

Chapter 1 - It seems to be an Escape Through the Air

One might wonder what someone might have felt if they had watched the chain of incidents taking place in this part of the demon country from far away.

A demon army had been swarming towards a mid-sized city. And a wall of wind blocked that army from entering the city in question. This alone could already be labeled as weird. It was very hard to imagine that magic art practitioners, who could span a wind wall big enough to cover a whole city while also powerful enough to stop an army's advance, existed, even if you searched the entire, huge continent. And if such a powerful caster were to exist, any country would set everything in motion to secure that person for themselves.

But, just when the watcher might have thought that the deadlock between the army trying to advance and the wind wall trying to block them from doing so would continue for a while, explosions and huge sword flashes would occur all of a sudden right in the midst of the demon army.

And, just as the watcher would turn their eyes towards the soldiers being blown away left and right, countless trees would suddenly cover the entire city, and as soon as the dragon, which flew into the city, stopped moving about, the entire city would start to glow in a bright white.

Contrary to the watcher's belief that an earthquake might be going on since the ground was vibrating faintly, the whole city would begin to emit a red light and the ground's vibrations would become more intense.

And at last, the watcher would observe the absurd spectacle of the city starting to lift off, separating itself from the ground, albeit slowly.

"It's so much a parade of paranormal phenomena that anyone would feel like swooning, I'm sure."

Emil and Shion were in the middle of retreating while mowing down the soldiers crowding them. They had managed to significantly close their distance to the enemy's headquarter, but just when they got all psyched about facing the enemy's commander anytime soon, they noticed how the city behind them started to float up while shedding a red light. Apparently out of time, they turned around 180° in a hurry, and started to fight their way back towards the city.

"If we're left behind, we'll be truly forced to walk back home, huh?"

"That's not funny in the least!"

Shion's face was filled with a considerable amount of tension when compared to Emil who looked like she was on some kind of picnic. After all, they'd be left stranded in the midst of the enemy army, if they were to miss the city's take-off. Well, it wasn't as though both would be completely helpless if that happened, but it wasn't a situation they wanted to experience by choice either.

However, apparently having grasped their intent as they started to run away after turning around, the layers of soldiers trying to block Shion and Emil's retreat accordingly thickened, forcing them to slow down considerably.

"Somehow, I feel like our journey to cross to Miasma Forest together is coming closer by the minute, partner."

"In that case, we're going to sprint all the way until Klinge!"

"...I'd really hate doing that."

Seemingly imagining how the two of them were recklessly running through the wide Miasma Forest, an expression of dejection and aversion crept on Emil's face. Considering it normally, it was next to impossible to get through the huge Miasma Forest while earnestly running all the way, but it was the abnormal part of these two women that made others think they'd somehow manage to achieve it anyway.

"Still, it doesn't look like the enemy intends to let us get away easily."

"Since they'll be able to break us up if they manage to stall us here, the enemy must be serious as well, don't you think?"

Emil could agree with the idea that the demon army would frantically try to stop them here, if they expected possible reinforcements. If one thought about the huge combat asset on the human side with the name Renya, it'd be a very reasonable approach to try lowering the combat power around him as much as possible. If they managed to keep dwindling down Renya's friends one-by-one to isolate Renya at some point, Renya alone should run out of power sooner or later, no matter how outlandish his abilities might be.

Having thought up to this point, Emil asked Shion with little confidence as a doubt had suddenly popped up in her head, "Do you actually believe that Renya might run out of power under some circumstances?"

"No clue! If you have spare time to talk, use it to move your hands, partner!"

Even assuming that everything worked out smoothly, allowing the demons to isolate Renya, Emil still couldn't imagine that Renya would run out of steam or get defeated. Rather than it going beyond her limit of imagination, she rejected that imagination in itself.

Deciding that there would be no point in delving any further on this if she couldn't imagine it, Emil, who had been defeating the enemy soldiers almost unconsciously, changed her mindset and tried to open a path of retreat by defeating the soldiers in earnest, but the walls of soldiers were thick, making it unlikely for the two to be allowed returning to the city easily.

"Is it okay for me to cut them down then!?"

