

Chapter 7 - 『Twilight of Dawn』

"So we ended up in the same party after all, huh?"

"Please take care of me again, Bruno."

"Everyoneee—— I found us a new rookie!"

Today marks the restart of my life as an adventurer. As result of me being allowed to join 『Twilight of Dawn』, the party led by Candy-dono, I'm meeting with the other members besides Bruno today.

The location for the meeting is a deserted restaurant in a corner of the slums. I hear it also serves as a bar for adventurers in the evening. After the rush hour at lunch time calmed down, only the old owner lady and us were left in the restaurant. It'd be no exaggeration to state that we've got the place all for ourselves.



"Let's have some introductions, okay? I'm the leader, and the greatsword on my back is my favorite weapon. The old guy over there is..." (format: pink)

"Who's an old guy!?! I'm still 32 years old, damn it!" (format: beige)

"Doesn't that plentifully qualify you as an old guy? He's skilled at handling knives and bows. He can also lay traps. So, in short, he's a Jack of all trades and master of none..."

"Who's a Jack of all trades and master of none!?"

"...with the name Boltor."

"Candy, you're also going to be an old guy in a few more years, just remember that!"

"I am an eternally young girl."

"Bullshit!"

The medium-built, rather inconspicuous man seems to be a fairly long standing member in this party. It's obvious from how he and Candy-dono banter around with each other.

"The quiet guy over there is called Dalton."

"..."

I think his age is in the mid twenties? He's a considerably broad man, but because of his muscularity, he doesn't give one the impression of being fat. He appears to be a taciturn person as he only nods in greeting after Candy-dono's introduction, and immediately goes back to tending his battle ax.

"In other words, with Bruno-chan and Ron-chan, Twilight of Dawn forms a team of five people."

"Is that so?"

Twilight of Dawn is a quite famous party, and Bruno only entered a little while ago. And yet, the numbers seem to be way low...

"Hey big lad, you consider it strange for our party to be smaller than you had imagined?"

"No...not in the least."

It'd definitely be rude to say such things after they went out of their way to allow me into their party.

"Don't mind it. Twilight of Dawn is such a party to begin with."

Boltor-dono explains to me the history of how Twilight of Dawn came to be.

"Twilight of Dawn is a 『party everyone is going to graduate from someday』. Let me tell you just in

case, but this ain't just about retiring as an adventurer. In a way, it's about going independent, I'd say."

According to Boltor-dono, Twilight of Dawn seems to be a party with a history of more than a hundred years.

"First, it's got a leader who's the core and will remain in the party until retirement. Currently Candy is holding that position after getting nominated as successor by the previous leader. If you're appointed as leader once, you lead the party until you die or retire. I'm the sub-leader. I'm much longer in this party than Candy, but I'm not quite suited to be the party's leader, and at this point I don't plan to go to another party anymore either. That's why I've stayed here while being treated as a sub-leader. Dalton has also been around for quite a long time, but this guy's staying here cause he likes this party. He's no sub-leader of this party, but he's been taking care of the rookies. Albeit, he's kinda tacit."

The Twilight of Dawn is a kind of adventurer cultivation party. The leader and two or three sub-leaders are fixed, the rest gets filled up with the necessary number of rookies. The fact of rookies leaving the party to go solo, join other parties, or form their own party after having grown as adventurer is welcomed in the party as 『The chick has grown up enough to take flight』. It looks like Twilight of Dawn is such a party.

"It's a party of awfully good-natured people."

"You're right. But, this party has worked like this for more than a hundred years now. If you dislike it, you're free to scoot. Big lad, Bruno, you guys will reach a crossroad in life after having been part of this party for several years and familiarized yourself with being adventurers."

I see, once you become full-fledged as an adventurer, it'll be your own decision whether you stay with Twilight of Dawn or go elsewhere. The same applies to Bruno and me as well.

"Big lad, you've got all those troubles with your previous party, and that's why you seem to feel a debt of gratitude towards Candy for taking you in, but it's one of our party's duties to save promising but unlucky rookies like you."

"That's amazing!"

The world of adventurers is a place where ability counts and where everyone is responsible for themselves. And yet there's at least one party which accepts rookies and actively teaches them how to get around as adventurers. I didn't know that. This world sure is a big place.

"Having said that, we need to make a living as well, so we basically only call out to promising rookies. We mostly refuse people who want to join our party, too. We only deal with rookies who seem to have the potential to grow into proper adventurers. We don't do charity work like the church."

Still, with this they can prevent at least a few talented adventurers from dying or retiring after getting heavily injured due to lacking experience. The founder of Twilight of Dawn was a magnificent man who kept the benefit of the entire occupation of adventurer in sight. Of course this also applies to Candy-dono, who's been designated as its leader.

