

## **Chapter 163 - Beginning of Dusk**

We mounted Rollodeen (Horse Lion) and traveled by flying through the air.

We arrived at 【Lodging Moon of the Labyrinth】 in no time.

It's already night.

The faint, blinking lights from the big lanterns in front of Lodging Moon were broken by the wall and eaves, throwing a shadow similar to a round moon on the street.

The stylish atmosphere created by the shadow and the inn's facade felt like a peculiar light trap.

It's night, but the chirping of the cicadas is still audible.

I wonder, are those Zeeta's pets?

While appreciating the elegance of the place, I got off Rollodeen (Horse Lion) by jumping.

Viine fixed her staggering posture after dismounting as well.

Rollo, who returned to her usual form, climbed on my shoulder as usual.

Once I opened the inn's entrance door and stepped inside...

My ears were greeted by a familiar, soothing singing voice.

It's Shana, the mermaid elf.

As ever her voice is wonderful.

It's has a terribly comforting effect as if directly caressing the cerebrum through the ears.

Tempted by the singing, I head towards the dining room.

As expected, Shana is in the middle of doing her work on the stage.

While having a pose of spreading her arms, she spots us as new entries, slightly inclines her head to the side as if saying, "Ah, found you," and sends an adorable wink our way while singing.

As result, the surrounding guests became noisy.

"Just now she winked at me."

"No, it was me."

"It was me, I tell ya."

"Cute, her eyes were turned in my direction!"

"Nope, me!"

Although it became slightly noisy, the guests naturally focus on Shana again, as if being charmed by her singing voice.

Now then, where's Mel...just as I let my eyes wander,

"Oh, Shuuya-san! Great, please quickly come this way." (Mel)

It's Mel, standing in front of the door with the stairway leading to the basement.

Her expression is stern.

After exchanging looks with Viine and nodding, we hurry over to Mel.

"Sorry, this way." (Mel)

Descending the same spiral stairway as before, she opened the door of the large basement room and lead us to the meeting place in the depressed area.

"Did something happen?" (Shuuya)

"Yes. Umm, that is...right now we are in the middle of a war." (Mel)

Mel is very different from usual.

Looking hesitant, she explained that they are in a war.

"...War? Between fellow dark guilds?" (Shuuya)

"Yes, of course...three guilds picked a fight with us." (Mel)

"I see. So, what about the matter with Kazane? I came here for that reason, you know?" (Shuuya)

I deliberately ignored the matter with the war.

"For the moment we passed your message along to them, Shuuya-san. However, given that we are currently in a war, we haven't been able to get in touch with them." (Mel)

Still no answer?

"...Please don't look like that. Shuuya-san, I know that you don't want to have anything to do with it. However, Veronika was defeated and heavily injured by her natural enemy..." (Mel)

What was that? Veronika was defeated?

"Paulsen and Angie are also at disadvantage with the Mad Knight as opponent. Right now we are barely holding the "Flavor Street." The enemy might attack this place, too. I think we will be alright since Magit is here, but either way, the war's situation is bad for us. Currently I'd like to get any combat asset I can — Shuuya-san, it's a shameless request, but please save us. I beg you." (Mel)

In the middle of talking, Mel went down on her knees and bowed her head.

She's not prostrating herself, but she's looking up to me as if praying to a god.

What a pickle. When it comes to being begged so much by a beauty who goes as far as tossing her pride as guild leader away...

Viine stared at Mel with a cold-hearted expression.

But, I guess Magit, whom Mel mentioned casually, is their secret weapon protecting this place.

Is it related to the magic gem located on Magit's collar?

Well, leaving that aside, I wonder what I should do?

I don't mind helping them out of friendship, but...

Oh...I got an idea.

"...I don't mind helping you. But I have a condition." (Shuuya)

"W-What is it?" (Mel)

Just then I reveal a vampire-like, evil smile and intimidate her with my look.

