Sein."

"A name unknown in Socteria, but he's strong enough to have killed those bloodthirsty Obliteration Brothers, eh?"

"He's a renowned swordsman in Tandarl."

"Figures. Still, you think I'll let him kill my subordinates just like that? At this rate it won't just stain our honor, but also stand in the way of my path as man amongst men. That's why I'll go and slaughter that fucker personally. I'll butcher that bastard with this Mythological Peerless Dragon Katana after using <In-Night>."

The face of Rinabel shifted from anger to calmness. His face was covered by a layer of tiger fur, making it difficult for others to read his emotions.

Rinabel placed a hand on the hilt of the big katana resting on his back. Originally, he had been a wandering adventurer, and on top of being a practitioner of the Peerless Sword Style, he had also studied the Tiger Fist Style. He was far more belligerent than the Eight Lights member Hogbar Shafeed, a cat beastman.

For a long time, Rinabel had moved from battlefield to battlefield, surviving through the 65 Great Wars of Seven Pholia. He had also experienced getting chased by the Special Military Police Corps after getting into a fight with nobles, despite having achieved many meritorious deeds in Seven Pholia.

And after he was washed into Socteria, he made a name for himself through his prized sword skills, climbing all the way to becoming an Eight Lights.

"I expected that you'd get all fired up since you're the Whimsical Rinabel-sama..." Tokman said as

he scrutinized Rinabel through his narrow eyes while fanning many cards out on his palm.

Immediately following, one card naturally stood up, and automatically floated up into the air. Bloodstained remains of a moon were drawn on it.

"No need to mention it. Nevertheless, it's been quite a while since I last crossed swords with someone. Ever since that labyrinth request that came in right after the negotiations with that Gomock dude in Hekatrail, several months ago, I think."

He didn't know that he had passed Shuuya back then.

At that moment, the earth shook, and the roof of Dignified Heaven's Shrine crumbled down.

"Nuuoooh, awesome! It looks like a flashy battle has started at the top of the topmost floor."

"...I don't think they build the tower with that as a premise, but for the roof to collapse is honestly quite surprising." Tokman was truly astonished, with his heart racing.

"No sign of the barrier surrounding the building weakening, huh? It seems Shadow Wing has hired an excellent space manipulator. It makes my blood boil, fuhahaha——"

"Really? Usually the Heaven's Shrine is a peaceful, high-class inn. Only today it has completely changed into the venue of a festival." Possessing a completely opposite character from Rinabel, Tokman answered very calmly.

"Alright, I'll use <In-Night>, and dive in by myself...Tokman, you stay on standby here."

After giving himself a pep talk very characteristic of tiger beastmen, Rinabel activated <In-Night>, melting into the darkness with his fangs gleaming ominously.

<In-Night> was a skill to kill one's presence. It was far more superior than invisibility. Rinabel was capable of using it exactly because he was a tiger beastman. Even Max or Felt, the head of the legendary Assashinreed family might have been astonished if he had seen this concealment technique that exceeded <Hide>.

With worry written on his face, Tokman said, "Understood. Fortune and misfortune are intertwined...please be careful."

But, Rinabel wasn't present anymore. Tokman continued gazing at the new roof of Dignified Heaven's Shrine where debris still kept crashing down.



Likewise, those related to **【Assembly of the Stars】** had gathered at the roadside trees on the left of Dignified Heaven's Shrine.

"Mother, Adolianne-sama, these are Paulsen-sama and Angie-sama, both leaders of Remains of the

Moon."

"Hello, I'm Paulsen."

"Angie."

"Thanks for your assistance tonight. We're very grateful for Remains of the Moon immediately making its move as a member of the alliance." Still wearing a mask, Adolianne bowed towards Paulsen and Angie.

A largely built human, wearing a wheel-shaped weapon on the back, a magical girl who was rolling a small wand around on her palm, and a demon with four eyes and arms, a shamshir at the hip, and the hilt of a greatsword peeking out at the shoulder, stood behind Adolianne. All of them wore masks just like her.

