

Fate: Charm of the Devil Fae

Story Starts

==&<o>&=-

Ch. 4 Sakura's Healing Touch

A bewildered Yuuto Kiba escorted us, both Runeas and I, outside. His current state stemmed from the frustrated outburst of the ancient Runeas, one of the original pillars of the underworld. Rin remained inside the Occult Research Clubroom, sipping tea while keeping standby in case Rias and Akeno returned through that avenue.

“Sakura, you should probably teleport home and prepare dinner. We'll teleport back home once everything is resolved. I'll have Rin send you a message if there are any concerns or changes,” Runeas said as she unfurled her wings. “I'll look for them and check to see if they need backup.”

Sighing, I hoped nothing too bad would happen. Checking my phone and looking at the time, as it is already 6:20 p.m., I take note of a text message that Shirou sent a few hours ago, stating that he'll do the groceries.

Now needing to do the groceries myself, I took note of what was inside my purse, checking if it was enough. I then teleported into a secluded area near one of the local groceries run by an elderly couple living near the border of Northern Miyama and the shopping district.

A jingle rang in the air, indicating my entrance into the small grocery store as the old lady greeted me. Saying a formal greeting in return, I grabbed a basket and went straight towards the chiller section.

Seeing four packets of Jidori chicken priced around 500 to 600 yen, I remembered that we had a container full of frozen chicken collagen. We tend to freeze most of the bones that we do not use, using the majority for stock in the first extraction. We then use some of the remaining bones, along with those previously used in stock—their second extraction—to make paitan or collagen soup.

I placed all four remaining packets of chicken into my basket. Noting the possible visitors tonight are Shirou, Rin, Taiga, Yuki, Yui, Runeas, possibly Ritsuka—and possibly Rias and her group. Mentally, I calculated my budget, as I have a little more than 13,000 yen.

I saw half a kilo each of minced pork and chicken, priced at 350 and 300 yen, respectively, and even some beef sukiyaki cuts at 400 yen per packet.

Turning towards the shop owner, “Excuse me, I might be expecting a large number of guests tonight, is it okay if I take all of these?” I said, gesturing at the only remaining meats on sale.

As it was still quite a young night, I wouldn’t want to trouble the owner when somebody else comes in expecting some bargain-priced meats only to be disappointed.

The kind elderly lady just smiled and told me that it was fine. I bowed in return as I thanked her, then turned back towards the chiller and placed the eight packets of meat into my basket.

Mentally reviewing what is currently in our pantry, I bought a few more items for the hot pot, like some cabbage, mizuna, a large radish, lotus roots, leeks, and some dried egg noodles.

Just as I was about to pay, I spied at my periphery some dried chillis from Szechuan China on display with a large sign above them. Immediately thinking of a great idea, I grabbed the bag of dried chillis and backtracked

towards the spice aisle, taking some red and green Szechuan peppercorns, sancho pepper, and white pepper.

Then, a thought struck me, and I realised: “We still have sancho, and white pepper, and some of the other needed spices at home”, I muttered to myself, as I returned both the sancho and white peppers to their respective places in the aisle.

Double-checking everything in my basket, I hauled my groceries towards the lovely old lady, adding a few more items that would complement the hot pot along the way. As the lady rang up my groceries, she talked about her grandson, who had also just been accepted into college, proudly discussing how he had been admitted to one of the nearby universities.

From what I recall correctly, her son was also from Homurahara from the same year. She always tries to set me up with her grandson, but I politely decline her offer each time. She always shows a clear disapproval of Shirou, who almost always has a different girl with him.

Sighing to myself as Shirou either has a strong positive impression or the worst kind—like how Rias has decided the worst of Shirou— I then proceeded to fish out my purse. Tallying everything up to about 9,100 yen, I placed a clean 10,000 yen bill on the tray in front of me, taking care to face the bill toward the owner properly.

She then handed over to me an extra bag; peeking into it, I found a bundle wrapped in newspaper. Smiling at me, she just said that it’s a gift for always buying at her shop and that these are just some extra sweet potatoes. A wily, knowing grin played on her face as she took note of how many grocery bags I was going to need to carry.

“Oh, my bad, I think you have too many bags, why don’t I call my grandson to help you?” She gave me an innocent smile.

I just smiled at her, politely ignoring her offer. I lifted both my arms, currently carrying all the groceries, as I mimed lifting barbells.

“Don’t worry, I’m stronger than I look,” I said, my demonic constitution granting me a body stronger than the average human. I smiled at her as I gave my assurance. Her wily grin softened into a pout for a second before she smiled again.

Bowing politely at her, I left the shop as I discreetly moved to the secluded area and teleported back home.

--&<o>&--

Appearing within the dining room, wings unfurled and body floating, I set my groceries on the table and frowned. Turning around to flick the lights on, wondering where Yui and Yuki were, as we had given our close friends spare keys and an open invitation to enter whenever.