"You're right...I guess there might be no other choice." Emil reluctantly agreed with Shion who was under pressure.

The vibrations assailing the city gained in intensity, and the cracks running across the ground continued to grow in depth and width.



This would bend Emil's own principle for the sake of not missing their ticket out of here, but the situation had developed up to a point where she apparently had no other choice but to fight with the intention to kill and allow Shion to use the blade's sharp edge.

"I'm not all that happy about it, but we cannot afford to end up stuck in this place either."

"If you don't want to do it, leave it to me! I'll open a path out of here!"

"Both of you, cling to the ground so you don't get blown away ~no."

Just when Emil had resolved herself and Shion was about to flip her katana around, they heard a voice from above. Without even time for doubting, Shion stabbed her katana deep into the ground to use it as a brace, and Emil tightly clung to Shion's waist.

At almost the same time, the wind wall lost its shape in an instant, and the wind, which had formed the wall, washed across the battlefield like a raging flood.

"Wai-!? Uwaah! Uwah uwaaah!?"

"Isn't this a bit...too tough!?"

While screaming in panic, Shion tightly gripped the hilt of her katans with both hands while genuflecting. She tried to somehow weather through the wind pressure. Probably because Emil, who was stuck to Shion's waist, didn't weigh much, she could hold on with just the power of her arms. Still, her body was trifled with by the wind like a flag fluttering in a storm.

Seeing how Shion and Emil were in such a state despite having prepared in advance, it was pretty clear that the soldiers of the demon army, who hadn't prepared at all, would be helpless. Being pushed down by the wind pressure, they rolled across the ground unable to resist in any way. Blending with clouds of dirt and other stuff, they were swept away by the wind.

Possessing the eye strength of demons, Emil saw in the far distance how a person in a black dress took on the full brunt of the wind - probably because of her clothes' big surface area - and was blown away even more spectacularly than the other soldiers, causing Emil to rejoice in her mind while sticking her tongue out.

"Wait a sec!? What's this!? What's going on here!?"

"The wind wall was released and turned into a squall...in quite an ingenious way at that." While still looking quite pathetic herself, Emil answered Shion who desperately endured without understanding the circumstances.

You could say that the person, who triggered this situation, had changed the wind direction of the wind wall which Renya had set to blow upwards, but the ability to undo the formula of the spell Renya had cast with his huge mana and to rearrange it into another spell was a feat impossible to achieve even with the skills of a top-notch magician, Emil deducted.

"Who has done something like this!?"

"Well...there's only one person who'd be able to process Renya's magic in such a way, isn't there?"
While answering, Emil looked up to the sky.

Feeling how Emil's gaze shifted upwards and getting drawn in by it, Shion also looked up to the sky, just to find a figure in an apron dress floating down in an extremely relaxed manner in defiance of the wind force around her.

"Frau!?"

"Shion-ane-sama, Emil-ane-sama, I've come to pick you up ~no."

Buoyantly floating down, Frau quietly landed on Emil's back after worrying for a short moment where she should get down.

"Ooohhhh!?" Emil screamed awkwardly due to the unexpected weight pressing down on her back, but Frau didn't seem to care about that at all.

Without knowing what to say about this, Shion removed her left hand from her katana's hilt, grabbed Emil's nape, and pulled her back so that she wouldn't get blown away.

"You two are late ~no. The city is about to fly off ~no!"

"Ah, yeah, sorry, Frau. We did our best, but our strength was lacking."

"Frau came here because she couldn't wait any longer ~no. Anyway, we're going back to the city now ~no."

"Sure. But before that, could you get off Emil's back?"

The surrounding wind had started to lose power, albeit little-by-little. Emil somehow managed to fix her posture, placing her feet on the ground, but since her arms were still slung around Shion's waist, both of them looked as if they were doing a pair performance on the horse as gymnasts. Frau was still on Emil's back, but being asked by Shion, Frau looked down at her feet and pondered about something, but after widening her feet as they trampled down on Emil's back, she dropped down butt-first, shifting to a posture as if straddling Emil.

"Okay ~nano."

"...I'm not sure what you're talking about, but it sure looks like you've no intention to get off from there."

"Partner...we don't have any time for this. Let's just move on like this." Emil said with Frau on her back.

