

### **Chapter 3 - It seems we won't be allowed to leave that easily**

Currently you could watch a scenery far apart from any common sense: a city flying above a carpet of trees stretching out beyond the horizon. And as if to top off the absurdity, the land below was pulsating with huge tentacles extending upwards, seemingly trying to pierce the sky.

Each and every single of those tentacles had a length and width you could label as ridiculous, but as if to thoroughly and utterly finish off the last traces of common sense, it wasn't just a few of those monstrosities, but a swarm. That doesn't mean all of them were huge, but the tentacles kept growing out as though they were trying to form a forest while pushing the trees of the actual forest aside without a care. Before long, a fairly extensive range of the city's surface was buried in nothing but wriggling tentacles.

Watching that abnormality, Croire flatly commented, "Disgusting."

"Yep, my words."

Even though he knew the identity behind those tentacles, Renya agreed with Croire that the sight of countless tentacles squirming and wriggling below them could only be described as revolting. When he saw them underwater, they didn't really irk him as he registered them as huge octopus tentacles, and the tentacles required to form the path between Klinge and the Gordonarl Barony didn't give him much of a shock either since they were only few in number.

But, when it came to seeing such a big flock of tentacles wriggling all together, and on top of that, on land, it went way beyond causing a bad feeling.

"I wonder what's going to happen next."

Croire's question was all too reasonable, but Renya had no answer to it. After all, Renya had no way of knowing what the tentacles were aiming for by manifesting on land in such a staggering amount. Furthermore, the only ones - as far as Renya knew - capable of understanding the will of the tentacles were Kilie, the traveling merchant who could doubtlessly communicate with the katurul, and Frau, whom Renya predicted of being able to pull off something like that.

"Assuming Frau returned to Klinge and brought 'that' back with her, I'd say everything that's going to happen from now on is some kind of measure to get us through the barrier."

"One way or another, the forest will get completely messed up..."

Because they were going to dig a hole to pass underneath the barrier wall to allow the city to escape, the forest's trees would have been blown away together with the soil in the area around the hole, but even under the current circumstances, where the previous plan had apparently been abandoned, the trees would obviously end up smashed and broken after getting brushed aside by the tentacles. For Croire, as an elf, either seemed to trigger feelings of sadness over a large number of trees being lost in the process.

The instant Renya tapped Croire's head to console her, a single red dragon appeared in the flight direction of Jade's city after passing through the swarm of tentacles. The dragon then hovered in a

location visible to Renya's group with a small figure standing straight atop the dragon's head.

"That's Dra-kun and Frau, right?"

"There's no way you'd find anyone else doing something like this," Renya muttered under his breath.

At the end of his line of sight, Frau seemed to stomp several times, causing Dra-kun to shift from hovering to slowly approaching the balcony, where Renya and the others stood, albeit unwillingly.

"Master! Sorry for having made you wait ~nano!"

"Don't worry, it's not like I waited that long, but...what are you up to with all of this?"

The initial plan should have been to dig a trench big enough to allow Jade's city to pass underneath the wall, but even Renya could tell that the current plan had diverted quite a bit when taking the current situation into account.

"Also, where are Shion, Emil, and the Azs?"

"They stayed back in Klinge ~no. They have their own share of work to do ~no. With this, everything is going to be perfectly okay ~nano! Leave everything in Frau's capable hand, master ~nano!"

Their words didn't really mesh with each other. However, Renya thought Frau saying everything was okay ought to mean that they were carrying out some kind of work without any problems for the sake of getting the city through the barrier.

"So it's alright to entrust everything to you?"

"Yes ~no! I will get everything ready right away ~no!"

As soon as Frau audibly hit her own chest once, Dra-kun did a half turn on the spot, showing Renya's group his back while still hovering.

Standing on his head, Frau widely spread her arms, and shouted at the top of her lungs, " Oh great Dreamer Katurul, in the name of mine master, Renya Kunugi, I implore you to show us a path for the sake of all the demons trying to escape the demon king's sphere of influence while under the protection of my master!"

"...Ah, somehow I've got an idea now what's going to happen."

Apparently having heard Frau's shouted plea, the tentacles, which had been wildly and chaotically wriggling so far, stopped moving all at once. Right after having come to a halt for a moment, the tentacles started to move again, but this time in an orderly pattern. The swarm of tentacles neatly lined up, and before long, slowly parted, beginning to create a huge passage by ripping the ground apart.

"Fu fu fu! You might call me Prophet Frau henceforth ~no!"

"I get the inspiration behind this, more or less, but...that wasn't anything so repulsive, I believe? I can't say for certain as I haven't seen it with my own eyes, though."

The tentacles split the ground, revealing a trench with tentacles forming its walls.

