

Chapter 41

The woman in front of me — the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, who's trembling while holding her right foot, glares at me with a piercing look.

"Didn't you hear me, 『Hero of the Black Sword』-sama? Your friends ran away, so, what are you going to do?" (Shion)

"Kuuuh...kill me!" (Rina)

A "Kuuuh" here...? Are you a female knight? No wait, that's for when the opponent is an orc aka pig, right?
What?

"I'm a vampire!" (Shion)

I unintentionally raise my voice with an angry yell.

"——!?" (Rina)

The body of 『Hero of the Black Sword』 shivers with a start upon my abrupt shouting.

"Oops, sorry. Kill, you say...? In other words, you want to die?" (Shion)

"Demon King, what do you bastard want to tell me?" (Rina)

What I want to tell you? That I want you to become my bloodkin.

For the sake of my future endeavors — attacking the Domains ruled by other Demon Kings, I need bloodkin that can serve me as combat assets.

Bloodkin are, in a certain way, subordinates. Kanon actually proved that subordinates are unable to disobey me. That's exactly why I genuinely want to add the woman in front of me — the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, to my combat forces. However, even if I tell her all that directly, my wish likely won't come true.

"Those eyes of yours haven't given up on survival. What do you, who got seized by despair and anger, desire? Revenge against your comrades who betrayed you? Revenge against your comrades who abandoned you? Or — revenge against me who killed your comrades?" (Shion)

It would be ideal if her reply is the former. If it's the latter...I will try a different approach to persuade her.

"Demon King, what do you bastard want to tell me? What do you want me to say? Isn't it you guys' objective to destroy humanity? In that case, hurry up and kill me! You just have to accomplish your objective by killing me!" (Rina)

I ponder about the meaning behind the words spit out by the 『Hero of the Black Sword』.

My objective? Is the destruction of humanity my objective? According to the Mastermind, my goal is not just the destruction of humanity, but also the overthrowing of all Demon Kings besides me...

But, to be precise, that's not my objective. It's the objective of the Mastermind's 『World Salvation Project』.

My objective is to survive. If possible, I want to survive while enjoying my freedom.

Well, I won't deny that destroying humanity is a method to accomplish that goal, but...

"My objective is survival. Aren't you misunderstanding something here?" (Shion)

"What? What are you saying!? Survival as goal, he says! Are you in any position to say that while stealing the lives of so many people!?" (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 roars. 'While stealing the lives of so many people'...yeah. If I include those I ordered my subordinates to murder, I'm sure it easily surpasses more than 100 people.

Having said that, I have an objection.

"I won't deny that I stole the lives of many people. However, that was legitimate self-defense." (Shion)

"Self-defense, you say?" (Rina)

"Indeed. With a certain day as turning point, I was locked up inside a Domain. I can't go outside my Domain. And, everyday humans are invading that Domain to kill me. I killed the humans for the sake of my own survival. This is legitimately called self-defense, isn't it?" (Shion)

"..." (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 stays silent.

"I didn't go to the humans to kill them. I killed the humans that came to kill me in order to stay alive. Am I not even given the right to live? 『Hero of the Black Sword』, what would you have done? Would you sacrifice your life...to an enemy that has come to kill you without even knowing the reason?" (Shion)

"T-That's...even we, for the sake of surviving..." (Rina)

Doubts starts to color the eyes of the 『Hero of the Black Sword』.

Chance!

——Kanon, make the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 feel pity for you!

"Eh?" (Kanon)

Having received my order, Kanon's body suddenly trembles and she approaches the 『Hero of the Black Sword』.

"U-Umm~...do you remember me?" (Kanon)

Kanon calls out to the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 while smiling awkwardly.

"——Wha-!? A monster talked...!?" (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 is surprised by the Japanese words coming out of Kanon's mouth.

"Umm, you know...I'm a former Demon King who ruled over the Domain in the ΔΔ District. You don't remember?" (Kanon)

"——The one we invaded...that fairy Demon King? But your appearance has..." (Rina)

"Being cornered by the heroes...you guys, I resigned from being a Demon King and sought Shion-san's protection. My ordinary life of happily living together with goblin-san, kobold-san, and wolf-san...was ruined by you guys." (Kanon)

Kanon spins her words while making sure to speak with a feeble voice.