"...Submit to me." (Shuuya)

"...Wh-, that's sudden. Are you telling me to pledge allegiance to you, Shuuya-san? As leader of **【Remains of the Moon】**?" (Mel)

Mel fixedly looked into my eyes.  
After a short time she averts her face slightly and hesitates.  
Her honey-colored hair sways.  
Going by her face, she's obviously shaken.

『Your Excellency, what splendid idea. So you intend to build an army after all.』 (Helme)

『It's slightly different, but whatever.』 (Shuuya)

"...Of course I will have all members swear their loyalty. But, in the end you, Mel, are the leader of **【Remains of the Moon】**." (Shuuya)

People like her fight poison with poison.  
She's probably aiming for a similar development, but...my implicit cynicism tells her, "If you intend to use me, I will make use of you guys as well."  
Besides, if I place them under my control, it will be possible to deploy them as secret protectors of Rebecca and Eva, too.  
It might not be necessary for Eva, though.

"What do you mean..." (Mel)

Mel's serious look penetrates my darkness.  
I guess she's trying to grasp my real intentions.

"Just as you heard. I will take everything of **【Remains of the Moon】**. However, in reality it will be you who will move the guild as my hands and feet." (Shuuya)

...My race is Light Demon Lucival. I'm a villain who also has a dark side.  
But, my dark side is thrilled.

"...You will really save **【Remains of the Moon】**, right?" (Mel)

It sounds like a question, but Mel's light brown eyes are trembling with the color of hesitation still visible within.  
She has become slightly teary eyed.

"Yeah, I will annihilate all the meddlers. Viine, you will come with me as well, won't you?" (Shuuya)

"Of course, my supreme Master. Let's eradicate the enemy dark guilds." (Viine)

Somehow her tone resembles that of Helme. I guess she imitated her.

『Your Excellency, Viine is promising. And, please use me as well when you are heading into battle, okay?』 (Helme)

Helme manifests in my visual field.

『Understood. There might be no opportunity for that, but if there's a chance to use you, I will contact you via telepathy, so disappear for now.』 (Shuuya)

『Yes!』 (Helme)

The tiny Helme whirls around on the spot as if dancing and vanishes.

"...Got it. But, is it fine for me to give you my answer after having seen the outcome?" (Mel)

How ambiguous. I suppose there's also the possibility that she will quickly change her opinion after all's done and over with.

However, I don't think that she will really do that, seeing as we have gotten along so far. I guess I will demonstrate my power since I'm forcing her to pledge allegiance to me.

"Very well. As I'm going to head to the front line, the Flavor District, what's the enemy guilds' names?" (Shuuya)

"【Supreme Dance of Crimson】, 【Eyes of Twilight】 and 【Gloves of Darkness】; those three guilds." (Mel)

If it's Mad Knight of 【Eyes of Twilight】 , I already faced him once.

"They are unrelated to Kazane's group with whom you spoke the other day?" (Shuuya)

"Yes. The Asura Religious Organization is basically neutral. It has influence at various places as religious organization, but their turf is very small. They are subordinate to 【Assembly of Stars】, but in the end they are just a bodyguard group for the sake of protecting the title Eight Lights and allowing the end-of-year auction to proceed smoothly." (Mel)

I see.

"I guess I'm off to the Flavor District then." (Shuuya)

"Okay. Please wait a moment." (Mel)

Mel rushes into a room of the passage.

Seemingly having quickly gotten her equipment in order, she returned to the meeting place with her breathing going somewhat roughly.

A longsword and a dagger are dangling at the belt around her waist. Several daggers are affixed to her chest strap.

Are her boots for combat as well? She wears combat greaves that are clad in mana.

Her legs are long and pretty. They are muscular, but not excessively.

For some reason unknown to me, there's a large hole from her heels to her ankles.

But, she seems to be using something like a shadow technique that appears to be powerful.

"—Let's go. It's this way." (Mel)

Mel didn't guide us to the spiral stairway we descended before, but to a passage atop the stone stairway leading upwards from the meeting room.

The underground passage, which was illuminated by lanterns, has many side paths.

Those appear to be connected to various places in the city...

Before long we arrived at a dead end with a ladder.