They were leaders of **【Assembly of the Stars】**. Despite them being allies, Paulsen felt an abnormal pressure from those leaders.

"...Don't mention it. We just moved in accordance with Vice-guildmaster Mel's instructions."

"..."

Paulsen replied, bowing his head in a humble manner. Angie silently imitated him.

"Mother, Adolianne-sama, it looks like Dignified Heaven's Shrine has completely fallen into the hands of the enemy. As proof of that, all contact has ceased from the guards inside the building and down in the basement." Mirai reported to everyone after listening to the whisper of a subordinate.

While nodding at her words, the elderly Kazane said, "Come to think of it, the words 『The Lancer of Chaos that walks the Path of an Inexplicable Bloodbath』 might be about today."

"True. At first I felt slightly uneasy when I heard that he was someone your powers didn't work on, Kazane, but he's a surprising integer man. A special man I want to call my friend for eternity from now on." Adolianne raised the volume of her voice, which carried a peculiar echo, informing not only Kazane, but also the two leaders of Remains of the Moon.

Paulsen tried to deduct the meaning behind her words... While pinching the tip of his curly mustache with his fingers, and repeatedly stretching it to the side, the look in his eyes sharpened.

"This time the religious organization suffered heavy losses, but we obtained a personal connection with Shuuya-san. That alone is clearly more of a benefit than all the losses added together." Adolianne stated.

Kazane and Mirai nodded.

"Yes, my powers don't work on Spearmaster Shuuya Kagari. The future developments are full of insecurities, but...in a different meaning, I think we can hold big anticipations towards the future of the **【Blood Star Sea Moon Alliance】**."

"I will have you, Kazane and young Mirai, put in great efforts into this as well."

"Please leave it to us."

"Yes, we don't have any of the secret medicine anymore, but please allow me to do my very best to recreate the medicine's effect."

'If possible, with Shuuya-san...' Mirai's cheeks turned beet red. She wanted to form a private connection with Shuuya.

"Adolianne-sama, what are we going to do about the matter with Keera Ho'Seray?"

"...Unnatural fundraising and incomprehensible actions, Keera Ho'Seray who gave up on her position as chief of the Asura Religious Organization's eastern department, and retired, huh? Though I didn't expect that she was an ambitious person, aiming for Arcadia."

"Yes, she seems to also be connected to Collector..." Mirai added.

"The reason for the money flow seems to be related to that. Also, I'm bothered about the motive of Keera becoming hostile to us, but...her sphere of action is regionally limited to the east, and there's a huge number of dark organizations striving behind the scenes. Just like the west, darkness is deeply nesting in the east in various ways...right? Don't pursue her pointlessly. It's fine to keep it at a background check."

"As you wish."

"Anyway, we suffered collateral damage, but we will pull out, leaving the rest to Remains of the Moon without intervening in the profitless battle carried out in the inn. Lesha —— have you prepared the exploration route to the southern underground ruin said to hold the ark and the plate?" Adolianne addressed the small woman behind her.

The two eyes peeking out through the two holes in her golden mask were stabbing.

"Yep. I've set up a contract with a medium-sized company famous for its eel sales."

"Very well. As previously arranged, we'll go back to the Empire through the south."

"Sure. Time to go home, to go home~ I'll slowly enjoy Margaret's eel while looking forward to the conditions of the items and slaves we bought."

"Fufu, Lesha, you sure like that eel. Okay then, I leave the work over here to you, Kazane."

"Okay, Adolianne-sama."

"Paulsen-san, Angie-san, thanks for your protection up to here. Please give Shuuya-san my regards."

Adolianne and the members of her guild left the inn's vicinity at a light pace. Paulsen and Angie shifted their eyes towards Kazane and Mirai as if to silently apply pressure on them.

"Mother, we have a meeting with the Collendon Slave Company tomorrow morning. Let's leave this place to Remains of the Moon, and go back to the office."

"You're right. Paulsen-san, Angie-san, we're leaving as well."

"Understood."

