

Chapter 369 - Quiche, Reunion with Family

Puyuyu spreads its arms into a hurrah pose while sitting atop the Wave Gourd, but I ignore its fussing. I look up to Gramps Kistrin who's still floating in the air as the elven ghosts sing their hymn.

He's mumbling "Ygir Fortona" and such under his breath.

For starters I'll explain the ghosts' singing to Quiche.

"...Hey, Quiche, I can see elves that resemble you."

"Eh? W-What?"

"The nice hymn audible on this square actually originates from ghosts."

"Ghosts?"

"Yeah, ghosts with elven appearances. Maybe I should call them ethereal bodies?"

"Oh, just like shapsir!?"

Quiche becomes wary, placing a hand on the hilt of her sword. Her stance resembles Yui when she uses her iai-based technique.

"Don't get so riled up. You don't sense anything sinister around here, do you?"

While listening to my words, Quiche lets her eyes wander, "Indeed, you're right."

"It's okay to remove your hand from the sword."

She becomes bashful upon my remark, "Yeah, I just got slightly bewildered by that unknown phenomenon."

"Even Helme only sees these ghosts as a strange accumulation of magic elements."

Next to me, Helme adds, "I can't see them, but the cluster of magic elements feels gentle, just like the sunlight."

"...Okay. I sense nostalgia...or rather relief as I feel it from Spirit-sama's water. But Shuuya, are these ghosts really resembling me?"

"Yes, they are. I think they might be your ancestors, Quiche."

"——Is my little sister Lash possibly with them?"

Quiche swings her left arm horizontally to the side. Her shield slips out of the metal fixings on her arm, and falls to the ground.

"I think so."

And then, as if lured by Quiche's voice, the elven twins, who had materialized in my house, appear in front of me with ghostly floating movements. At the same time, the cross-shaped Demonic Eyes of Gramps Kistrin start to gleam.

The beams emitted from those eyes pour down on the elven twins. In response, the twins begin to shine.

"Is my mother with them as well!?"

"Wait a moment, something is happening."

"...I got it." Quiche nods, just to restlessly look around all over the place in the next moment.

Suddenly one of the twins moves her mouth, 『Can we pass on longer words with this?』

『You can. Unlike with the hymn, this power has its limits, so you don't have much time. Also, your hometown is gone...thus, if you continue to speak for a long time...your souls might wander the surface without being able to receive the guidance towards the light. So, be careful as it might result in you eternally wandering the multidimensional darkness...the Spirit World, or you could end up stuck in the interstice』 Gramps Kistrin solemnly declares to the twin.

It looks like the power of his Demonic Eyes grants power to the ghosts. I imagined that they'd use the power of their hymn or something like that, but that seems to be wrong.

『Okay! Thanks, Grandfather Kistrin. Then let's use the little time we have!』

The twin shifts her eyes from Gramps Kistrin to me. I guess I should greet her.

『My name is Shuuya』, I try to address the twin.

『No need to introduce yourself, perverted hero!』

『Haha, oh my, Lash, you silly girl』

The twins are beauties. Her name being Lash means that she's Quiche sister after all, huh?

『What are you saying, Mum! You've been watching it very attentively as well, haven't you!? Did you think that I haven't heard you mumbling, "Amazing...me too..."?』

『I-I vaguely remember something like that happening...』

She was her mother?

『Oh, thanks. So you were no twins』

I address the other beautiful elf.

『Oh my, it makes me happy to hear you say that. You're skilled at flattery, Shuuya-san. Your sex is quite intense as well, so I can totally understand why Quiche has fallen in love with you』

『Mum! Quiche-onee-chan is with us, so you shouldn't say such strange things!』

Even Quiche's mother is here, so could her father be around as well?

『Shuuya-san, don't look around so restlessly. The same can be said about Quiche as well, but please be as kind to pass on to her that we're here』

『Oh, sure. Your name is...?』

『My name is Shumi』

After telepathically chatting with Quiche's sister and mother, I turn my gaze to Quiche who's trying to detect the invisible ghosts for dear life. Her eyes are trembling, clearly exposing her feelings of unrest, hope, or maybe both.

"...Quiche, the souls of your mother Shumi-san and your sister Lash-san are right here."

