

Chapter 361 - Reporting in to Commander-in-Chief Quiche

...It was a long kiss.

By the way, I've already released <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception>.

"Phuuh, I thought that I might run out of air there."

"Sorry."

"...No, I don't really mind since it made me happy." Quiche smiles shyly.

She wraps her arms around me and gently leans in. A very natural hug.

It's through her armor, but...I can feel her warmth. Still, looking closely at the armor she's wearing...I can spot small rips at various spots. Moreover, at some places it's been completely torn off, showing bruises.

Noticing my stare, she chuckles, whispers, "I'm fine," into my ear, and loosens her embrace. Then she pulls back a bit, and glances at Kisara who's bowing next to us.

For an instant uneasiness colors Quiche's face, but after blinking once, she shifts her eyes - those pupils that look like jades - back to me.

I can see myself reflected in her eyes. Her translucent skin and her small lips...

Those lips of her move stiffly, "...Should I also bow like her?"

While laughing, I tell her, "Don't be stupid. You're my friend, aren't you?"

"You're right. I'm your precious friend——" Quiche replies with a smile, and leans in again after stretching herself a bit.

Her breath feels nice as it tickles my ear. Suddenly I can hear her whispering, "...The wish of Morning Star Cydale came true..."

Then she squeezed out the feeling that had amassed in her heart, "I was lonely...so lonely——" while pressing her lips against my neck.

While feeling slightly ticklish...I gently stroke Quiche's back and slender nape with my fingers...

In response, she leaks a sexy moan, seemingly also feeling ticklish. After tilting her head somewhat, she mutters, "...Mmh, it's your scent, Shuuya."

I can tell from her tone that she's smiling.

Once again Quiche kisses my neck, before confessing quietly, "I love you..."

At the same time as I feel my chest tightening oppressively, I also sense passion welling up within. I should give her a response.

I mutter into her lovely, long ears, "...you."

"Eh? What did you say just now?"

"Don't worry about it——" I tightly embrace Quiche to hide my embarrassment that might show through my behavior.

However, right now we're on a hill littered with orc corpses. It's not the right place for long hugs.

I place my hands on Quiche's shoulders, and she nods, apparently agreeing with my feelings. Quiche tenderly places her hands on the back of mine as if nursing her own shoulders.

Turning around with a smile on her lips, she starts to walk around so as to check the situation on the hill.

"...It looks like the semi-transparent you defeated was the last of the lot, Shuuya." Quiche comments while checking the equipment on the orc corpses.

"A semi-transparent orc; for it to have eaten the remains of its own kin..."

"Yeah, it was an abnormal orc. There's also a magic cage over there. I think the semi-transparent orc was probably released from there, but I can also see the corpse of the general orc over here."

Just as Quiche has mentioned, I can see a cage at the end of her line of sight.

There exists a path at the bottom of the ravine, cut into the valley somewhat on the left from the middle. Down that path towers a huge cage. In front of it lay corpses of small orcs and the one of a big, horned orc.

The big orc is obviously different from the others. It's wearing a luxurious long hakama and a coat with vivid, pure colors. I think this should be the general orc Quiche has mentioned moments ago.

"They died by having the skulls pierced, huh? It looks like the semi-transparent orc's feelers also ate the contents of their heads. The general might have failed in controlling the semi-transparent orc."

"...I suppose they failed precisely because it was an intelligent monster."

"Seems so."

I trek uphill while talking to Quiche.

"But, I gotta admit, you did well to cope with the situation under this sudden 3 vs. 1 situation."

"What, it's the usual for me." She answers in a bright mood.

I jump up lightly, landing on the toes of one leg.

"...Shuuya, the pretty liquid connected to your feet are water scales?"

Just as Quiche has pointed out, sheets of water scatter from the soles of Arzen's Boots. The water sprays reflect the sunlight, becoming tinged with a beautiful rainbow.

"...I think those are the remains of my new technique after having fused with Helme." I answer while lifting a leg and looking under the boot.

I wonder, is that proof of Helme having grown in power alongside my growth?

"Unification with Spirit Helme-sama!? Unbelievable." Quiche gets agitated, looking at Kisara once more.

"What's wrong?"

"I just thought that I can now fully understand why this beautiful witch obeys you with such a reverent attitude." Quiche explains hesitatingly while looking back and forth between Kisara and me.

"Really?"

"...It sounds like you're not aware of it, but it's true. You've daringly confronted the unknown orc without any fear for my, no, everyone's sake. And you've won overwhelmingly, using a peerless spear style. Moreover, you're carefreely walking across a twinkling water path as if taking a stroll. ...It might be only natural because you've fused with Spirit-sama, but it gives you an air of dignity." Quiche recounts her impressions and praise of me like a troubadour with her eyes trembling.