Mel climbs that ladder.

Of course I looked at her shaking thighs and ass, as well as her black panties.

A manhole-like wooden cover that's connected with a rope is visible at the very top.

Once she pulled the cover with the rope to herself, it was opened to the left and right.

"It's the surface." (Mel)

Mel exits the underground first.

Viine and I follow her.

"This place is southeast from Lodging Moon. The Flavor Street is close to the Second Ring Road's eastern part." (Mel)

"Roger. Guide us there. Rollo." (Shuuya)

"Nya."

Rollo transform into her Horse Lion size.

"T-This is...kya!" (Mel)

Rollodeen swiftly grabs me, Viine and Mel with her six tentacles, and places us on her back.

I could feel Mel's huge breasts on my back.

Bluish-white big boobs at the front, white big boobs at the back.

Marvelous! It's a big-boob sandwich.

"...If you become my subordinate, it won't do for you to be surprised by something of this level."  
(Shuuya)

I arrogantly said while having a lewd look on my face.

"That's correct." (Viine)

Viine adds while hugging me from the front.

As the vanilla scent increases her seductiveness as woman, it's inevitable for me as man that my nether region reacts to some extent.

"It seems so...haa..." (Mel)

Mel's astonished voice tickles my ear.

"It's nothing to sigh at. Guide us." (Shuuya)

"Ah, okay. Please head straight east just like that." (Mel)

"Rollo, you don't have to go at full speed; a quick pace is enough, okay?" (Shuuya)

I instruct Rollo while gently stroking her black fur.

"Nyaon."

Although I told her that, she's still quite fast.

Seemingly having been surprised by the high speed, Mel tightly hugs my waist from behind. Once we arrived at the eastern side, Rollo slowed down.

"...So, around where from here?" (Shuuya)

"...Y-Yessh...umm...we're already close. If you go to t' right along the road over there, it's the Flavor Street. The enemies might be around already since we are close to the battlefield now."  
(Mel)

Mel slurs her words.

...Even I don't affect someone's articulation.

Well, let's leaving the joking aside...certainly, magic sources are all over the place.

"Where are the most intense battles going on?" (Shuuya)

"Up there." (Mel)

Ahead of Mel's pointed finger——

I could confirm many figures fighting as if battling atop a building's roof.

Once I activate <Night Vision>, a sword fight scene becomes clearly visible.

Soldiers that lock swords or fall off the building after being kicked.

"True. We're getting off." (Shuuya)

"Okay."

Mel slowly dismounted, but ended up collapsing as her hips apparently gave way.

Well, I do understand her.

Even Viine, who's used to it, is wobbly on her feet.

"So, is there any way to tell your allied soldiers apart? Some kind of sign?" (Shuuya)

"...There is. They have cloth armbands, scarves and badges with a mark of two moons drawn on them. Everyone else is hostile." (Mel)

Mel explains after somehow managing to stand up with her feet still unsteady.

"Roger. I don't wear something like that though..." (Shuuya)

"Here you go. Three armbands." (Mel)

Mel seems to be prepared.

Viine and I put on the armbands.

I had Rollo turn into a medium-sized black panther and tied the armband around her neck instead of the collar.

"I guess we will join them." (Shuuya)

"Yes." (Viine)

"I think Benett is there as well, so I will go, too." (Mel)

"Sure. It's night, so let me apologize in advance should I kill an allied soldier by mistake." (Shuuya)

"...Please make sure to not mistake them." (Mel)

Mel turns a piercing look at me, apparently unable to stomach my screwing around.

Uwah, how scary.

She's not joking. I suppose I have to truly pay attention.

"I'm heading to the rooftop. Viine, come!" (Shuuya)

"Yes, Master!" (Viine)

I open my overcloak, embrace Viine and shoot <Chain> from my left and right hand.

After using the chains as anchors by stabbing them into the building's roof and the top part of the building on the opposite site, I contract one chain while quickly running up the other chain.

"Ah!" (Mel)

Mel is left behind.