Since the members of Remains of the Moon have secured the perimeter around Dignified Heaven's Shrine, the members of Assembly of the Stars and the Asura Religious Organization could safely evacuate the area. Even during their conversation just now, Kazun and Zeeta were searching for personnel of the Shadow Wing Brigade.

Meanwhile, some members of another dark guild had gathered as if having their attention drawn by the battle in Dignified Heaven's Shrine. They were part of **【Shafa's Lightning】**, one of the Eight Lights guilds.

The accessory of a man, wearing a pointy hat and a black suit, squirmed as it laid on his chest. This accessory had also reacted during the meeting of the Eight Lights by emitting a crimson light. Next to the man stood a trim woman who had dressed herself in an A-line skirt with a cross hanging from the necklace at her chest. Furthermore, a lamia with a big belly was present as well while holding a cross-shaped metal with a snake face imprint in both hands.

The man spoke up to his comrades, "This place is full of demons."

"It's a labyrinth city with a world similar to that of the fifth floor. Various powers are conflicting with each other here. It's understandable for many of those affiliated with evil to linger around. Besides, the destruction of the former templars' dark guild might have had some influence as well. Come to think of it, the Eight Lights Adolianne and Shuuya Kagari also triggered a response, didn't they?"

The woman extended her arm, draped in a simple, long sleeve, pointing in the same direction as the magic tool's response.

"Especially the spearmaster is even now triggering a very unnatural response, just like he did at the meeting place."

"But, acting like the Holy Church, and judging him to be a demon based on only that much is, well... Gyulbun, you don't plan to chase too far either, right?"

"It's as you say. You saw the swordsmanship of that tanned man, didn't you? Just fighting him will cause losses. I have no intention to intervene in the battle either."

The members of **【Shafa's Lightning】** nodded at each other, looking up to the top of the collapsing inn.

"...Okay, guys, time to pull out. We've also got an audience scheduled with Priest Delian-sama in the Shafa Temple. On that occasion, I'll maybe have the opportunity to have a little chat with my adorable battle priestess Ivanka-sama, too."

"Okay~. The girl you fell in love with, huh?"

"Are we going to ask the people of the temple to provide us with guards for the transport of the goods again?"

Gyulbun and the others walked off in the direction of the Religious District. Immediately after they left, the moonlight intensified as if to illuminate Dignified Heaven's Shrine. The two moon gods Uraniry and Uryo might also be watching the battle down there.



"Is that you, Hankay?"

Hearing my question, Hankay runs up to me. Viine, Yui, and Helme are apparently wary of the onion-headed dwarf. Viine activates <Rising Silver Butterflies>, a derivation of her Extra Skill. Helme widely deploys a water membrane, enveloping the vicinity around the stairs. And Yui points her katana at Hankay.

I lift a hand, telling them that he's an acquaintance.

"That's right! It's me! Hankay! Long time no see, Shuuya."

"I'm happy to see that you're doing fine."

Seeing him from nearby, it's very obvious that he's Hankay. His peculiar facial features and his outward appearance haven't changed since the time we bid farewell from each other.

"But, why are you here?"

"I came here to talk with Lezalaysa of Bloody Long Ears."

"What!? You were acquainted with the ancient elves, Shuuya?"

"Which reminds me, you hate elves, don't you Hankay?"

"Yeah..." Hesitation creeps into Hankay's eyes.

Just at that moment, there's a change in the expressions of the Bloody Long Ears and Shadow Wing Brigade members. The fact that us new arrivals and Hankay are acquaintances seems to be unexpected for both sides. Maybe they believe this to be a choice between mutually exclusive alternatives. The battles gradually die down.

Even the jet-black beast, which has been chasing the Bloody Long Ears members around, spreads its wings, flapping, and stops moving. Then it turns its big, hawk-like head in our direction, fixing its two large eyes on Rollodeen, who has the same color as itself in her dignified black panther form.

Rollodeen also looks up to the beast with her red eyes. That black beast...is a chimera, but it looks strangely cool.