"...Eh?"

Quiche stares at me while her body jerks from her getting startled. A teardrop...runs down her cheeks.

"M-Mother...L-Lash are here? Where is here...?" Quiche slowly extends her hands as if trying to grab the empty air.

...However, her fingers only pass through nothingness. She's looking in the wrong direction. I'd like to let her see her mother and sister——

With that feeling in my chest, I look at Gramps Kistrin. But, he shakes his head.

I guess it's impossible...

It looks like I'm the only one capable of seeing them. Even though I think it'd be already plenty if she could hear their voices, seeing how she can already hear the hymn.

Quite a heavy responsibility has been thrust on me. But, it's for Quiche's sake. I think...it's a heaven-sent reunion with her family, so I'll do whatever I can.

"...They are over here. On your right."

I take Quiche's hand, and guide it so that it's touching Lash's green hair.

"Here?"

"Yes."

『Ah, onee-chan's hand is...』

"Your sister is currently right there."

Quiche smiles cheerfully upon hearing my words. Tears endlessly spill out of her eyes.

"Lash...can you see? Your beloved flower...the Edelweiss flower is right here, look..."

Even while crying, she tilts her head as if to show her sister her glossy, green hair. Her jade green eyes are made even more beautiful by the sunlight. A hair ornament is affixed to her hair.

So that's the reason for her having put that ornament into her hair, huh? I ended up associating it with various meanings of the modern era's flower language, but in reality it's her sister's...

I recall our conversation when we went on a date in Hekatrail. We should eat some majun marron when we get back to Hekatrail next time.

Moreover, I feel like the figures of her family were reflected in her eyes when she had sadly looked up to the night sky back then.

『Hehe, onee-chan, I'm always watching you, so I know without you telling me』

An exchange between big and little sister. The gentle look of the mother overlooking that. Bonds of deep affection. It makes me imagine that the Edelweiss flower is blooming around them.

『Quiche is happy, too』

"Mother..."

『Hehe, over here』

"She's smiling next to you."

"...I..."

『Aww, don't cry so much...Quiche. You were able to come back to your hometown. On top of having built graves for us, you've been offering my beloved Ryon flowers and Dad's cherished Mirebana flowers every day without missing a single day, haven't you?』

Shumi extends her hands as if trying to hug Quiche, but they slip through Quiche.

『Shuuya-san, please tell onee-chan: "Thanks" and "Don't look so sad. I'm happy that I'm able to meet my beloved onee-chan!"』

Her sister looks desperate, but her tone is bouncy and full of spirit.

『Could I have you pass on, "...I love you. You've really done your best for the sake of the village. I'm proud to have you as my daughter," to Quiche from me?』

Of course I will...

I can fully understand her mother and sister's feelings. After all, they wanted to meet again and they're harboring feelings they wanted to pass on to each other...

Naturally, my visual field also becomes blurry. A curtain of water. Tears overflow from my eyes.

『...Of course』 I wipe my tears away while answering them.

And then I speak up while looking at my reflection in Quiche's eyes, "...Quiche, your sister says that she's happy about being able to meet with you. Your mother says that she's happy to meet you again, and that she loves you. And your mother has also asked me to thank you for always offering her Ryon flowers."

"Aaahhh, Mum, Lash!!"

Quiche sinks down on her knees, and props herself up with both hands, breaking down in crying. Lash-san and Shumi-san snuggle up to the heartbroken Quiche.

Quiche is sobbing with her shoulders heaving up and down. Lash-san and Shumi-san are trying to give her hugs, but...both are ethereal bodies...so their hands pass through Quiche's body many times over.

It's heartrending.

"...I can smell Mum and Lash's smell. They're with me right now, aren't they?"

Oh? Their smell? Is this also part of Gramps Kistrin's power? He's doing something considerate on behalf of the family's reunion.

Thinking that, I look at Gramps Kistrin, but he shakes his head as if saying that he has no idea, and starts to look up to the sky. Sunlight is gently pouring down on him. Does he want to tell me that it's Light God Lulodis's blessing at work here? Or maybe the sun god's?

Leaving that aside, I want to do something for Quiche. For Quiche and her family...

With such sentiments, I say, "...Your mother and Lash-san are right next to you. They're lovingly embracing you, Quiche."