"There's some truth to what you're thinking, big lad, but in Candy's case, he's way too harsh on the looks of rookies when scouting."

"Harsh?"

"This piece of shit scouts nothing but male adventurers who suit his own tastes, damn it! Ever since this guy became the party leader, not a single woman has entered our party. It's all machos, machos...bloody hell!"

"Isn't that fine? When looking at a type like Bruno-chan or Ron-chan, I equally consider them as nice. Both of them are talented as magicians, and nurturing that is my duty as leader of Twilight of Dawn."

"And also to appease your own desires, aight?"

Appease his desires...due to Boltor-dono's comment, Bruno and I put ourselves on guard.

"I won't do anything since I hate pushy men. Of course it's a different matter if you guys desire me. You see, I'm a beautiful maiden dreaming of a love that somehow doesn't want to come true."

"" ... ""

It looks like Candy-dono's tastes are biased, but I managed to safely get into Twilight of Dawn for the time being.

* * *

"I'm going!"

After some twists and turns I entered Twilight of Dawn. Candy-dono, the leader, usually acts like a lovely girl, but during work he's really strict.

No matter how much the party has the rearing of promising rookies as its goal, the leader and sub-leaders must guarantee a substantial income for the party. Because of that, we've started to hunt in a domain near the capital with quite a few monsters the next day.

I hear Bruno has been going at this for the entire last month. It's fairly hard training, telling us to learn how actual combat works. But now I understand why they won't let unskilled rookies into their party: they'd die right away.

As I'm drawing close to a monster with mana charging my fists, Candy-dono hurls a cautioning my way from behind.

"Ron-chan, you're not fighting here as a solo adventurer. Keep your back in sight. Are you also keeping the line of fire axis for Bruno-chan's magic in mind?"

"OH!

Winning in the one vs. ten battle the other day has gone to my head! Today we're fighting monsters with five people. Moreover, Bruno is in charge of firing magic from a distance, unlike me. If I charge in without thinking, I'll just get into Bruno's way.

"Sorry, Bruno."

"Ron-chan, currently you're a vanguard. You need to also think of how to cooperate with me and Dalton. If monsters break through our line, not only Bruno-chan, but even Boltor, who's using his archery as rear guard, will fall into a predicament."

"Roger!"

Candy-dono's teaching is strict, and everything he says is to the point. Just as might be expected of a famous adventurer who holds the nickname of Bloody Candy.

Even afterwards, we continue the subjugation as a training in real combat that wouldn't lose out to any mid-tier party, and eventually we reach the point of taking a break while at the same time eating lunch.

"I'm exhausted."

"I've finally become somewhat used to it, I think."

The instant Bruno and I reach the rest place after leaving the monster domain, we flop down on the spot.

"You okay? Drink this here."

With combat being over, Candy-dono has reverted to his usual self. He passes some chilled fruit juice diluted with water to Bruno and me. He shows a friendliness as you wouldn't expect from the leader of a famous adventurer party.

"Today's lunch has been prepared by me."

Candy-dono has prepared bento for everyone. Moreover, hand-made ones. For me, who can't cook at all, it's nothing but surprising.

"Do you prepare these every day?"

"No, even I'd be hard pressed to do this every day. I've put in some effort today since it's your first day, Ron-chan. Usually we order our food at yesterday's restaurant."

"The bento of 『Mistletoe of Night』 are cheap and delicious."

"No matter how much a girl I might be, I still lose to Ireisa-san's years of experience." Candy-dono replies to Bruno.

So the name of the old woman in yesterday's run-down...no, deeply historical restaurant + bar is Ireisa-san, huh?

"For this reason, dig in."

""""""Good appetite!""""""

All of us eat Candy-dono's special bento, and I must say, it's very delicious. It's in no way inferior to the dishes prepared by the exclusive cooks of my family.

"It's enviable how you excel as an adventurer and cook."

"True, Candy-san is also very skilled at sewing." Bruno adds as he got his torn clothes fixed in the blink of an eye some time ago.

"This guy sure is skillful. He's better at housework and such than women."

"Oh my, how rude of you, Boltor. I'm a maiden, you know? And as a girl I wouldn't cut any corners with things like these. After all, I also dream of becoming a bride one fine day."

"""""" ... """"""

He's a superb adventurer despite not being a magician, he's got good leadership abilities, he can handle many things skilfully, and he has an excellent character, but I can't help feeling that a marriage is next to impossible for him.

But, as might be expected, even Boltor-dono, who knows him for a long time now, doesn't point this out. All of us start to silently eat lunch.

"This is where we stop for today."

It's been around one month since I've entered Twilight of Dawn. I've also finally reached a point where the number of Candy-dono's cautionings during combat has significantly decreased as I've learned the difference between fighting myself and fighting in a group.