Buuut, Quiche is exaggerating. Well, I think it's inevitable though.

In addition to her joy over having reunited with me, she seems to have actively invested great efforts to repel a military force. I'm sure she must be high from feeling uplifted.

"...You're going too far. Did you read too many fairy tales to the children?"

"...That embarrassed acting and look is very like you, you know? But, Spirit-sama has also mentioned that you're a 'Great Excellency building the Great Holy Lucival Empire that's going to reign over all of the Mahaheim Continent'."

Helme...you didn't limit it to butts, but also expanded on your tale of the Lucival Empire?

At that point, the liquefied Helme, which had transformed into a mysterious water patch at my feet, squirms. She quickly moves up from my legs, passing my waist and chest along the way. Just to enter my left eye in an instant with a smooth sclish.

It was so fast that Quiche didn't even notice it. Though I guess Kisara has perceived it since she's blinking her eyes.

"...The part about the empire and so on is Helme's idea. I have my own objectives I follow——"

Placing a foot on a part of the hill, I extend Baldok diagonally above. It's a stance that makes me look as if I'm taking a stab at the sun with the red spear. And then I slowly move Baldok sideways as if to cut the sun horizontally.

Thereupon, the sunlight gets reflected on the ax blade, glittering like a mirror that reflects light. The reflected light of the ax blade pours down on the opposite site of the hill. I tilt Baldok to take a look at the ax blade.

Just like that, I stare at it as if carefully scrutinizing the blade. Suddenly I spotted a skull mark, made out of countless capillary-like threads, on the blade's surface. It resembles the ones on the witch spear.

"Objectives, eh...?" Quiche mutters, musing about my words.

But, when did something like that appear on the red ax blade's surface...? I reflexively check the witch spear in Kisara's hand.

She doesn't notice since she's bowing her head. Of course, the witch spear doesn't give me any answers either. The filaments, which are being released from the hole in the handle, are hanging downwards like ordinary hair strands, swaying in the wind.

...There's the matter with Baldok having instantly absorbed the blood of the semi-transparent orc right after I stabbed it with <Fang Stab>, and back when I fought Kisara and Schmihazar, Baldok also showed some kind of response.

...Zaga, Bon, it looks like your weapon has started to evolve out of its own will.

While commenting in my mind, I unleash a <Thrust>. And then, I shift from the <Thrust> with the red spear extended to a right downward slash by making Baldok's handle vibrate. Focusing on keeping it compact, I pull my right hand back, close to me, and delicately delay the timing of striking the ax blade down by using a slight shift of my torso.

I naturally begin to practice my spearmanship. But then I recall what Suloza's bald shopkeeper said at the time I got him to appraise Baldok. He's cursed by Cursed God Tengaln Bububa, and since I'm also cursed by Cursed Goddess Kokbruundozuu-sama, we might be two peas in one pond.

Switching Baldok to my left hand, I unleash a barrage of thrusts, and then do a left turning kick, before jumping into the air, and moving Baldok behind my back with both hands. It's a technique to not show Baldok to an imaginary opponent.

After stepping forward while lowering my left shoulder a bit, I furiously swing down Baldok, which I made spiral with an image of stabbing it out alongside my left back, to the right.

At the same time, the appraisal result for Baldok crosses my mind.

While revealing a spellbound, womanly expression, Quiche says, "You haven't changed a bit since our first meeting...even now you seem to be completely devoted to your spearmanship..."

"——Indeed. The spearmanship Master taught me is my religion. A spear style based on the Wind Spear Style..."

As I answer Quiche, I lower Baldok's handle onto my shoulder. A faint, metallic sound reverberates from my shoulder dragon.

"Shuuya-sama's Master!?" Kisara cries out in surprise.

Come to think of it, I still haven't talked about Master Achilles to her.

"That dark greenish outer garment of yours appears to be special, too."

I light rotate around my axis while turning my back on Quiche.

"It's the protective clothing version of the Mythological armor Hal'Konk."

"Mythological...that goes beyond my imagination. But, it suits you, Shuuya. A dark green cloth coat that's connected to a dragon-shaped shoulder protector. The silver tree branch and leaf patterns depicted in the area between your chest and the flanks is beautiful and exquisite."

She's right, those sure are pretty. You might even call it casual American outerwear.

"The metal clasps and buttons that look like brass and have been added at equal intervals from your collar down to the lower area of your chest give me the impression of a military uniform. They suit the design very well. Is it an item different from your previous, violet Evil Dragon King armor and overcoat? Right now it kinda looks short-sleeved, doesn't it? Your collarbone and the area around your neck is exposed, too." Quiche talks about the look of Hal'Konk.

"Haha, did you fall in love with me all over again?"

