

Chapter 96 - vs Demon King Yataro ①

I had decided to gather the invasion team members at a beach close to the Domain said to house two Demon Kings in order to carry out a strategy meeting.

"From now on, we're going to begin our invasion of Uchinada's Domain rumored to have two Demon Kings. According to the Hazard ranks used by the humans, our target Domain has rank B. However, with two Demon Kings, the threat level goes up to A." (Shion)

By the way, my sectors in the southern direction have a Hazard rank S — commonly called 『Heroes' Graveyard』. The sectors on the western side have a Hazard rank D — commonly called 『Farm』. The sectors in the east have a Hazard rank of B, and the ones in the north are set to A. My threat level is S. This isn't a rank that I assigned myself, but one that had been allocated to me by a former hero who ran away after abandoning Rina.

According to the humans' hearsay, I'm superior in everything. But, in the end it's been the humans that decided so on their own accord. I can't let my guard down.

"This time's invasion is different from the ones so far. I shall assign a single mission to all of you. That mission is to capture the two Demon Kings alive. However, the priority of this mission will be lower than the lives of the bloodkin. Are there any questions so far?" (Shion)

I look at the faces of my subordinates who are standing in a line.

"Chief...can I ask one thing ~ssu?" (Blue)

"——!?! Blue! You fool! We stay quiet while master——" (Chloe)

"Chloe!" (Shion)

"Yes, master! Excuse me for speaking up out of order..." (Chloe)

Chloe admonishes Blue, who raised his hand and tried to energetically ask a question, and I admonish Chloe.

"So, what's your question, Blue?" (Shion)

"You said capture alive, but what exactly should we do ~ssu?" (Blue)

"You're right. This time I will command Rina's unit. Blue, if your unit encounters the two Demon Kings before us, clean up the surrounding small fry, and corner them. The best would be for you to make them escape into another sector." (Shion)

"That's easy for you to say ~ssu, but...the opponents are Demon Kings, you know ~ssu? If they are at the same level as Demon King Alyssa——" (Blue)

"Blue! Even if they were as strong as Alyssa, I will definitely bring them down! You bastard, your life is——" (Chloe)

"Chloe! Don't bring them down. The goal is to capture them alive. And, the bloodkins' lives have the highest priority." (Shion)

"E-Excuse me..." (Chloe)

I wonder, did Chloe actually listen to me? There's a touch of uneasiness left.

"Well, whatever. Chloe, if your unit encounters the Demon Kings, run away in the worst case. I permit you to sacrifice your subordinates to make the escape a success." (Shion)

"I'm deeply grateful for your benevolence and deep consideration, master." (Chloe)

"And, if the girl Demon King shows up...use this. Apply it the instant she disappears." (Shion)

I pass 50 『Flash Orbs』 I had alchemized for this day to Chloe. Since I had alchemized 100 『Flash Orbs』 in total, we will be able to use the same amount of 『Flash Orbs』 as well.

"You have my thanks for bestowing these on us." (Chloe)

Chloe bows deeply.

"And, Blue, did you remember how to use the smapho?" (Shion)

"I'm okay ~ssu. If I press this, I can talk with you, right chief ~ssu?" (Blue)

Blue holds up the smapho, he took out of his straw skirt, while brimming with confidence. By the way, what Blue means with 'this' is a speed dialing icon that will connect to my smapho. Until now I have continuously checked the situation with the live video of my smartphone, but this time I cannot afford to do something like that. I had considered teaching him the method to receive a call as well, but I omitted it since I can handle that through telepathic messages.

"Call me at once if you run into a Demon King." (Shion)

"Roger ~ssu!" (Blue)

Chloe sends a jealous look at Blue who answers vigorously. Originally I wanted to give the smartphone to Chloe who fights from the rear, but since she couldn't handle its operation, it was no option. Unexpectedly Blue might have the highest aptitude towards modern devices.

"Well then, we're going to start the invasion now!" (Shion)

""""Yes, master!""""