My mana has been properly increasing every day, albeit slowly. However, since my aggregate amount of mana remains low, there's been no change in our tactics. In regards to this matter, Candy-dono told me, 『I'm no expert when it comes to magic, but even if it's just little-by-little, don't forget to train your magic every day without lowering the amount of training out of annoyance as long as it still grows. From my experience, plain, daily efforts very often bring about results sooner or later』.

Just as told, I never miss doing my daily training routine.

One evening, when I got accustomed to this kind of lifestyle, I used the opportunity to have the next day off after finishing that day's work to do something I had to do.

"You're moving out?"

"Yes, I do."

Ever since my days at the prep school, I've been living in the attic of a small house, but it looks like Mrs. Walkt, who's been recently showing signs of senility, is going to sell her small home and move in with her son. For this reason, I had to move out within a month.

So far it hasn't been necessary to hurry with it, but from now on I must look for a new place to stay.

"I see. So, Klimt, what kind of property are you looking for?"

"Anything is fine as long as I can sleep in there!"

"That's definitely quite the modest condition."

"I still have my own room back at my parent's home."

I don't know when, but I'll have to go back home at some point anyway. The majority of my personal belongings are in that room. Since it's okay with me to put the necessary stuff around my bed, I don't need such a big room.

"What about cooking?"

"I'm no good at it anyway, so I'll just eat out."

There's no need for me to expressly spend time on my awkward cooking skills since I can enjoy eating stuff at restaurants until I go back home.

"What about doing your laundry or washing your body?"

"I've been doing all the laundry in one swoop on our days off. As for washing my body, I usually boil some water and wipe my body with dishcloths every day."

But then again, I don't have any clothes besides the custom-made robe I wear every day, the spare robe I wear on my holidays, and underwear.

The hot water to wipe my body is simply done by fetching water in a bucket, putting my hands in there and heating it up like that, even if I can't use any emission-based magic. Normally I wet dishcloths with that water and wipe my body. Every once in a while, I'll also go to a public bathhouse. This has the disadvantage of being slightly expensive in regards to the bath fees, but being able to visit a bathhouse, even if it's just occasionally, might be proof of me doing well for myself after leaving home.

"And that's why!"

"I had become doubtful whether you're truly a man of the Earl Armstrong House, Klimt... Anyway, I'll also look for a room with you."

"Bruno, you too?"

"I've become an adult, and my big brother is going to inherit the family business. It'd be better for me to leave my parent's home. Let's search together."

"That's wonderful news!"

And thus Bruno and I decided that we'd look tomorrow for a new place to stay.

* * *

On the next day, Bruno asked an acquaintance of his parents who works as realtor to introduce us to some properties, and thus a young employee has come to greet us as the one in charge of us for today.

"Hello, my name is Rinnenheim and I have been serving as senior staff at Ansand Real Estate."

"Hello."

"Nice to meet you."

Not only is it hard to grasp that youth called Rinnenheim, he feels outright shady, but...well, we just need to go elsewhere if he's no good.

"I have been informed about your budget, but I would like to give you a suggestion."

"What is it?"

"As you two seem to only have become adventurers recently, I suspect that you do not have any plans to marry in the next future."

"Correct, unlike my older brother, I don't have a fiancée. I think I'll stay single until I build a bit of a foundation as an adventurer or magician."

"The same applies to me."

Although I won't become the successor, I'll go back home sooner or later. Father or brother might offer me some formal marriage interview, and as someone who selfishly wished to travel the outside world, I must at least take the woman they're going to recommend to me as my first wife. Since I don't think that they'll recommend a strange woman to me, I won't have much of a choice but to accept her.

Even if I've gone outside, I still can't escape the fetters of nobility. However, it's not like I never felt the wish to experience true love at least once. Though, I doubt there's any nobles who haven't wished for that.

"Accordingly, how about renting a house together? It'd be what you call room sharing. Rather than

renting an individual room for each of you, renting a house while pooling your money would be much more economical."

I see. I guess that would mean we can rent a house with the rent of both of us put together.

"It'd also be easier to invite friends over."

"The suggestion isn't bad. What do you think, Klimt?"

"I'm okay with that."

I don't have any particular problem with a small room either, but there's no inconvenience for me with it being spacious either.

"That's if we can find such a place, though."

"I would like you to place your trust in this Rinnenheim of Ansand Real Agency."

"Haa..."

"It depends on the properties you're going to show us."

I can't quite explain why, but somehow I feel a fishy shadow from this guy.

"Of course. I shall introduce you to the properties in all sincerity. Shall we go then?"

Bruno and I start to walk to the area with the properties under Rinnenheim's guidance.

