

Chapter 5 - It Seems We're Going to Join up with her

'Just what is the current demon king thinking,' while that question, which lacked an answer, kept swirling through her mind, Emil Rajah calmly folded her arms in a certain room while ignoring the reports coming in one after the other. The scenery visible outside the twin window should depict an extremely beautiful, orderly city according to her memories, but right now black smoke billowed up as the red tongues of flames flickered all over the place, causing the sky to be covered by thick, dark clouds.

For a moment she succumbed to the feeling of having done a bit of injustice to Renya and the others. A while ago, a certain message had reached Emil through a route only known to her. Hearing the news that her parents, whose faces she couldn't quite recall anymore, had been killed at the hands of the demon king had only given her a little shock. However, that shock wasn't about their murder, but rather her once again remembering that she actually had parents to begin with.

Usually demons tended to not put much emphasis on their blood relationships. But topping this off, Emil had even forgotten her parents' faces since she had immediately left home as her parents didn't think overly well of her talent, and devoted herself to her beloved research, doing whatever she wanted.

The Rajah family held a reasonably high status among the demons, and could be described as nobility, if you were to use human terminology. The 'reasonably' seemed to only be Emil's impression, though. The people around them looked at the Rajah family with eyes full of respect and reverence as if they were gods. The head of the family seemed to believe that Emil's exceedingly superior talent would lead to a division in the family, seeing as she had been born as a woman albeit being the legitimate successor.

Either way, Emil got heavily shunned by her father, and her mother didn't stop him either. A while after she gave birth to Emil, she blessed Emil's father with a son, and henceforth only cared about her son, completely ignoring Emil in the process.

"If I had been a human, this would have pushed me off the right path into becoming a bandit or robber," Emil had often muttered with a bitter smile. Emil couldn't comprehend the antiquated view of a family's eldest son having to always become the legitimate successor at all, but once she concluded that it couldn't be helped as the patriarch back then held onto such a custom, her next actions were quick and decisive.

Emil immediately left home, set up a base of operation at some suitable place, and immersed herself in research activities that allowed her to make full use of her bountiful talent. It was her way of showcasing that she had no intent to harm the Rajah family by obviously not caring much about worldly affairs. But then again, immersing herself in research was simply Emil's own hobby, completely unrelated to any showcases or whatsoever. Either way, by doing this, Emil managed to gain the reputation of being a hopeless noble daughter who was completely infatuated with her own amusement and had no will to succeed the family.

During her research, as a result of examining various matters while also regarding her own body as just another test subject, Emil realized that her body appeared to possess slightly different elements compared to the other demons. Afterwards, just as she told Renya when they met for the first time,

she began to devote herself to the research of living beings, and dabbled with experiments such as crossbreeding strong life-forms or inserting various elements into life-forms.

It was around that time that she gained the reputation of being "spooky" on top of being a prodigal daughter of a noble family. Emil herself didn't care about one or two adjectives being added to her reputation, though.

Even though she invested a lot of time into research, she couldn't grasp the slightly different element she had discovered in her own body in the end. Well, you could also say that she got caught by Renya before reaching an understanding. But, Emil didn't really mind that either. The lifespan of demons was long, so even if she stayed with Renya until his death, she'd still have a long life left. Thus she believed it'd be alright as long as she somehow managed to understand that element during that time.

At least it was her way of thinking until a little while ago.

"Father and Mother, you had way too nasty characters...if you had only told me, I'd have at least understood you."

Having heard that her parents got killed by the demon king for some reason, Emil had decided to return home while keeping it a secret from Renya and her friends. It wasn't as though she liked her home town in particular. In the first place, the family was supposed to be succeeded by her little brother whose name she didn't even remember. It was a family matter completely unrelated to her, and she didn't plan to take the succession right as eldest daughter from her brother now after all this time either.