The brief strategy meeting comes to an end, and I announce the start of the invasion.



Parting with Chloe's unit, I began the invasion together with Rina's unit.

The sector we invaded is structured as what you'd call a dungeon. The walls concealing the surroundings consist of unrefined, bare rock surface. Moss is growing here and there. Depressed spots and puddles of water are covering the ground made out of soil and rock.

A dark dungeon that felt damp and humid...how very comfortable. I also like a clear night sky illuminated by moonlight, but such a clammy dungeon calms my mind for some reason.

As Iron and four living mails advance in the lead — suddenly a dry clanking sound reverberates, and a single arrow falls to the ground at Iron's feet.

"Enemy attack! Spread out!" Rina's voice immediately fills the corridor, and my subordinates shift towards combat positions in accordance to her words.

"Flora, lilim, deploy your 《Magic Shields》!" (Rina)

""Okaaay~""

"Leila, Dakel, use ranged attacks together with the dhampirs!" (Rina)

""No need to tell me.""

"Iron, living mails, protect Leila, Flora and the others." (Rina)

{{Certainly.}}

"Guy! Red! Strike the enemy together with me!" (Rina)

"Hah! Roger." (Guy)

"Sure." (Red)

My subordinates get going while cooperating according to Rina's swift commands.

...And me?

Being one step late, I give up on close combat with Gáebolg, and start preparing to attack with magic.

——《Dark...eh, hey!

"——Wha-!?"

"Guuh...a blunder."

"Gaaaaaah! How annoyin'!"

Rina, Guy, and Red, who started to run, are tripped up by the slushy ground, and have their speed killed. Immediately after countless arrows and fireballs rain down on them.

"No helping it~ ——《Magic Shield》." (Flora)

{——《Cursed Hatred》} (Iron)

Flora and Iron aren't perturbed by the sudden event. Flora deploys a magic barrier in front of Guy who has a low durability, Iron draws the arrow's aim towards himself by clanging his shield. Rina and Red knock down the arrows by resolutely swinging their weapons. They escape the danger of the approaching fireballs while tumbling on what seems to be a muddy ground.

"Ah...!"

The expression of Red, who heartily swung his club atop the muddy ground, freezes. If one had strained his ears at this moment, they might have heard the clicking sound of him stepping on a trap. —Gogogogogogogo!!

A huge stone ball is rolling directly towards Red from the front alongside a strong vibration. In front of the monsters using ranged attacks, a muddy ground. A tumbling boulder switch inside the muddy ground. ...A killing intent at full throttle from the very start! —《Dark Lance》! I shoot a darkness lance at the tumbling boulder. The lance hits it directly, turning it into small stones and scattering it in all directions. It allowed Red to escape the danger.

"B-Boss... Thanks." (Red)

Red looks at me with a loose expression.

"Thanks are unnecessary. I will eradicate those guys. Rina, Red, Guy, spread out!" (Shion)

"Okay." (Rina)

"Affirmative." (Guys)

"Sure!" (Red)

—《Dark Night Tempest》!

The violently blowing storm of darkness swallows up the arrow-shooting goblins and magic-firing imps altogether.

Even the enemies, who were fortunate enough to escape the storm, are completely slain by Leila's ruthless ice bullets, and Rina as well as Guy who got out of the quagmire.

"Pheew, right from the beginning such a hassle."

"Yes, no kidding."

Rina and I look at each other, and smile wryly.

"Shion-sama! Look at this...!"

Once I get close to Leila, she points at an arrow that has fallen to the ground.

—!

The arrow is completely made out of silver.

Come to think of it, the spells raining down on Rina and the other two before were all fire-based. And, all the shot arrows were silver items.

What both of these shared in common was them being my weaknesses.

Is this coincidence...? Impossible.

In that case, the answer is simple. The master of this Domain knew that the enemy coming to attack them would be me. And they worked out plenty of countermeasures against me.