While stabbing the building with her tentacles, Rollo climbs to the rooftop with a speed that surpasses mine.

The people fighting on top of the roof stopped moving after seeing us sudden intruders.

Meanwhile I confirm the enemies.

A group with black attires and headbands.

A group with flashy copper armors and red hats.

I guess these guys are the enemies. They are using the Magic Combat Style, but there's no expert among them.

I spread out my left and right hand to the sides, and summon the Magic Halberd in my right hand and the Cursed Sword Beet in my left.

"Let's get the show started, Viine, Rollo." (Shuuya)

"Yes!" (Viine)

"Nyaoa."

We simultaneously rushed the enemy soldiers.

I extend the Magic Halberd and Beet with a twist——

After stabbing the red spear into the torso of a nearby, black-clothed man, I pull the halberd out, tearing it out alongside his guts due to the red axe blade.

"Gueeeh."

While pulling out the halberd in my right hand, I horizontally slash the solar plexus of a man wearing a copper armor with Beet from the side. He was cut right in half alongside his armor.

"Guh——"

Entrails and blood sprays were scattered. The cursed sword is sickly sharp. It felt like cutting through butter, completely unrelated to any sword techniques. That right now what just owed to the powers of the cursed sword and my race.

"The heck are these guys!? Shahia, Razon, deal with them!"

"Aight, eat thiiiis!"

"What's it all of a sudden!"

The enemies, who gathered to start a counterattack, raised their swords overhead. I rotate my body, using my toes as center. The footing might be bad atop the roof, but that's of no concern to me, no matter where I might be. Wide slashes aiming for my head and collar from the left and right—— I dodge the swords by rotating my body while watching the swords' points. And, using the momentum of the rotation, I make the Magic Halberd collide with the head of the black-clothed man, who swung his sword from a diagonal position. —His head is cut off. I ignore the flying head that still said, "Oh!" I maintain my body's rotation, making sure to focus on the flow. Just like that I diagonally swing Beet downwards. The cursed sword's blade strikes the forehead of an enemy wearing a headband

"Gieeh."

A red line runs down across his face, and then one side of his head slides down along that line, falling to the ground.

"Whaaaat da heeelll aaaare yooou!?"

"Shut up." (Shuuya)

I shoot <Chain> from both hands at the black-clothed man who gave the instructions earlier. At the same time I cast the intermediate spell, 《Ice Arrow》 of the water attribute. <Chain> that plunges forward with a bullet-like speed penetrated the man's torso and foot. Slightly later the ice arrow stabs into the face of the man who has collapsed while twisted.

"——The sub leader was defeated! Concentrate on the newcomers!"

"Aye!"

"Tsk, a skilled fighter."

"I guess he's strong?"

Enemies wearing red hats and those wearing black clothes; three of them face me.  
Rather than intercepting them, I launched an attack from my side  
I erase the cursed sword in my left hand, and stab the Magic Halberd into the roof.  
While supporting my body with one hand as it grabbed the halberd using it as pole vault, I delivered a dropkick to crush the chest of a black-clothed man, who rushed at me straight from the front.

"——Guaah."

"Shit, Sash! But now's the chance, aim at him!"

"Yaaaaa!"

Targeting the opportunity when my kick comes to an end, the enemies thrust out their swords from the left and right.

After landing I swiftly swing the halberd that supported me as if performing a driver swing.  
A red flame that heads from below to diagonally above.

"The fuck? It's a fire gate."

Once the red spear and axe blade, which are at the upper part of Magic Halberd Baldok, cut through the darkness, it apparently looked like the creation of a fan-shaped gate atop the roof, colored by flames.

Next I swung down my halberd on the shouting men on the left and right.

The trajectory of the axe blade that I fully swung in a 180° fan shape slides through the men's abdomens, bisecting them in no time.

Their abdomens were torn open as if they didn't wear any armor in the first place and their entrails spilled to the ground.

They fell over while bending backwards.

"Guh."

"Goh."

The two sword thrusts didn't reach me...

I check the vicinity while drinking the spraying blood.