On the other hand, the battle between Lezalaysa and Galroh continues. It seems like they have noticed our presence, but both are fully concentrating on the opponent in front of their eyes.

Still, that sword...is it alive? Lezalaysa's weapon is quite weird. Its blade is densely crowded with sharp fangs. A peculiar magic sword similar to a living being.

Galroh holds a sword with a broad blade and a cross-shaped hilt. It's a type of claymore, but hollow, horizontal stripes, looking like railway tracks, are visible on the sword's surface. Small dark flames surge out from those depressions like steam.

I'm kinda curious about those flames, but...for now there's another place that interests me even more. It's the marks on both arms of Galroh. The marks have been carved into the skin of Galroh's arms, which have their sleeves rolled up to the elbow. While radially deploying mana of an abnormal quality, those marks seem to be connected to the sword Galroh is claspings in both hands.

Both, Galroh and Lezalaysa, are wielding abnormal weapons.

Lezalaysa says, "You're a pain, Shadow Wing. Are you guys the pawns of some councilor?"

"Who cares about the councilors. We simply received money for an assassination."

"Money, you say? You've targeted the inn where I, no, the Eight Lights are staying for such a silly reason?"

Galroh's black eyes become as sharp as blades due to Lezalaysa's question which teems with sneer.

"Look who's talking...shouldn't it have been you who aimed for my life, trying to steal the dark flames of the Sacred Treasure Rolga?"

"...Who knows?"

Lezalaysa glances at me. Since one of her eyebrows has moved faintly, it might be a topic she doesn't want **【Remains of the Moon】** to hear about.

"That's not all. The resources in the Azel Boundary, the network of political power in Senapua, the connection to Oseberia's annoying female fox who's picked a fight with us over mining rights, and the great number of missing prostitutes in Tandar's pleasure quarter; all of these are your work. There's also your imprisonment of arena staff, and the turf wars in the gambling district and trade facilities."

"Prostitutes? Gambling district? I don't know what you're talking about."

"What a barefaced lie. Alford saw your meeting with **【Owl's Fangs】** and **【Nose of the Large Bird】**."

They've got a person with such an ability? Being able to take a peek at situations taking place in the far distance... Isn't that like possessing your own, private spy satellite? It's quite handy for that to be possible even without a military communication monitoring facility like Echelon.

Well, Echelon is possible because of the existence of cellphones. Even in the Japan I know, major telecommunication carriers monitor their customer's communication while cooperating with the police, prosecutors, or other enterprises.

"Oh my, is that so? However, the situation always keeps changing——" After lovingly handling her magic sword by caressing it gently with her free hand, "I think it's common sense that something like a pre-established harmony goes up in smoke in the underworld——"

While cladding her large body in silver mana, she raises her voice towards the end of her reply, launching a preemptive attack against Galroh, who has readied his sword by tightly grasping the cross-shaped hilt.

After Lezalaysa shortens the distance to Galroh, she swings her sword at the top of Galroh's left shoulder as if to deliver the finishing blow. She slashes down towards his chest, and then unleashes a lower sweep, trying to cut Galroh's legs while lowering her body slightly to the side.

Galroh opposes her with sword style movements after cladding himself in the Magic Combat Style. As if drawing an arc from below to above with his body, he splendidly wields his magic sword, using the joints at his wrists as axis. Just when I thought that he'd be devoured, torn and turned into splatter by the shark-fanged sword, he exchanges several blows with Lezalaysa's sword.

The metallic sounds as the living shark fang sword and the claymore bite at each other are very unique. Each time the swords meet, mana waves you don't see often are released as sparks. As the mana ripples spread many times into the air, they leave faint trails in their wake.

The blue-eyed Lezalaysa, guildmaster of Bloody Long Ears, and the black-eyed Galroh, guildmaster of the Shadow Wing Brigade; both repeatedly exchange highly sophisticated combinations of offense and defenses while skillfully handling their bodies and swords. Naturally, the members of either guild don't even attempt to join the one-on-one of their leaders. It's a beautiful duel exhibiting the struggle of true strengths for supremacy.