"Even us Demon Kings are originally humans, just like you guys." (Kanon)

"——!?" (Rina)

Hearing Kanon's statement, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 widens her eyes in shock. Huh? Humanity doesn't know that us Demon Kings are former humans? Ah...so that's what was meant with the memories of all humans being erased. However, Kanon is really skillful at enticing sympathy. Coupled with her cute appearance as pixie, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 is on the verge of giving in, isn't she?

"One day, I had suddenly become a Demon King after waking up and was locked up in a Domain. There I quietly lived together with unique creatures — the ones scorned as monsters by you guys. What's so wrong about that? I killed the invading humans for the sake of saving all the monsters, my friends...if you apply the human's laws, that's probably a crime. However, I don't regret those deeds. Even as former human." (Kanon)

"I-If I remember correctly, a Demon King we defeated said, "We are all humans, aren't we?", on the verge of his death. However, I believed it to be an unsightly pleading for his own life..." (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 mutters with a fading voice to no one in particular.

"Does it look to you as if we are currently begging for our lives?"

"T-That's...then I want you to tell me. Vampire Demon King, what do you want me to say? What do you desire of me who's going to die?" (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 asks me while shedding tears. Oh!? her way of addressing me has changed.[efn_note]Previously she referred to him as "kisama", a derogatory way to call someone, like bastard, asshole etc. Now she calls him "anata", someone of equal status, a more friendly way to address someone.[/efn_note] Is it the finale of the persuasion at last? The words I'm going to tell her from now on are really crucial. Do I pull her in as bloodkin while lining up one lie after the other...or do I demonstrate my sincerity by telling her the truth?

"If you believe that you're going to die...how about making a fresh start in life while believing that

the old you died here?" (Shion)

In order to gain some time to think, I hurl a frank statement at her with the intention of it being a light jab.

"——?" (Rina)

I suppose I blundered with my word choice. The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 looks puzzled. Let's head for the route of a bloodkin, whom I can trust, by showing my sincerity. Even if I turn her into a comrade by lining up lies, I have a hunch that it will create boundless troubles to follow up on once she learned the truth.... If I fail, there will be a next time, right?

I put an end to my thinking time.

I start to persuade the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 in earnest.

"What I desire from you is — you." (Shion)

"Eh?" (Rina)

Vigilance dwells in her eyes.

Huh? Did I make some kind of mistake?

"So you prefer women like the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, eh? But I wonder how it's going to turn out when you confess to her all of a sudden?" (Kanon)

Kanon looks at me scornfully.

Huh? Didn't I express myself properly?

I clear my throat and correct my previous remark.

"Umm, how to say it, what I want is to have you, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, as comrade...no, I want to welcome you as subordinate." (Shion)

"Subordinate...?" (Rina)

"Yes, subordinate. Even though I call it subordinate, it's something like Kanon over there...umm the fairy over there, okay?" (Shion)

——Kanon, praise me!

"Err, umm...Shion-san is gentle. If you ask him, he will even give you a home. It's close to self-sufficiency, but...you won't lack food. He wrecks his brain a bit too much, but...you can rely on him...however, skirts——" (Kanon)

——Be silent, Kanon!

It's just my imagination that her way of praising feels somewhat out of place, even though an order from a Demon King to a subordinate should be absolute, right? It looks like it's necessary for me to have a proper talk with Kanon.

"Well, that's the kind of frank relationship it is." (Shion)

"..." (Rina)

The wariness doesn't disappear from the 『Hero of the Black Sword』's eyes.

"To be honest, once you become my subordinate, it will definitely result in occasions where you will have to fight...kill humans. In addition, I also plan to ask you to invade other Domains. By no means can you call it a safe environment." (Shion)

To show my good faith, I talk honestly about the demerits.

"However — neither I nor my subordinates will stab you in the back. My subordinates won't run away while leaving you behind. That much I will promise you." (Shion)

A precious bloodkin for whom I expended all my CP. Moreover, I will never forgive a subordinate who escapes while abandoning the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, whose turning into a bloodkin is so difficult. I sincerely tell her the truth.

"——gh!?" (Rina)

The 『Hero of the Black Sword』 twist her face in pain.