There are no enemies around me any longer.

I confirm Viine's and Rollo's situation while sucking up some blood by holding out my tongue.

I could see Viine involved in close combat with her silver hair swaying.

She's slaying an enemy with a red hat using her snake sword instead of the snake bow.

Two are already laying on the ground, and with this it should be the third.

Rollo defeated the last man with a red hat by biting his neck.

Five people are scattered on the ground. All of them had their heads or throats pierced by tentacle swords.

This was the end of the battle on this roof.

The surviving soldiers of **【Remains of the Moon】** stare at us with dumbfounded expressions.

A rectangular face I recognized was mixed in among them.

"...You startled me. Your movements just now...they were too amazing." (Benett)

"Oh, Benett, huh?" (Shuuya)

"...Aight, that mark means you came to help us, right? Thanks for da help." (Benett)

Once I look properly, blood is flowing down on both of Benett's legs and her collar with sword cut wounds being visible.

"Guh...we were in the process of retreating after being done in by those skilled sisters...due to being outnumbered, as you can see..." (Benett)

"Here—" (Shuuya)

I threw a healing potion against Benett's body.

"Thanks, we ran out of those." (Benett)

Her wounds recover.

"I have more of them, so take some." (Shuuya)

"Thank you, we owe you." (Benett)

I handed several of my spare potions over to Benett.

"——Beneeeeett." (Mel)

It's Mel.

"Ah, Mel." (Benett)

Mel gasps heavily, "Huh? It's already over?"

"Ya, Shuuya, the silver-haired woman and the black cat over there slaughtered the enemies here." (Benett)

Benett explained.

"...Is...that so? As expected of you, Shuuya-sama." (Mel)

Mel says after surveying the rooftop that's littered with corpses all over.

"Sama? It looks like there's some kind of reason for that, Mel?" (Benett)

"Ah, y-yeah. Rather than that, what about Veronika's injuries?" (Mel)

"She's resting in the Twin Moon store's basement. But, it looks like it's no use unless she enters her coffin as she hasn't slept for two days. That's why Kazun, Paulsen and Angie are doing their best in facing Mad Knight of **【Eyes of Twilight】**, the Massacre Sisters of **【Supreme Dance of Crimson】**, and a stream of nameless mercenaries from **【Gloves of Darkness】** further east from here." (Benett)

Benett explained so that I could understand it as well.

"Guide us over there." (Mel)

"Got it. This way." (Benett)

Benett begins to run.

We follow her from behind.

Her figure as she runs while she jumps from roof to roof as if coping with a parkour makes me admire her once more as elf that specializes in scouting.

"The street below us is the battlefield." (Benett)

Benett quietly peeks out her face from the roof and checks the street.

Viine, Rollo, Mel and I do the same.

Barrels have been piled up in front of the store like a wall. The injured Kazun, Paulsen and Angie are in a 3 vs. 2 against Mad Knight and a black-haired longsword holder. Zeeta is fighting two pretty women while manipulating his maji.

Or rather, all of them are fighting in a big jumble.

Behind the battling leaders, soldiers of **【Remains of the Moon】** were fighting against knights of **【Eyes of Twilight】**, who looked like natives of Hesliphat and seemed to be church dropouts, soldiers of **【Supreme Dance of Crimson】**, who wear red hats and copper armor, and soldiers wearing headbands and black clothes that seem to belong to **【Gloves of Darkness】**.

"Mel, can you have the soldiers fighting over there withdraw?" (Shuuya)

"Yes, I can, but..." (Mel)

"Then have everyone except for the leaders fall back." (Shuuya)

"What ar—" (Mel)

I turn a dark look at Mel.

"They are hindrances. Or is it fine if I slaughter everyone including your guys?" (Shuuya)

"U-Understood." (Mel)

"Shuuya, what are going to do? If you intend to make a move on our friends with those bloodshot eyes, I won't forgive you!" (Benett)

Benett warns me.

"Be quiet, big-chinned elf! You should just obey Master's orders!" (Viine)

Next to me Viine remonstrated Benett with a cold-hearted expression.