In the meantime, the elf, who has been suffering in pain on the ground after receiving Hankay's shoulder blow to his abdomen, returns to his guild members, who have started to adopt a wait-and-see approach, by rolling across the floor.

The sight of Hankay and me having a chat has definitely affected the battle on the roof. However, is Hankay a member of the Shadow Wing Brigade, seeing how he's been fighting against Bloody Long Ears? For starters, I'll try to negotiate with him since I don't really want to fight Hankay.

"...Hankay, I'm the representative of **【Remains of the Moon】**, and **【Remains of the Moon】** has formed an alliance with **【Bloody Long Ears】**. On top of that, we've also formed an alliance with **【Assembly of the Stars】** which is affiliated to the **【Asura Religious Organization】**. That makes the Shadow Wing Brigade our enemy."

"..." Hankay stays silent while faintly changing his expression by scrunching up his eyebrows as if

carefully brooding over my words.

Looking at Rollodeen and me...he's troubled? He shakes his onion head.

Pointing his face upwards as if having made up his mind, "...Shuuya, please withdraw."

"That's impossible. With the battle against the dark-skinned guy on the second floor, we've killed a member of the Shadow Wing Brigade——"

At that moment, lightning heads my way. However, the water membrane and silver butterflies deployed in front of me reflect the sparkling lightning, scattering it. The effect of Helme's magic water membrane, and Viine's Extra Skill derivation is tremendous.

Butterflies fly through the air, having their glittering increased as they are basked in the light of the moons, as if being powered up.

"——Master, please leave this to me." Viine says with a smile.

She's a truly reliable woman. The silver butterfly carved onto her cheek stands out all the more thanks to the silver mask being placed above her beautiful silver hair. It might also be an effect of her having used her Extra Skill. Her bluish-white hand emits a dazzling silver light.

Moreover, I feel like the huge number of silver butterflies dancing through the air keeps growing. I guess it's a power she has gained as <Head Servant Leader> of a Light Demon Lucival. It's resulted in her having become powerful, huh?

"Turning the lightning magician, who unnaturally unites lightning spirits, into His Excellency's subordinate...looks impossible."

"...Is it an effect of the Demonic Eyes?"

Helme and Viine whisper amongst each other while looking at the lightning woman.

"...Thousand Lightning was blocked once again. Judging from the water membrane and the strange butterflies blocking the lightning...and your relaxed attitude, it looks like you're speaking the truth about having killed Sein of the Peerless Sword. Also, onionhead! At this point, you don't really have the spare time to go with a "sink or swim" approach, you know?" The lightning woman barks while glaring at Hankay as lightning surges out of her fingertips.

"For the dwarven mercenary, who's called Resurrection and Mad Dog and supposedly harbors a deep hate towards elves, to betray us this easily——" Galroh mutters.

"——Betrayal? Isn't this rather a betrayal by Remains of the Moon, spearmaster who desires the most ideal solution?" Lezalaysa roars after blocking Galroh's kick with one of her own, taking some distance.

Her expression betrays her anxiety. Seemingly in a mental state similar to Hamlet due to the unexpected ambush, her eyes are dyed with suspicion. It's kinda difficult to describe, but I think you might call it surprisingly womanly.

Well, I suppose it's a fact that I've a sword at hand, though. [efn_note]A reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet[/efn_note]

"Don't misunderstand. No need to worry, Lezalaysa, I won't betray you. ——So, Hankay, what's it gonna be?" I ask while summoning Baldok into my right hand, and shouldering it.

"A violet halberd appeared? Remains of the Moon, a black panther..." The lightning woman mutters after seeing Baldok.

"Lalay, that black-hair over there is your beloved spearmaster. And, he's also the one Noran warned us about. Be careful." Galroh cautions while squaring off against Lezalaysa.

That Noran guy has apparently informed them about me in advance. I don't think that I've got any such acquaintances, though...

"He's that spearmaster? Fufu, I wanted to meet you!"