Getting carried away, I adopt a Helme pose.

"Fufu. Ah, is that the butt love one? Spirit-sama told me that my training is still lacking, but..."

"I was the first one to strike a pose, but let's leave the topic of butts out of this for the time being."

『Your Excellency...that is a waste』

I ignore Helme.

"Haha, you've got a point there. Getting back to the topic of your spearmanship, your techniques coupled with your outfit look like a piece of art. So let me guess, your objective is to become a strong spearmaster who can enforce your own conviction?"

I stop posing and turn around, looking at Quiche who's deliberately asked me such an obvious question. While turning around, I kick the Magic Dragon Gem with my boot as if scooping it up, hurling Baldok's butt end upwards. The magic halberd keeps rotating clockwise as it is vigorously flung up.

Before it flies off, I firmly grab the middle part of its metallic handle with my left hand.

"——Of course. Anyway, a mindset to always aim for new heights is what matters. I want to explore my own path of spearmanship while using the spear tyle my respected Master told me as foundation. To be honest, there are a few more important guidelines for me though, I reckon." I smile as if messing around.

"I'm aware of that. It's Rollo and women, right?"

"Nothing less of you. You've fully grasped my personality, haven't you?"

"...I believe I'm well aware of your fondness for women."

After staring at me with moist eyes, Quiche glances at Kisara again.

...As expected, Quiche is bothered by her. I mean, she's a beauty, the nun outfit suits her, and Kisara has big boobs. It's only normal for her to feel uneasy, I guess.

"...Hahaha."

"Shuuya, you won't be able to deceive me with some dry laughter."

Quiche-san's jealousy is on full throttle. Is she wary of Kisara? I should change the topic.

"...Well, there's plenty of other objectives, or rather, things I want to do besides honing my spearmanship and womanizing. I think it's also going to be a nice thing to explore the mirrors, check out the Whirlpool Forest of Demonic Fog where I've left Viine and Mysty behind, meet up with Master Achilles, and accept some adventurer requests in Hekatrail."

"Your Master, and requests, huh?" Quiche nods.

『The place with my birthplace...』

Oh, right. There's also the matter of Helme's birthplace. Before she lived for a long time in my but...

『I'm a humble "Stray Spirit." My name is Water Fairy Helme. I can come to live for only one day during this season, once a year. I'm the spirit of this lake』

I remember those words as if I've heard them just yesterday. If Helme can take a look at her birthplace, she might also be able to actually realize her own growth.

『...You're right. Do you want to go back home?』

『I don't think that the lake exists anymore, but I'd love to see it once more』

『Okay. Let's visit it then once I go back to Master's place someday』

『Gladly!』

As I finish my telepathic conversation with Helme, I survey the vicinity once more. Anyway, I guess I'll report what's taken place to Quiche while heading back to the village.

"Alright, Kisara get up. Let's head back. Quiche, you too."

"Okay."

"Roger. Things will become busy from now on. Orc meat is food. The children will likely be very happy. And the orcs' equipment will be turned into crucial war funds for our village."

『Your Excellency! Quiche has done her very best at butt love as Commander-in-Chief, so please praise her, not just with a kiss, but also words』

『Looks like it. Well, I don't care about the butt love part, though』

I pull myself together, and look at Quiche.

"As expected of the village chief, no, Commander-in-Chief——"

I perform the greeting I've inherited from Master, 『Ra Kelada』, half in jest, towards Commander-in-Chief Quiche.

"Ugh, don't tease me."

"You're not used to the title? Don't worry about it so much, my cute Commander-in-Chief Quiche." I laugh while tearing off a blue, gaudy and ornamented armor from an orc corpse.

Kisara imitates me, looting the equipment from the orc corpses.

"...It sounds as though you're making fun of me."

"No, not at all. Still, do the orcs also possess craftsmen capable of making armors?"

An infantry orc with blue armor, and over here a heavy infantry orc with black armor? The archer orc who died after getting stabbed with a sharp stake is wearing yellow, light armor. All of them are soldiers who've been classified by colors.

"I don't know, and I don't really want to know either..."

Well, I suppose it won't change the fact of us being bitter enemies. Albeit possessing intelligence, orcs still remain monsters.

Just when we cross a hill while looting, I say, "Arry and Taack were kidnapped by a group of the Valmask vampire family who built a base a good distance away from here."

"...No wonder I couldn't find them with the kidnappers being a vampire family."

I think it might be best for me to tell her about Gramps Ton and the others ahead of time, too.

"...And so, you see, there's also other people whom I rescued beside the children...an ancient wolfman too..."

"An ancient wolfman!? That's yet another, outrageous being you've picked up there..."

"Yeah..."

As I thought, leaving Higlia here would be asking too much, huh?