"Wh-! Silver-haired woman, to talk like this with me!" (Benett)

"Stop it and shut up. Mel, have the soldiers pull back." (Shuuya)

I look at Mel with piercing eyes.

"Very well—" (Mel)

Mel takes out a scroll from her bosom.

The instant she poured mana into that scroll, she threw it down to the battleground below.

A dazzling light, similar to that of a flash grenade, was created.

At that moment,

"Retreat!"

"It's the signal. Retreat!"

"Aye, fall back!"

Only the soldiers of **【Remains of the Moon】** withdraw.

The enemy soldiers are raising something akin to victory shouts in the street.

"Viine, Rollo, until I tell you to, do come down on the street." (Shuuya)

"Yes, Master!" (Viine)

"Nya."

"I will annihilate the enemies. Mel, resolve yourself now that you're going to watch this—" (Mel)

"Eh?" (Mel)

Leaving such parting words, I jumped down from the roof towards the street.

——Blood Magic <Blood Path - Third Gate>

I activate <Beginning of Dusk>.

Darkness is born in an instant.

The flash grenade disappears as if popping, and darkness encroaches the street.

"What's going on?"

"Suddenly it's pitch black!"

"The moonlight's gone, too. A special magic?"

"Hahahaha, what the fuck is this? Don't tell me, a path to the Spirit World has been opened?"

"Hya hya, ridiculous!"

"...It will be repelled by Mad Knight's spirit binding!"

"What, what, keep your calm! Everybody, don't move to avoid friendly fire!"

"We are on standby until there are new orders from our guild leader."

"Aaah, w-wh-what, don't comeeee!"

"Guuuh."

"You mooooooonster."

The enemy knights had their heads gradually invaded as the mind pollution had started.

They are beginning to kill each other.

I landed in this street of darkness, a world of madness.

——Bye bye.

I send an evil smile in the direction of the enemies who are going insane.

I activated <Dimension of Darkness Blood Chain>.

Infinite crimson meteorites, blood chains, are generated from the darkness world connected to my mind.

The flock of blood chains that appeared in empty space tears through the world of darkness as if penetrating it and the enemies, who had their minds eroded, before vanishing.

With the sound of a mirror breaking, the enemy soldiers that were on the street disappeared.

Only several different weapons clatter to the ground of the nightly street after having lost their purpose...

『Magnificent...the works of one who is an Emperor of Darkness...I got mesmerized as the mana decreased...』

Just when I thought that Helme will likely complain about not being used in combat, she says something like that.

"...Hey, it's fine to come down. The only ones left are the strong guys fighting in front of the store."  
(Shuuya)

I called out to everyone atop the roof.

"Yes! Kyaa!" (Viine)

"Nyaon——"

Rollo instantaneously changes into her Horse Lion size, twines a tentacle around Viine's hips, places her on her back, and then comes running down quickly.

In no time she arrives next to me.

"...Master, even I witnessed the scene just now for the first time." (Viine)

Viine speaks while adjusting her posture atop Rollodeen (Horse Lion).

"Really? I used it once when confronting the guardian of the golden treasure chest, though. I guess you didn't see that." (Shuuya)

"Yes, it's dreadful. All enemies disappeared..." (Viine)

From Viine's expression I can understand that she's scared, even across the silver mask. She has a bluish-white skin from the start, but now it looks pale. With a slight delay, the soldiers of **【Remains of the Moon】** gathered while being led by Mel and Benett.

"Shuuya-sama, I understood what you meant before..." (Mel)

"You, darkness is darkness, but who the heck are——" (Benett)

"Benett, be quiet for now." (Mel)

Mel reaches out a hand and seals Benett's mouth.

"Rather than that, the fierce fighting over there...is still continuing, but you're not going to help them?" (Shuuya)

"Ah, yes, let's go." (Mel)

"Right! I will slaughter those shitty sisters!" (Benett)

Benett eagerly dashes in front of the store with the piled up barrels. Next we barge into the intense fighting at the storefront as well.