"It looks like ordinary methods won't work on usurping this Domain." (Shion)

I lift my evaluation of the Demon King ruling this Domain by one level.

Chapter 97 - vs. Demon King Yataro ②

Twelve hours have passed since the start into the Domain ruled by two Demon Kings.

Currently we're in the middle of invading the second floor.

The various traps planted at perfect spots, and the good compatibility with the various kinds of traps by the monsters stationed to intercept...as one in the same position of ruling a Domain, there are many things I admire, and as someone in the position of an invader, those have increased my stress levels. That's the kind of Domain it is.

"Rina, what's your impression of this Domain?" (Shion)

"The degree of invasion difficulty is quite high. It might be justified to set its Hazard rank to A and not B." (Rina)

Rina seriously answers while walking next to me.

"You're certainly right. The ranks of the deployed monsters aren't high at all. The equipment they wear is at most D rank. And yet, the degree of difficulty is fairly high." (Shion)

"Indeed. The skill of all the monsters we have encountered was high. ...Or rather, I think they are moving according to some kind of rule. I can't see any hesitation in their actions." (Rina)

"Goblins that lure one into traps, wolf packs with the goal of causing chaos, and monsters who have always been starting ranged attacks from nasty locations. The Demon King of this place seems to be fairly clever." (Shion)

The point I'm paying attention to is the high CP efficiency. Some pervert Demon King had only created masses of ghouls and giant bats while stressing the cost performance ratio. As if following the pervert Demon King, many Demon Kings had used similar strategies. However, the monsters inhabiting this Domain, the low cost wolves, goblins and the Devil species characteristic monsters, imps, have been skilfully put to use here.

"What makes me curious...is the wide range of monster types we have encountered. Are those monsters that have been insubordinated from the Domains that had been usurped so far?"

"I wonder? If you consider it normally, that would be the case, but...the overly familiar way of working with them is weird, isn't it?"

Pixies that fan the fires created by fireballs shot by imps through 《Nature Manipulation》. The stationing of ogres who excel at physical power, and traps that are buried in the ground as if aimed

at setting up an attack by those ogres from the sides. Elves that unleash ranged attacks while shielded by dwarves who have a superior sturdiness.

And what wonders me the most is how monsters, who can't be created by a Devil Demon King, immediately escape once they are in a predicament.

"Elves and pixies run away at once, don't they?" (Shion)

"Yeah." (Rina)

"I wonder whether that's owed to them being subordinates that can't be recreated like unique items..." (Shion)

I also cherish the lives of subordinates that I can't recreate like ogres and pixies for the same reason.

"Is there something about it bothering you?" (Rina)

"The Domain here has seven sectors, right? Did such a remarkably, great variety of Demon Kings exist in the vicinity?" (Shion)

"Going by my experience so far, the majority were Ogre or Fairy Demon Kings. I have seen only one Elf Demon King. Now that you mention it, it might be abnormal." (Rina)

"——Oops, we got to interrupt our chat." (Shion)

A violet swamp with steam rising — a poison swamp has been set up down the path. Slimes in the same color are squirming within the swamp. Several dark elves, who readied their bows, and a huge, dark brown devil holding an ax — a lesser demon, are waiting beyond the poison swamp. Moreover——

"Giant bats, huh?"

Three huge bats fly around above the lesser demons.

"We have plenty of antidotes on hand! All of you, fight without minding the poison!" (Rina)

Well-prepared means no worries. There's slip damage through the poison swamp, and if you're talking about the effect of the poison, I think it's close to a cold. You feel nauseated, and your stomach hurts. It's not at the level of obstructing combat, but if you ignore it, it will amplify the feeling of tiredness. That's the kind of effect a poison swamp has.

Not wanting to enter it, I proceed with the preparations for offensive magic.

"Dakel! Shoot down those eyesores!" (Shion)

"Ayes." (Dakel)

The ultrasonic waves of giant bats affect one's mental concentration. Their weakness are archery attacks. I give Dakel an order before Rina can.