"How about it? Won't you help me? Won't you help Kanon who was persecuted by you? If you're going to help us — I'd like you to drink up all the liquid inside this chalice." (Shion)

I tenderly say, squat down in front of her and hand her the **【Blood Chalice】**.

"T-This is..." (Rina)

The eyes of the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 focus on the **【Blood Chalice】** she took from me.

"However, you won't be able to go back once you drink this. You will become my subordinate and humanity's enemy." (Shion)

If she throws away the **【Blood Chalice】** which I created with all my CP...I will give up on her becoming a bloodkin, and kill her. And I will also stop trying to turn humans into bloodkin for a while.

"『Hero of the Black Sword』 — what are you going to do?" (Shion)

I asked the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 my final question.

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After taking a breath, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 — slowly poured the deep crimson liquid that filled the **【Blood Chalice】** down her throat.



Kanon and I watch the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 attentively.
Seemingly because the liquid was bitter, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 reveals a mortified expression.

"Shion-san...was it okay to tell her such a lie?" (Kanon)

"Lie? What kind of? I honestly told her the truth, didn't I?" (Shion)

I tilt my head to the side in confusion upon Kanon's whispered question.

"Eh? What I told her is..." (Kanon)

"That's what you told her, not me, right?" (Shion)

Even if she's going to blame someone for argument's sake, it'll be Kanon and not me.

"Eh? B-But, I was ordered by you to..." (Kanon)

"Ha? How is anything of what you said a lie?" (Shion)

"Eh? Gentle——" (Kanon)

"Hmm? What is it?" (Shion)

I show her a smile that's full of affection.

"N-Nothingggg." (Kanon)

After I got Kanon to agree, I approach the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 who is about to drink up all of the liquid, raise my hand over her head, and chant,
——《Contract》!

A faint light wraps up the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, and then the brightness converges slowly.
I operate my smartphone and throw a sidelong glance at her who looks at her hands and body to check the phenomenon taking place.

Did it succeed?

I check the screen displayed on the phone.

『

Name: Rina Shion

Race: Human

Rank: C

LP: 50/50

Body: D

Knowledge: G

Mana: H

Special:

– Swordsmanship (C)

– Slash

Subordinates:

【Composition】

』

I confirm the name of the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 — Rina, who had been added to the column of 【Bloodkin】, and then smiled.

However, something like that? After all the difficulties...she's rather weak if you look at the status, isn't she?

I guess the only things worth of mentioning are her swordsmanship rank and the LP value?

Rina calls out to me who's dispirited while looking at her status.

"Is it...fine with this?" (Rina)

"Probably. Did anything change for you?" (Shion)

"Let's see...if I must say, I feel like my hatred towards you — a Demon King has faded." (Rina)

Rina answers carefully, obviously groping for the right words.

According to Kanon, humans instinctively harbor feelings of hate towards Demon Kings. I guess it's some kind of brainwashing initiated by the Mastermind? Did that feeling disappear because she became my bloodkin?

Having said that, what interest me are the words 'has faded.' As it seems that she has said that unconsciously, it looks like her feeling of repulsion towards me isn't completely gone either. She's someone I turned into a subordinate at great pains. I think I should build a friendly relationship with her.

The first step towards that goal is an introduction, I suppose?

"Once again...or better, nice to meet you. I'm Shion."

I smile kindly at Rina, and hold out my hand to her.

"Glad to meet you. Rina. Going by my standing...I'm to call you Shion-sama?" (Rina)

Even while being bewildered, Rina grabs my hand and squeezes it.

"Just call me Shion or like Kanon, Shion-san. Whatever you like. No need to speak formally either." (Shion)

"Okay. Then I will call you Shion. I don't mind if you call me Rina. Best regards." (Rina)

Rina — the woman formerly known as 『Hero of the Black Sword』, showed me a smile for the first time.

"Huh? I feel like your attitude is completely different from the time when I became your subordinate. But that's just my imagination, right?" (Kanon)

Someone who applied to become my subordinate on her own accord, and someone who became my

subordinate because I wished for it. It's inevitable that there will be a difference in treatment.

I splendidly ignored Kanon's voice which I heard from behind.