"Of course, the entire vicinity will be filled with nothing but tentacles if we pass through that place, so it's going to be a sight that's going to give anyone a devastatingly heavy, visual impact," Renya grumbled.

"It's wrong to be too demanding ~nano! Once you get used to them, they actually look cute ~nano!"

"I don't really want to get used to them, though."

"I agree with Renya. Or rather, I'm pretty sure that this whole ordeal should definitely have some lasting effects on the demons in the city."



Jade had quickly fainted a while ago, and didn't show any signs of waking anytime soon. Seeing how a demon of Jade's caliber had ended up like this from just sensing the presence of the katurul through the ground, one could say that it was highly likely for several demons to suffer mental damage with the tentacles having appeared above the ground and the prospect of the city advancing through a path created by those very tentacles, but Frau laughed off Croire's concern.

"It's going to be fine, Croire-ane-sama ~nano. As long as they don't pass away from this, I will properly heal them back up afterwards ~no."

"Okay, but I feel like we will see quite a few casualties as well."

"I think that side is going to be no problem ~no. Probably...everyone inside the city has fainted by now ~no. Disposing the feces should be much more of a problem than the mental damage ~no."

Naturally, in response to Frau's statement, Renya and Croire's looks shifted towards the lower half of Jade who lay on the floor. In some cases extreme fear would cause the sphincter to give way, resulting in stuff leaking out that mustn't leak out under normal circumstances.

Fortunately, it looked as though such fate hadn't visited Jade, but the probability for all the demons in the city to share the same stroke of luck was extremely low if you considered it for a moment. Regardless of gender and age, it was predictable that all of them would take a hearty dose of mental damage - for a reason other than the shock caused by the tentacles - after they woke up.

"Demons...were beings feared all over this world, weren't they?"

"...At this point I think we have no choice but to pretend to not have seen anything, no matter what happens."

Neither Renya nor Croire wanted to put into words what exactly they were making the demons leak, nor did they want to think about it, but then again it was hard to imagine that anyone except for the residents of Klinge would actually believe such a story anyway. It was a joke that would only be ridiculed as the blathering of a drunk, but when it came to the actual proof laying around all over the place, things were different.

Renya decided that he wouldn't allow any humans to enter the city after they landed it near Klinge before they didn't clean up the whole mess.

"Master, putting that aside..."

"Hmm?"

"You need to fly the city through the finished path ~no."

Just as Frau said, a huge trench surrounded by tentacles had been deeply carved into the ground. It was a fairly gigantic and spacious trench, but when Renya judged by eye that it had a width where it was unclear whether Jade's city would be able to pass through, he put on a sour face.

"It looks like things will get really hairy if we crash against the walls, doesn't it?"

"It's fine ~no. 'It' possesses a generous broad mind, so 'it' will forgive us for something of that level ~no."

"It had...a mind?"

"Master, I think you will hurt its feelings with that line just now ~no."

Even while they were having such a casual and relaxed conversation, Renya slowly kept lowering the altitude of the entire city.

For the sake of guaranteeing a crossing underneath the barrier, which would likely be put up by the demon king, it was necessary for the entire city to fly below ground level, and flying such a huge mass without hitting or scraping the tentacles that formed the wall required a fairly high level of precision. When they flew at a high altitude, the control was simple because a deviation in the flight direction was no problem, but now that such precision was demanded of Renya, the difficulty of the spell immediately jumped up by several degrees, compelling Renya into naturally lowering the speed of the city.

While the city slowly but steadily lowered its altitude, it reached a point where its entirety was about to completely sink into the tentacle trench, and just when the city was about to reach an altitude below ground level, a part of the tree's leaves suddenly went up in flames alongside an explosion.

"What's going on ~nano!?"

Once Frau looked up above her head, a huge amount of burning leaves and ash - leaves that had already burned down completely - were slowly fluttering down towards her. The leaves, which had grown out so thickly and bulky that they ensnared Dra-kun, had completely blocked some kind of attack, but since they were wood and leaves, it was only logical for them to catch fire if hit by flames. Albeit slowly, a fire continued to spread across the canopy of leaves covering the city.

"I'd say we got attacked...it's probably someone working for the demon king, but the way they attack is problematic."

Even if you were to argue that the trees would block attacks for them to a certain extent, there was still the danger that all trees would burn down if the means of attack was fire. Once that happened, the fire would also spread to the city, but even fire fighting would be impossible since the demons residing in this city were out cold due to the mental shock from the tentacles.

Moreover, it was an established fact that the one being above had an overwhelming advantage in an air battle, and Renya's group had no way to overturn that disadvantage as they were trying to navigate the city to fly beneath ground level.