However, although Emil returned home with the faint notion that she should at least witness the settlement of the inheritance, she ended up sighing after seeing a letter addressed to her in the masterless study, understanding that she had to go back to Renya's place. However, she certainly hadn't ever dreamed of getting dragged into a war against the demon army that came to attack her hometown for some unknown reason while she was there.

"Emil-sama! Emil-sama, where are you!?"

Leaving her reverie and returning to reality thanks to the voice calling for her, Emil turned over the hem of her dress, facing in the direction of the person getting closer while yelling.

As for the attire Emil was currently wearing - a beige, high-necked dress - she harbored a deep wish of wanting to ask how it had turned out like this. This dress, which lacked any unnecessary ornaments and was kept rather plain, was one of the things her mother had left behind, but somehow she couldn't quite settle down in it as it was much too different from her usual outfit. She couldn't help but to believe that her usual outfit was far more easier to move in, but since the chamberlain, retainers, and servants would insistently beg her to wear something more wholesome whenever she wandered around in that outfit, Emil yielded and wore her mother's dress instead.

'Isn't it kinda impossible to fight in this?' Emil wondered, but if she were to be told that a noble lady wasn't supposed to fight in the first place, she wouldn't have any way to refute it either.

"What's all the racket about? Did something happen?"

"Emil-sama! I'm overjoyed to have finally found you!"

The one respectfully bowing as soon as he spotted Emil was one of the military officers who had served the Rajah family for a very long time. He wore armor consisting of leather and metal plates, completely focused on practical use, on top of his forged, muscular, dark brown body. He was a great warrior with a sword, which would make any human scream out that it was unwieldable, hanging at his waist. It was obvious at a glance that he possessed quite the strength and ability. But then again, Emil didn't remember his name at all.

For convenience, Emil decided to call him military officer A. Once military officer A lifted his face, he immediately began reporting the essential points.

"The evacuation of the citizens isn't proceeding well. It's close to 30% behind schedule. As might be expected, the battles around the wall aren't advancing in our favor. The situation is dire."

"I've heard those reports earlier. Isn't it way worse at this point in time?"

Emil repeatedly tapped something similar to an Alice band with her finger. That plain, silver head decoration made one believe that it was an Alice band on a first glance, but in reality it was a magic art device for the sake of listening to the reports from soldiers, who were stationed at various places, through remote communication. The conversations she had heard were filled with nothing but advice to evacuate, appeals for reinforcements, warnings about an increase in casualties, and reports about delays in the work - or in short, not a single good thing.

"Even if it's just you, Emil-sama, we'd be delighted if you could escape this place."

"That's what you say, but..." Emil looked outside the window once more.

Smoke and flames rising in the streets surrounding their current location was clear proof that the enemy had broken through the wall at several spots and was in the process of invading the city. The soldiers under the Rajah family seemed to frequently intercept the enemy soldiers, but in the end they were outnumbered. Sooner or later they'd die or become unable to continue fighting and retreat to the castle of the Rajah family.

This caused Emil to reminisce, 'Come to think of it, my home was an excessively grand castle surrounded by a magnificent moat, wasn't it?', but even if they could anticipate its defenses to hold out a while, they wouldn't have any place to run if they got completely fenced in.

"Have you been distributing the medicine to the soldiers at the front line?"

"Yes, milady! Your medicines are very effective, and have been a great help to our soldiers."

The stock of medicines was something she had prepared in Klinge. No matter how Emil looked at it, that city was completely outside any common sense. They used up outrageously expensive, precious goods from left to right as if it was a bad joke, abundant mana was circulated into every crook and cranny of the city, ingredients that were hard to obtain under normal circumstances were easily available, and neither research nor production posed any problems at all. For Emil it was a place close to a dreamland. Pangs of sadness assailed her whenever she thought that she likely wouldn't be able to return there anymore.

"Still, those just buy us some time, right?"