Sliding the fusuma open, I peeked into the dark hallway; everything was still turned off. Opening the shoji towards the garden, I let the cool spring air and the moonlight enter the dining room.

I lowered myself towards the ground, still wearing my shoes, folding back my wings into my body. A sudden memory of learning to fly for the first time entered my mind. We did not need to flap our wings like birds, like I’d first thought, since the wings generate the magic for our flight.

I shook my head and checked my phone, only to see no new messages. I scrolled through my contacts as I approached the front gates of the Emiya estate, clicking on Yui Yuigahama’s contact and bringing my phone to my ear.

Unlocking the door, I heard the telltale message that the customer I was calling was unavailable. As I opened the gate, I saw my two friends squatting beside the entrance, looking glum.

Tilting my head in askance, I watched as Yui's face lit up with happiness as she saw me, while Yuki, arms crossed calmly, stood up, offering a hand to Yui.

==&<o>&=-

The soft thudding and the crunching noise of napa cabbage being chopped into medium-sized chunks while Yui hummed a tune from an idol group that had recently gained popularity.

Yui was only given the task to slice up the needed vegetables for the hot pot as she couldn't be trusted with any other form of cooking, much to the consternation of the others.

Beside me, Yukino Yukinoshita, or Yuki for short, had just finished mixing both the minced pork and minced chicken. We decided on a sausage-style seasoning for the pork, as it was pretty fatty, adding a mixture of fennel, garlic, and some freshly picked Italian herbs from the garden. In contrast, the minced chicken was given the classic treatment of freshly minced garlic and ginger, white pepper, soy sauce, salt, sake, and mirin.

Both batches were thoroughly mixed until the meat could freely cling to our hands when picked up, allowing for proper protein extraction and a bouncy texture.

Yuki then began forming both batches into balls and started pre-cooking them: the pork was deep-fried. At the same time, the chicken was boiled in an already simmering chicken paitan broth, with Yuki carefully fishing out any scum that formed.

I placed a previously boiled and deboned jidori chicken on a bed of mizuna—the clean taste of the succulent prized meat would go well with some ponzu or yuzu kosho—, then poured the first batch of hot oil into my spices, tempering it while mixing everything with a wooden chopstick.

Looking to my right, I noted that the oil had reached the desired temperature, as the thermometer read close to 190°C, so I added the second and final pour. The scent of chilli and numbing spices immediately filled the kitchen. I quickly added toasted sesame seeds, soy sauce, and black vinegar to the mixture, stirring it again with my chopsticks.

Checking over the progress of my friends, I nodded to myself as I gently poured my freshly created hot oil into a different pot of simmering chicken paitan, whisking the soup with oil to form an emulsion. The two were stuck outside because they had forgotten their keys at home and, quite unfortunately, their phones had run out of battery.

Instead of taking a bus and a train ride home—even though they lived only a station away—they decided to wait it out, figuring that Shirou would be home early or, at the very least, Taiga would come by after her teaching duties were done.

After letting them in, I clued them into the situation with Shirou, and we then began preparing dinner, splitting tasks. Nodding at the look of my mala-infused broth, I took a sip of both the mala-infused paitan and the plain paitan broth, making some minor adjustments to the seasoning.

I then turned to Yui and Yuki to start arranging the meat and vegetables into the two separate nabe pots.

Turning the stove off and covering both broths. Transferring the excess hot oil into a covered container, I then filtered the frying oil and set it aside, as it can still be used at least two more times.

Before wiping down the counter, I made a sesame chilli dipping sauce, taking note of the amount of ponzu and yuzu kosho I had left so everyone would have options.

Moving over to the rice cooker, quite a large one as we use this whenever we know we are receiving a significant number of guests, bundling the edges of the steaming cloth together into one hand, I opened the rice warmer and heaved the steamed cloth filled with perfectly cooked rice into the warmer.

“Wow, I can’t wait to be that strong when I become a devil,” Yuki said in wonder at the fact that I single-handedly lifted a large bag of cooked rice—the loud thud following the transfer, making the heft of the rice bundle known.

Most of our close friends are in the know of our status as devil, magus, and everything related to it, Runeas even brought in their parents doing business, benefitting everyone as they have converted most of their parents into devils through Runeas’ underlings.

Our friends haven’t been converted, as we are still waiting for our evil pieces to arrive.

“Don’t worry, I think we’ll get our evil pieces within the week.”

“What was the main reason for the delay?” Yuki asked me as she had just finished wiping down the dining table, as Yui started setting up for dinner, laying down chopsticks, rences, and bowls.

“Well, Vivian was working with Ajuka and Aza—”

A series of muted wooshing and popping noises was heard as people started teleporting into the garden.