"...I see. Mum, Lash, I wanted to meet you..."

Quiche strongly hugs her own body as if not wanting to let go of her family's love. Words and actions desiring pure love...

At that moment, Quiche blinks repeatedly.

"Ah, ah, Mum, Lash..."

『You see us?』

『You can see us, right!?』

It seems they're visible to Quiche. She extends her slender hands towards the two ghosts.

"You haven't changed from back then at all. Mum, Lash, you're as beautiful as ever..."

『Onee-chan...』

『Quiche...』

Quiche nods while crying, "...I can't hear your words, but just being able to see you is already a bliss for me——"

And then she looks up to the azure sky as if staring at heaven. A gentle morning breeze is blowing. Her jade green, long hair is whirled up by the wind and falls on her shoulders. To me it looks as though the sunlight's warmth is pouring down on her.

"Thank you...War God Vice-sama. No, I suppose this is a miracle of Light God-sama." Quiche powerfully prays.

Then she shifts her eyes back to her family, smiling all over her face.

"But, Dad and brother aren't with you? Grandfather Ab, my friend Miton are..."

Hearing Quiche's question, her mother nods lightly several times, and with her tears overflowing, explains, 『...Shuuya-san, please tell her, that her Dad has moved on to the "path leading to Seuros of Light," and that her brother Shtoran has also departed on his journey to the divine domain, to heaven. Her grandfather and Miton are...with the Underground Goddess』

I engrave Shumi-san's message into my heart. The souls of her grandfather and friend...have been devoured by the Underground Goddess?

『...In reality, her Dad, Mum, brother, and me should have headed to the sanctuary of Hardelende, but...』

Lash-san mutters something that makes me curious. I turn to Quiche, "It looks like your father and brother have moved on along the path leading to Seuros of Light, heaven's divine domain."

"I see. That's good to hear. E-Evil Dragon King, I hate you for having killed my family. I loathe you...but, although I still can't cease hating you...I shall thank you for allowing my family's souls to rest in peace..." Quiche declares while crying.

"Y-You've got a point..." Naturally I've been crying loudly as well as I squeeze out these words.

Quiche's eyes become tearful, over and over again. After saying, "You're so silly, Shuuya! What's the point in you crying here!?", she tells me, "But, thanks...", and leaps into my embrace.

At that point, Higlia, who's brought along Ryokline and Daon-san, cries out, "You're hugging Quiche again! I won't allow that!"

"Higlia, right now I'm reuniting with my family..." Quiche rebukes Higlia while wiping her tears away.

"Family!? Quiche's family? I can't see them, but...don't tell me it's a phenomenon like in the fairy-tale where God Wolf Hurley-sama and the messengers of the Twin Moon Gods danced and howled!? The song-like "Ceremony of the Echoing Bowstring"...reciting how ancestors have appeared from an idol in droves. It's an elven ceremony though. Ah, so that's why Shuuya is crying I guess...then I'm going to cry as well!"

Higlia blurts out some incomprehensible nonsense.

"Princess...it's the first time in my life to see a male to cry so profusely, despite being a hero..."

Ah man, I cried, okay? Isn't it fine?

Since I got slightly embarrassed like that, I turned around, and separated from Quiche.

"But, princess... I understand about him being a hero, but looking closely, he's got black hair and eyes. He resembles that vampire, the black noble youth." Daon-san brings up something that bothers him.

Black noble youth... He's a stray vampire and gives me the impression of being a strong vampire, but it seems like Daon-san knows him.

At that moment, Kisara, who has been observing us from the sky, says, "——Shuuya-sama, Puyuyu-chan on the Wave Gourd has...", and points her witch spear at Puyuyu.

Puyuyu is repeatedly shooting its tiny dinosaur at a metal fixture of the Wave Gourd.

"——Puyuyu!"

As if responding to Puyuyu's actions, the Wave Gourd lets gong sounds reverberate. Higlia has attention drawn by that happening, and tries to rescue Puyuyu while shouting, "Tiny one! That's an ominous object which sucks blood! You better get away from it!"

"It's definitely a mysterious creature."