In addition, this huge mass Renya was making fly at present was originally nothing more than a city, and thus dog fights hadn't been taken into account during its establishment. If it came to anti-aircraft weapons, ballistae had been set up at Jade's castle and at various spots all over the city, but the dense layer of leaves, which was protecting them from the enemy attacks, would likely block any anti-aircraft projectiles from the city as well, and on top of that, there were currently no demons around to man those ballistae.

"I have no means to fight back."

Given that Renya had his hands full with controlling the city's flight, he didn't have any leeway to focus on attacking, regardless of whether he'd have the spare energy to do so or not. If he unwisely started to attack the enemy, he'd fail in his flight control, and it was very likely that the entire city would crash or majorly bump against a wall.

"I guess it's only Frau, Dra-kun, and me who can take care of offense." Croire snarled with a grim expression while looking up to the leaf canopy, which had started to burn furiously after receiving several more attacks, and Dra-kun roared once.

"It looks like he's sensing the presence of evil dragons ~no."

In response to Frau's translation, Croire's expression became even more grim. In the current situation, evil dragons were close to the worst kind of pursuer to face. On top of being able to fly at a speed exceeding the city, just like Dra-kun, they possessed high maneuverability, and their flame breaths had a terrible compatibility with the tree protection of the city.

"It's not just one pursuer either, is it?" Renya asked while looking up to the fires bursting at various spots of the leaf layer.

As might be expected of a leaf layer that supported Dra-kun's body, it was still doing its job, but at this point it was just a matter of time until it'd get destroyed. And with the enemy using fire, it was a foregone conclusion that it'd happen sooner or later.

If one place broke or burned down due to the ravaging flames, the enemy attacks would start to directly hit the city itself, and as no one in the city was capable of moving around, it was very obvious that the city would suffer heavy damage, as suppressing it would be impossible.

"Master, I would like you to fully concentrate on flying the city ~no!" Frau addressed Renya as he was worrying about what to do.

"I would like to request you, Croire-ane-sama, to keep the damage to the city low ~no! If possible, it'd also be good to wake up the demons and get them to help ~no."

"What are you going to do, Frau?"

Elves had a rather bad affinity with fire. Still, there were some trees not burning yet, and since Croire herself also had plenty of energy to spare, it was easy to imagine that she could at least handle some fire extinguishing or defending against enemy attacks without a problem, but with Croire and Frau being the only ones capable of moving around right now, Frau had to take care of intercepting the enemy by herself if Croire were to work on the defense.

Croire believed that this might be a very dangerous approach in a situation where they hadn't yet a full grasp on the number of enemies, but Frau tightly clenched her fists with a smile as if to laugh away Croire's worries.

"Frau and Dra-kun are going to annihilate the enemy ~no!"

"Dra-kun, can I ask you to handle it?" Renya deliberately asked Dra-kun and not Frau.

It was his way of showing consideration for Dra-kun not being Frau's pet, but Liaris' dragon which meant he didn't have to listen to Frau's orders. Going by the power hierarchy, Dra-kun had no room to turn it down, but Renya still believed that it'd be bad to force Dra-kun, who had a proper master, into something over the head of that very master.

Apparently having perceived Renya's view on this, Dra-kun fixedly stared at Renya, and then, after nodding his head once, flapped his wings powerfully one time, rising in a straight line towards the leaf canopy where the fire carpet was gradually expanding.

"Croire, I leave the defense and fire fighting to you."

"Okay, count on me."

"How about waking up Jade? He should be useful for something if you drag him along, don't you think?"

Renya offered that suggestion based on the idea that any help might come in handy under the current circumstances, but Croire apparently understood him in a slightly different way. She kicked Jade's head with a verve as if scolding him that this emergency wasn't the best time to carefreely nap around. It was quite the violent action, but it seemed to unexpectedly work.

Jade immediately sobered up, and started to look around, wondering what was going on. Without giving him the chance to catch a break, Croire grabbed his nape and started to run.

"W-Wait a moment, elf! Just what the heck is going on!?"

"Time is precious, so man up and get a grasp of the situation by yourself!"

Renya believed that to be a rather unreasonable demand, but thinking that it'd be fine as long as it produced results, he decided to leave them to their own devices. Rather than that, Renya currently had something he had to do. Now all alone on the balcony, he folded his arms in front of his chest, pulling a troubled expression.

"I..really hate such delicate work, okay...?"

The work of having to navigate the city through the trench without bumping against anything would result in lots of time and effort for Renya amidst the uproars happening all over the place. And yet, seeing how Frau and Dra-kun were doing their best in the sky and Croire on land, Renya believed that he couldn't afford to not answer their efforts in kind, and thus began to concentrate on controlling the spell formula of Flight.