My eyes immediately darted towards Shirou, who was carrying a passed-out Ritsuka bridal style. I worriedly looked him over. The pair was covered in blood, but as I saw the rise and fall of Ritsuka’s chest and Shirou’s tired look, my concerns were briefly abated; they didn't seem too hurt.

Following Shirou were an irritated Runeas, a chastised Rias, an amused Akeno, and a blank-faced Rin.

A loud banging of the gate as an energetic Taiga announced her arrival, “Yaho!!! Taiga’s here for—what happened to Ritsuka and Shirou?!”

-=&<o>&=-

A sigh escaped my mouth as I started heading over towards the room where we laid Ritsuka. To put it lightly, dinner had been a sombre and awkward affair, far from the lively atmosphere typical of hot pot dinners, where the mixing and matching of ingredients usually encouraged a good flow of conversation.

Not even Shirou’s charm, which typically devolved dinners into a debauched ritual satisfying both our lust and hunger, altered the sombre atmosphere. The allure he normally exudes was muted throughout, a reflection of his current mood.

The meal concluded with everyone, one by one, leaving to do their own thing.

Taiga ate quickly as she rushed to her nephew's side. Both Akeno and Rias had to rush through their portions because Runeas, who quickly scarfed down her meal, immediately stood up, telling them to follow her towards the guest outhouse.

Only I, Rin, Yuki and Yui remained, as Shirou also left after we tried adding food to his bowl of rice—unfortunately, his mood stifled his appetite.

I left to check on Taiga, Ritsuka, and Shirou, as Rin offered to wash the dishes while Yui and Yuki offered to store the leftovers.

Gently sliding the fusuma open, enough space for me to peek inside, I saw Taiga sitting cross-legged, with both her arms crossed and her head was bowed down, clearly sleeping.

In front of her, Ritsuka lay nestled beneath the futon's blankets. The steady rhythm of her breathing, the gentle rise and fall of the blanket over her chest, and soft snores offered clear reassurance that she was recovering well.

Sliding the fusuma close, the wooden lattice thudding gently against its frame, I turned towards Shirou's room. I frowned as I peeked into the room; the moon's rays illuminated it, bathing the space in an ethereal blue, and I saw the clearly disturbed, empty futon of Shirou.

A sudden, muted dry heaving came from down the hall. I entered the changing room of the bathroom, then turned towards the three small rooms, each with a toilet.

Unfortunately, I found Shirou currently hunched over the toilet as he dry-heaved, a trail of saliva dripping down his lips. The toilet was probably already flushed clean from his initial vomit.

Crouching down, I gently patted Shirou's back, his body slightly jolted from the sudden shock of my presence.

"Do you want to talk about it?" I offered.

Shirou patted my hand, which was resting on his shoulder, as he silently thanked me. He wiped his mouth with his arm, then sat, leaning against the bathroom wall, with his forearms resting on his knees.

I sat opposite him, my soles resting on his feet, avoiding the biting cold of the bathroom tiles as I patiently waited for him to speak.

"I don't understand. They killed Ritsuka and were planning to kill me." He stared blankly forward, his open palms shaking, as he clenched them into fists to stop the involuntary action.

“I don’t even feel any remorse, but why does my body shake whenever I picture all of those dead bodies?”

Unfortunately, it was just the blind asking the blind for directions; most of our humanity had already been shed, even before becoming devils or fae. Even with the support of everyone, even with our progress, we are nothing but tourists in this thing called humanity.

There’s only one thing I can do, one thing I know, as I raised myself on my knees, closing the distance between us. Placing my fingers underneath his chin as I lifted his face, our eyes connecting as I put my lips upon his.

Savouring our connection before pulling back, I stood up, my face blank as there’s no need for emotion here, I offered Shirou my hand.

“Come, let me make you feel better.”

--&<0>&=--

After our little special massage session, we washed each other’s bodies while talking about random things. We then spent about half an hour holding each other in the bath, the scent of the tea extract relaxing us.

Well, in the end, Shirou was emotionally exhausted, and I finally managed to lull him into sleep.

Leaving the room for now to check in with my guests, I backed out quietly, sliding the door closed. “How’s Shirou?”

I turned. Runeas stood there, having just left the room where Taiga and Ritsuka were resting, and she’d likely—through her enhanced devil senses—heard me stand up and leave.

“He hasn’t processed the fact that he had to kill. Or rather, he understands that he had to do it, but his body somehow rejects the idea.”

Runeas, placing her palm on her cheek as she showed physical concern—a very rare thing to see—, said, “I’ll talk to him tomorrow. This is the first time he’s had to take a life, and despite his condition, he still retains some form of humanity. Even you and Rin most likely retain it, especially given your upbringing within human society.”