Meet me? She reveals an innocent, happy face, frolicking around as if having obtained a new toy. As her beautiful fingers move as if slowly tracing my contours, lightning vigorously surges out of her fingertips. The cluster of lightning clashes against the defense of water and butterflies.

Thanks to Helme's and Viine's protections, the fine lightning streaks are reflected diffusely, and vanish completely. I've heard that beams weaken within fog, but maybe the effect here is something similar?

Moreover, even the surface of my Gatrance form is covered by a silver film. My shoulder dragon also looks as if having obtained a silver coating. Viine, Helme, Rollodeen, and Yui are also engulfed by membranes with the same color as the butterflies.

"...That woman is a dark elf?"

"Correct."

"I've heard about them, but it's my first time seeing one. A rare species."

Hearing the words of Hankay, which are full of curiosity, Viine glares at Hankay.

"It looks like you're being accompanied by other unusual, strange folks as well...besides, the big panther over there is the transformation of the black cat from back then?" Hankay has apparently recalled Rollo after looking at Rollodeen.

"Indeed. I've obtained the Light Sake Drop of the Mysterious Trees."

"Ooooh, the one you mentioned before! Wait, that means...no way, you're saying you turned that fairy-tale into reality!? What a hard worker you are...the legendary Light Sake Drop..." Hankay's lips keep trembling all over.

"That's why she's now Divine Beast Rollodeen."

"Shuuya, are you a legendary man surpassing the great Budand clan?"

It sounds like there existed some great people among Hankay's ancestors.

"I'm no legend. I've just kept my promise with Rollo."

"Fuhaha, it's very typical of you to not boast about what a ridiculous story that promise of yours is. You're a mysterious man, no different from back when you saved me."

"Haha, you're right, I'm a weirdo by nature. Though I'll do my best if I feel that there's meaning to life."

"Gahaha!" Infected by my laughter, Hankay laughs too.

I feel like the hatred that filled his eyes has waned a bit.

"...So, Hankay, what's your choice?"

"That's obvious."

"You're going to double-cross us, Mad Dog!?" The steel armor, who's started to fight against the mace-wielding elf again, yells.

Hearing this rebuke, Hankay lowers his face a bit, but...shaking his head, he lifts his head as if having made up his mind.

"...Mad Dog, eh? I definitely hate the ancient elves." After casting an intense glare at the elves, he stares at me with pure eyes, "But, not once did I forget the benefactor who saved me! I, who had been called Rashou [efn_note]Rashou is a Fist of the North Star term. At least I think the author pulled it from there since the Third Rashou over there is called Han[/efn_note] Hankay in the past, have become a wreck with my heart broken by hatred like the light of this broken moon wreckage. That's why I shall pledge on the light of this broken moon — Shuuya, if you're Remains of the Moon, I will obey you, thinking of this as a twist of fate! Are you going to accept the loyalty of Hankay, son of the Langur Kingdom's Budand Clan member Licha, Shuuya?"

Hankay declares as if pouring all his body's heat into his words, and lifts up his two axes above his head. The area around Hankay's eyes is illuminated by the moonlight's reflection of his ax blades. Tears are streaming down his cheeks.

Hankay...it looks like you've chosen your past debt of gratitude over your own feelings, even while it causes you pain.

But, loyalty while wandering from one place to another, huh? I recall the past when I met him for the first time...

This might also be a good opportunity, and opportunity is like a bird - you need to grab it before it flies away. It's not like Hankay has grown wings, but he imitates the words of his ancestors.

"...Got it. I shall accept."

My old and new friend.

"Alright! But, it's impossible for me to get along with elves. That's why I'll leave this place without fighting any further. ...Shuuya, hurry up and finish this battle. We've got a lot of things to catch up on."

Hanka stores his axes on his back with his whole body emitting a faint aura of delight. He passes me, and heads downstairs.

"...For Resurrection and the Spearmaster to have been acquaintances...what a miscalculation."

"No kidding."

Galroh and Lezalaysa comment.