Emil saying something like that as someone who had a deeper and far longer relationship with Frau than Shion meant that it'd likely be impossible to convince Frau to get off Emil at present. Having perceived as much, Shion stood up within the continuously weakening wind with Emil still clinging to her waist, pulled the katana out of the ground, and slowly started to run towards the city while paying attention to not lose Emil.

"Frau, could you please give it a rest with the heels...?"

"Run as quickly as possible ~no. There's no time left ~no."

With Frau acting as if she was spurring on Emil to raise the speed like a rider would urge its horse, Shion sheathed her katana, thinking that it'd increase the speed a bit. While holding onto Emil's arms, Shion attempted to increase her running speed.



Around that time, Renya noticed a change happening to a part of his body while receiving healing through Rona's divine arts as he lay on the plaza with a languid body due to having run out of mana.

Rona apparently noticed that change as well. She looked at Renya fiddling around with that part as if watching something mysterious.

That change was a part of Renya's black hair losing its color and turning into a slightly shiny silver. Having noticed this happening for the first time, Renya thought that his hair might turn gray because of his body weakening from an overuse of mana, but considering it was supposed to be gray hair, it was a bit too glossy. Moreover, since it looked as though it was faintly glittering as well, he looked at Rona to ask for her opinion. As a result, both agreed to call it silver hair.

Renya played around with the part of his bangs which had transformed as if a streak had been added to his hair, but eventually he lowered his hand, apparently having lost interest.

"Is it a side effect from using too much mana?" Going by the lack of confidence in the way Rona asked this, it was plain obvious that she said this even while knowing that her words held no credibility.

"I wouldn't know. There's no corresponding information about this within the draconic magic knowledge."

"Do you feel any abnormalities in your body?"

"It feels sluggish and doesn't want to move, but...it's not to the extent that I'd call it a bad condition."

Even Renya understood the reason for this reaction of his body. It was because the mana, which usually filled Renya's body, had completely run out. Renya's mana, which had dried out to start the magic crest for making the city fly to such an extent that it started to squeeze out some weird power, had slowly begun to recover now that the mana consumption had dropped down to only maintaining the magic crest.

However, with him still spending mana, his mana couldn't quickly recover, and moreover, because he had expended it to the point of hitting rock bottom this time, Renya's body suffered from a worsened physical condition because of mana shortage.

"It's not to the degree that I can't move if I force it, and it's not a situation where I can take a nap either. I'll try asking Kilie about my hair once we get back to Klinge. She's a knowledgeable peddler, and thus might have encountered similar cases."

"Kilie...-san?"

Apparently having pondered and guessed various things based on her position as clergy, and furthermore saintess, Rona looked as if she wanted to say something, but Renya slowly sat up on the stone paving, turned towards Rona, and placed his index finger in front of his lips.

"I don't know what you're thinking, but it's better to not voice it out. Not to mention when it comes to a topic the person herself doesn't want to be touched upon."

"Haah...is that how it is?"

"I think she'll tell you if she wants to do so. As for me, I don't give a damn whether a halo floats about her head or wings grow out of her back. Rather than that..." Renya stood up slowly.

Thanks to Rona's healing and his own regenerative powers, his condition had drastically improved, although he still felt slightly giddy. But at least he could stand on his own without requiring any help.

"Pursuers might come after us and they might have repaired the barrier we destroyed when entering this country. It should be fine as long as it floats, but we need to make sure to not destroy anything when landing. In the first place, it's questionable where we should land this thing. There's many things to do and consider, so it's not the time to take a rest."

Given that Renya had received a report from Frau through their telepathy that she had succeeded in picking up Emil and Shion, he didn't need to worry about that side, but he still had a lot of explanations to the citizens, soldiers, and Jade ahead of him, and discuss with the others what to do from now on. But, at present, all of this had the precondition of them safely leaving the sphere of the demons' influence.

"Now then, I wonder whether they're going to let us leave just like this."

While thinking that he'd launch another attack if he were one of the pursuers, Renya took the worried Rona with him and started to walk towards the place where he suspected Jade to be in order to report the current situation and discuss the future with him as the highest authority in this city.