I frowned at her. Her assessment, I felt, didn’t reflect my situation. A hand suddenly caressed my face, “Now, now, child, don’t think too much about it.” The ancient devil gave me a knowing smile.

“Anyway, go, Ms. Yukinoshita and Ms. Yuigahama have been patiently waiting for a while now. Rin and I still need to arrange several things, especially with this mess with the fallen and wand wizards. Would you call her for me? I’ll be in the study.”

I tilted my head as I watched her walk away. Sighing to clear myself of confusing thoughts, I then headed towards our living room.

Upon entering, my eyes immediately went straight to the bat hanging in the corner of the room. I turned my gaze towards the three who were currently lounging: Yui and Yuki deep in a conversation, while Rin, who immediately noticed me, set her book down to approach me.

“Runeas is in her study. I think she needs you to settle today’s incident.” I told Rin as I again glanced at the bat.

I heard Rin sigh as she patted my shoulder. “They’ve already been put in place by Runeas a while ago, don’t pile on too hard,” Rin said, glancing at the bat with a pointed stare.

Rin gave me another consoling pat on the shoulder before leaving.

As Rin left, I approached the pair who had already noticed my entrance.

“How’s Shirou?” Yui worriedly asked. I sighed. In hindsight, I myself haven’t even been given the complete picture of what happened. From what I surmised, Shirou had to take a lot of lives today while defending Ritsuka.

“He’s calmed down and is sleeping. Has Rin told you about anything that happened? We didn’t really talk about it.”

Yui gave me a teasing quirked eyebrow and a one-sided smirk, while Yuki offered only a blank stare, laced with judgment.

I was suddenly caught off guard as I blushed, Runeas' previous assessment of me repeating in my head. These two were my first friends outside of Rin and Shirou, and my dynamic with them was different from my relationships with Rin and Shirou.

I would describe it as very normal, fun, and—human.

‘... some form of humanity. Even you and Rin most likely retain it, especially given your upbringing within human society.’

I shook my head, puffing my cheeks in annoyance as they recounted everything Rin had conveyed: how Ritsuka was tricked by a fallen in disguise, the reveal that Ritsuka was a wand-wizard, and how a large group of fallen angels—later joined by wand-wizards—were under someone’s orders to kill Ritsuka.

After being successfully killed, or at least brought close to the brink of death, by the disguised fallen who had lured her with the false pretence of a missing dog.

Shirou then pulled out Avalon, trying to save Ritsuka, as he rained down traced-weapons upon traced-weapons.

Seeing that Avalon was not enough, he called in backup. Unfortunately or fortunately, Rias was able to save Ritsuka using all her pawn pieces.

“Unfortunately?” I asked.

Yui flinched at her apparent mispeak, as both of them grabbed my forearm.

“Well, Rias may or may not have—” Yui hesitantly began nervously glancing at Yuki, who merely shrugged.

“Okay, first, don’t overreact, okay? Runeas has already talked to them both.”

‘They’ve already been put in place by Runeas a while ago, don’t pile on too hard.’

Rin’s previous statement was ringing in my ears.

I frowned. “Overreact?”

Yui just gave a nervous laugh in return, while Yuki, with a blank, incredulous stare, nonchalantly said, “Yumiko Miura, Orimoto Kaori.”

“...Haruno as well.” Yui meekly added.

“Well, my sister kinda deserved it.”

I deflated as they brought up past examples where I had perhaps been overzealous in my defence of Shirou; it didn't help that everything had been blown out of proportion and later corrected.

“Both Miura-chan and Orimoto-san still flinch at the sight of you.”

Sighing as I acquiesced to their request.

Though their grip on me tightened as I bristled in anger when they revealed that Rias had strong-armed Shirou into promising to help Rias in return for reviving Ritsuka.

“You mean blackmail?”

“Well... she did take advantage of the situation.” Yuki is now somewhat acquiesced to my summary of events.

I glared at the bat in the corner of the room, dangling from the ceiling.

I sighed as they again tightened their grip on my forearm, reminding me of my promise. “Yes, I will just talk to them. I was there when they accused Shirou of turning all of us into sexual lobotomites. I just want to give them my perspective.”

I continued. “Now, why don’t the two of you have a bath and join Shirou in bed. We do still have classes tomorrow... and yes, if you want, you can even warn Runeas and Rin that I’m talking to them—please, I promise I will just talk.”

I said that as I locked eyes with the bat.

--&<0>&--

END

Glossary:

Shoji and Fusuma - Sliding doors/partitions with wooden frames, Shoji uses white paper in between the wooden lattice, while Fusuma uses thick paper or cloth.

**Follow me on my other socials
and stack additional voting
points on the story of your
choosing.**

[XTwitterX](#)

[🚫XTwitterX🚫](#)

[🤖Discord🤖](#)

[🦋BlueSky🦋](#)