My remaining subordinates begin to take on their respective tasks.

Once Iron clangs his shield, Red charges into the poison swamp without hesitation, and beats down

the violet slimes — the poison slimes with his club. Leila shoots her ice bullets at an imp, and Flora follows up on Leila's attacks. Rina and Guy run through the poison swamp, confronting the lesser demon.

——《Dark Arrow》!

I continue to indiscriminately fire many darkness arrows at the enemies on the other side of the poison swamp.

Five minutes later.

Once Rina's slash sends the lesser demon's head flying, the enemy's front line collapses. Afterwards we brought down one enemy blocking our path after the other, capitalizing on our individual strength.



The fifth day after starting the invasion.

We have completed the invasion of the sector containing nine floors in total. I succeeded in usurping the first sector.

"Mmh? Is something wrong?"

Rina calls out to me who finished taking over the sector.

"Yeah... There's something that bothers me." (Shion)

"Is there? Certainly, we lost two subordinates, but...all bloodkin are safe and sound. Or is it not about this time's invasion?" (Rina)

Just as Rina says, we lost two of my subordinates, a living mail and a wolf, in this run. Since they were subordinates that I had nurtured, I have a feeling of regret, but...I can come to terms with it as they were necessary sacrifices.

"Rina, there were nine floors in the sector we usurped a while ago, right?" (Shion)

"Yeah. A sector with nine floors is rare, but is there something making you uneasy about it?" (Rina)

"Nine floors means...what level for a Demon King?" (Shion)

"Nine, no?" (Rina)

Rina immediately replies.

"Do you know the number of sectors I'm ruling?" (Shion)

"If I remember correctly...it should be 45 together with this sector, I think" (Rina)

"Correct. Do you know my level?" (Shion)

"Kanon mentioned before that you became level 10, but...did you become level 11?" (Rina)

"No, I'm still at 10." (Shion)

"In short...you're saying you're strong?" (Rina)

Rina cocks her head in puzzlement, not understanding what I want to say.

"I became level 9 around the time you defeated Demon King Kanta." (Shion)

"Kanta...how nostalgic." (Rina)

"The number of sectors I ruled back then was 24." (Shion)

"I see. You grew quite a bit since then." (Rina)

Rina gives her opinion, missing the point.

"On the other hand, the Demon King here is ruling over seven sectors." (Shion)

"Just now it became six. Once Chloe's group finishes its invasion, five will be left, huh?" (Rina)

Kanon would have correctly guessed what I want to say around here. Is Kanon smart and Rina stupid...? Or...is there a difference in the way of thinking between Rina and Kanon because Rina hasn't been a Demon King unlike Kanon?

"I guess I was too indirect. Even though the Demon King here has only seven sectors, their level is nine. In other words, the Demon King, who has been ruling this sector, has defeated quite a few invaders with his own hands. Don't you think so?" (Shion)

"The Demon Kings killing their enemies with their own hands grow fast...come to think of it, that's the kind of creature Demon Kings were, weren't they?" (Rina)

"To call me a creature...well, you're correct, though. In short, what I want to say is that the Demon King here is a type who can also fight at the front line by himself." (Shion)

"And yet they didn't show up this time? Is that a matter of concern?" (Rina)

Rina has finally reached the answer I wanted her to reach.

"That's how it is. They are a Demon King excelling in the deployment of monsters and the planting of such troublesome traps. And a type of Demon King who can fight at the front line as last measure. That's plenty of cause for concern, don't you think?" (Shion)

"I see. Even when standing at the front line, you're always worrying about such things...I guess that's the secret behind your strength, Shion." (Rina)

"Well, it's an era where you will be weeded out if you stop thinking." (Shion)

"Hah, my master is truly reliable. Please guide me...and my friends from now on as well." (Rina)

Different from Kanon, it didn't develop into a discussion. Instead, Rina listened to my words and laughed in good humor.