"You having taken her along probably means that she isn't hostile...but, I've heard rumors that the ancient wolfmen have various conflicts going on. I don't want to be eaten either..."

"I think she won't pose a problem. Far from being harmful, she even protected her allies. Rumors are just rumors. Well, I think some adventurers might have actually been eaten by them, but I don't know any details..."

Quiche averts her eyes.

"...I believe the ancient wolfman I've taken with me to be different. I'd like you to not look at her with eyes full of prejudice like those shitty humans who attach stupid labels to people and discriminate against them. She doesn't look any different from any beastwoman." I implore Quiche sincerely to get her to understand.

"...I got it. To be honest, I'm uneasy, but if it's you telling me so, I'll believe in your words. But, that's very typical for you, Shuuya. Reporting with such a reserved manner of speaking...oh, are you possibly talking about her joining my village?"

"Correct. It's a big help that you're so quick on the uptake."

"Sure. Be it an ancient wolfwoman or any other race, they're all precious manpower as long as they cause no problems. I'll happily take them in."

It's just as Arry and Taack mentioned earlier. The gentle village chief Quiche is going to accept them. Quiche sure is a great woman.

"...That's great. But let's leave the details for later. On another note, I've asked you at the beginning, but what's the reason for the orcs to attack this place? Have you grasped anything about that since then?"

"Surmising from their movements and their organizational structures..." Quiche looks towards the hill towering in Cydale. "They might be targeting the Hardeland altar that's related to my ancestors."

"I've heard from Arry and Taack, but you think the altar in the underground continuing from those beehive-like holes is their goal?"

The Whirlpool Forest of Demonic Fog, the Sea of Trees, and the area around the Benrack village; all of them are different terrains, but there's a lot of chaos going on in each of them.

If they're aiming for the altar, the troll roaring might be related to that as well.

"...It's the Hardeland altar, but I can't affirm it with absolute certainty, although I think it's very credible."

"You're saying you've never actually seen the altar?"

"Yep. In the past I've seen the caves continuing onto the ancient Pel-Heka-Line tunnels. I've only heard about the existence of the **【Lost Altar of Hardeland】** and the **【Ancient Temple of the Befaritz Empire】** in legends."

"Legends, huh...?"

I look into the village once more. There are traces of the white and black cliffs near the mountain's base having been scraped off as if having been severed with claws. Even now they seem as if the rock could cave in at any moment.

Below exists a broad, depressed rock terrace, and all kinds of smaller and bigger tombs line up over there. Quiche's ancestors, parents, siblings, and relatives are buried in those tombs. It's a topic I don't really want to dig into too far.

"...Having said that, I believe in the legend. In the past, the 『Bee's Twilight Rock』 symbol of my clan had existed around the summit before getting destroyed by the Evil Dragon King. That's why I think that the underground temple related to the bee clan might truly exist as it's told in the legend."

Quiche points at the mark on her cheek. Bees and underground...I don't really want to believe it, but...I recall a certain goddess. One that I fought at the Dignified Heaven Shrine.

Is it related to the underground goddess Rolga who made a pact with Galroh? Have Quiche's ancestors worshiped Rolga?

She introduced herself as Rolga of the Darkness Bees, didn't she?

"...Bees? Did you ever happen to hear the name Rolga?"

"No."

I guess she doesn't know her. Then again, elves live for a long time. This all might have happened a very long time ago, so it's probably natural for Quiche to not know about it, even if there had been a connection between her ancestors and Rolga at some point. It's also possible that I'm completely wrong, too.

Anyway, it sounds like the hill is definitely connected to the Pel-Heka-Line, so it might also be related to another ancient god or some such.

"So I suppose the troll voice is also related to that altar?"

"Probably. I think it is, but as of yet we've just heard the voice, so it remains a mystery."

At that point, the rock continuing towards Cydale comes into sight.

"Now then, everyone who's riding Rollo is going to arrive anytime soon."

"The gallant Rollo! But, the people...you mentioned before, huh? Don't tell me, there's another woman besides Kisara..." Quiche narrows her eyes asking me with her intuition as a woman coming into play here.

Kisara smiles while remaining silent.

"You could say so. Now, let's go——"

"Yes——!"

"Ah, wait for me——!"

I run up the hill, leaving Quiche behind, and then look back. After clenching her fists, Kisara has jumped with graceful movements as if having wings on her back. She's moving uphill as if climbing a stairway in the air. How bewitching.

At last Kisara comes to a stop right above me while enticing me by showing her panties for real. I'm about to call for the Panties Wedgie Committee, but I endure.

With a delay, Quiche runs up with a speed as if to retort at my perverted look from behind Kisara.

"Kisara~ please wait." I can hear Rotalz's voice, but I can't see him.