I agree with Helme. Well, I think it's going to be alright either way. Cloud Rust - Tenge dwells within the Wave Gourd according to Time Pinyin. As long as that Cloud Rust - Tenge doesn't come out all of a sudden, it should be fine.

But, it's still true that it sucked up blood. I wonder what kind of reaction is going inside...? I don't know whether it's growing up, but...Time Pinyin said, 『It might be difficult to use, but its possibilities are infinite』.

In the meantime, Quiche has been using gestures to communicate with her family.

"...But, why have Mum and Lash's souls stayed behind here, unlike Dad's and brother's?" She asks me something reasonable.

『What's the reason, Lash-san?』

『It looks like we have a strong tie with the clan and Hardelende. Or rather, I realized it after I died...』 Lash-san explains while looking at her big sister and mother.

『Just as my daughter has said, there are many things we've understood after dying... It was true that Hardelende is a sacred ground where the treasure **【Tool of bee Style】** rests. Underground Goddess Rolga stole the sanctuary alongside that treasure. The sanctuary seems to be a place where all kinds of mana flowers bloom』

Such a treasure on a sacred ground...

『...We lost the protection of our ancestors while unaware of it. That's why, after getting attacked by the Evil Dragon King...and having the path to our sanctuary cut off, our souls...were rescued by Kistrin-sama and Ygir-sama's light, it was decided that we'd remain on this land for eternity with the exception of some souls like Dad and my son.』

Gramps Kistrin mentioned something like that with a few words, too.

『Can you pass on this reason and the other circumstance to Quiche?』

『Sure. If possible, I'd like Quiche to personally persuade you. The other ancestors wish for it as well. We'd like you to recover our clan's treasure and take us all the way to the sanctuary』

I have no choice but to agree with this. Though I think it's going to take time, and it's not that I can go right away.

『...I understand. I'll explain all of this to Quiche』

While everyone gathers...with Quiche, her mother and Lash-san occasionally taking turns in adding something...I explain about Gramps Kistrin, the souls of Quiche's father and brother, and everything else I've heard and know myself.

"...It seems that's the reason for it according to them."

"The power of bees? A sanctuary...a huge underground world. I recall Kaldo's story about there being a Tear leading to the Spirit World and a Demonoid Empire in Labyrinth City Sother'Deruly..." Helme mentions while hugging Puyuyu.

"Puyuyuu." Puyuyu nods with its big and round eyes sparkling.

I don't think Puyuyu understands what's meant here. Or rather, its head is stuck between Helme's lower boobs.

Not bad, Puyuyu. Though I don't have a clue whether you're male or female.

"So that's how it is, huh? I didn't think that such a power dwells in this bee..." Quiche touches the bee mark on her cheek with a finger.

That means other elven clans, like for example Belize Maffon of **【Red Tiger's Storm】**, might also be rooted in that ancestry. The secret of her enormous breast, err, her ability in archery...

"...For me to have to ask for your help again...and moreover making you head into the domain of the Underground Goddess..."

"What are you talking about? We're friends, aren't we?"

"Yeah...you're my dear friend."

I intensely lock eyes with Quiche. Quiche and I naturally draw close to each other. I immediately know what she desires from what's reflected in her eyes.

I steal her small lips just like that.

At that moment, Kisara's clear voice, filled with a magic breath, resounds from above. Kisara lightly kicks off Rotalz, and makes the filaments, which are extending from the witch spear's handle, twine around her arm. Those filaments creep along her arm like winding snakes. And after they cover her arm in several layers, her arm begins to shine dazzlingly with an abnormal glow appearing on its surface.

Kisara vigorously swings that arm down, activating <Throwing>. Her movement resembled the smooth, elbow-based throw of a dart, but the witch spear flies with a terrifying speed. Watching that scene, I reflexively separate from Quiche.

"...Puhaaa."

Gazing longingly at my lips, Quiche grabs my arm to hinder me from pulling away.

"Hehe, it seems like Kisara has also fallen for Your Excellency's manliness..." Helme comments while looking at Kisara.

She links her arms beneath her chest, as if to seductively lift up her plump boobs. I feel like I heard her say, "A lovely butt..." or something like that.

Nearby, Higlia screaming, "Y-You're not going to k-kiss with me!?", reaches my ears, but I ignore her.