No matter how high her family's social standing or how strong its military power might be, the Rajah family went never beyond being nobility in the demon country. Even if they boasted a relatively strong military force for a single noble family, the number of their soldiers was still finite. In contrast, Emil could see through the window how a carpet of enemy soldiers, extending far into the distance, bustled around outside the wall. Confronted with such numbers that she hesitated to only describe with 'many', Emil could only spit out a sigh.

"You guys sure are all gung-ho about crushing a single noble family out in the province, is what I want to blurt at them, but when standing on the defender's side, a high motivation doesn't really matter as long as the outcome remains the same, heh."

"We won't let them. Absolutely not, even if they're following His Majesty's will." The officer fervently objected to Emil's comment who sought his approval while smiling powerlessly.

For just an instant surprise dyed Emil's face due to the difference in their views, but then she shrugged her shoulders as if seeing no point in trying to persuade him otherwise.

"Our troops number a few hundred at most. There are many residents, but even if we were to recruit them as volunteer soldiers, it's not said that we'd reach a thousand, and that still wouldn't address the issue of our lacking equipment. On the other hand, the demon army has good gear, their soldiers are powerful, and they field several times our numbers. Under these circumstances I'd really love to call for some kind of help."

'If we were at least at my base', Emil ended up wishing. 'In that place sleep various creatures I've manufactured during my research. Thus it might have been possible for us to put up a reasonably good fight if I had thrown all of them at the enemy forces.'

However, her base was located in a place far away from the Rajah family's castle. It was extremely regrettable, but since she didn't plan to return to her parents' home after having left home, she had never set up any paths between the two locations to activate a transfer gate or some such.

"How are things going for my brother?"

"He's taking command at the head of our forces. He mentioned that he wouldn't be able to silently accept his death until he knew about the aim of this attack by His Majesty."

Emil pondered about her brother, the Rajah family's successor, whose face she couldn't quite remember, let alone his name. She felt like he had drawn a very short stick under these circumstances where not only his parents got killed but his territory got suddenly attacked by the demon king as well.

'Unlucky folks exist anywhere, but he's trying to struggle against his fate in his very own way,' Emil assessed.

"At the same time, he has ordered us to make sure that you would definitely be allowed to get away, even if by yourself."

Emil stared in wonder as if having heard something unbelievable. Just like she couldn't recall the name and face of her brother, she had expected that her brother wouldn't give much of a thought about her either.

"Why just me? I'm a misfit demon who indulged in her own hobbies, just to get all chummy with humans afterwards, you know?"

"Even so."

Not knowing what she should say to the officer who said this as assertively as if he was talking about a crucial matter, Emil turned her look back outside the window.

'If I could run away just because I've been told so, I probably wouldn't be here by now,' Emil thought. 'In the past I'd have quickly escaped, letting the people here deal with their own issues, but somehow it looks like my thinking got slightly influenced by the humans after having stayed in a human country for a good while.'

And then the face of Renya, who had created the opportunity for her to change in this way, crossed her mind. While still looking outside, she opened the window slightly, and muttered so quietly that the officer wouldn't hear despite standing close to her, "It's all because of you, you know Renya...?"

"I don't know what I did, but I guess I'm sorry?"

A voice that Emil shouldn't be able to hear in this place. Believing for an instant that she might have heard an auditory hallucination, Emil lifted her face, and of all things, the owner of the voice clung upside-down to the wall outside her room while peering inside through the gap Emil had created by absentmindedly opening the window just now.

"...HAAH!?"

"Yo, Emil. Long time no see. You know, if you wear an attire like that, you totally look like some princess." Renya greeted her with a dexterous wave of his hand while remaining stuck to the wall upside-down like a lizard for some completely incomprehensible reason.

Perceiving a dragon circling in the sky above the castle with small figures on its back, Emil somehow managed to grasp what was going on in front of her, and yet she froze in place with her mouth gaping, feeling a dire wish to ask someone just how the hell things turned out like this.

