

Chapter 218 - Dark Katana Blood Killer Yui

After we left the Ragni village, I summoned the Burning Knights. I deployed them as vanguards, and while making a break every so often, we proceeded towards the spot marked on the magic treasure map.

I continued spending the travel time asking the Burning Knights about the situation of the battles in the spirit world, learning swordsmanship while cooperating with Yui, and actually defeating monsters on the way.

Several days passed like that. As usual it was a dull, powerless sky, yet the rain had stopped. A mud road formed by the terrain continued on. There were great numbers of monsters inhabiting the plains, but around here, there were only few of them.

However, there were monsters similar to hyenas that swarmed towards monster corpses.

Also, thrown spears, and fallen swords and arrows littered the ground, showing that there had apparently been a hunt. There were also traces of a camp.

I wonder whether this area is still in the sphere of the ragni's influence, or whether it belongs to another evil races' living space.

Before long, we switched from the mud road to woodlands. There were many trees like lime trees, conifers, and twisted trees I had never seen before. Exactly because it was the evil domain that seemed to disregard the climate, there were many patches with overgrowing trees. Going by appearance, there were even trees with crystal bark. How heterogeneous.

It might be a part of a huge woodland area.

"Trees I have never seen before. There were no trees that possess crystalline bark in Zamalia." Yui commented.

"Nn, they didn't exist in Holker's south either." Eva added.

"There existed weird trees in the Whirlpool Forest of Demonic Fog near Hekatrail as well, but I've never seen trees with such shapes..." Mysty chipped in.

My bloodkin muttered as they touched the mysterious trees.

The foot of a mountain range, which seemed to be as tall as the alps, peeked out through a gap between the trees. The huge woodland area was like a wall with barely any gaps. Seeing as the forest was full of crooked trees, there existed no path to advance further inside.

However, according to the magic treasure map, the treasure's location was deep inside this forest. I guess I will take a look from the sky...

"I will go check it out from the air."

"Okay."

"Nn, go together?"

"No, it's okay. I will return right away. Rollo——"

"Nn, nyaon." Rollo transformed into her horse-like divine beast form.

I jumped upon the back of my imposing partner, straddling her, and then grabbed the pair of rein

tentacles extending from the back of her head. The ends of those tentacles attached themselves to my neck, allowing me to share senses with Rollodeen.

We started running parallel to the forest at full power. I had noticed it before, but this forest was really like a wall continuing endlessly.

At that moment, my partner suddenly caused a thick sound, the noise of my partner having kicked off the ground with her hind legs. In an instant I felt how we floated, right, she had leaped.

I also matched my partner's maneuver, creating <Magic Hand guided by Thought> below her feet. It used the image of a Rollodeen-exclusive springboard in midair. Basically it was like paper in stone-paper-scissors, but realized through the crooked magic hand.

As my partner was sharing her sensations with me, she perceived the <Magic Hand guided by Thought> below her feet. She stepped on it, and jumped once more. Having used the foothold, Rollodeen leaped high into the air.

At that moment, my partner deployed her jet-black wings at the sides of her torso, starting to fly. I actually felt her overwhelming speed, and the wind was nice. While checking the evil domain's weather——

"Nn——"

"Yahooo."

『Sky』 『Sky』 『Fun』 『Partner』 『Play』

We glided through the air as I felt Rollodeen's emotions. A huge woodland area extended as far as I could see below us.

——This is the 20th floor of the labyrinth in Pelneet, correct?

As I wondered so, there was no big difference between the surface of the planet Sera, and this view of the evil domain which was a different world on its own.

More than the elven territory I know from the surface...it's a chaotic forest formed out of many trees with odd shapes. That might be the reason, but I can't really see the ground.

I wonder what's visible far away. Once I shift my attention towards deeper inside the forest ——nuoh?

Deep inside the forest, far in the distance...no, beyond the mountain range...something mysterious is fighting?

Even from this spot I can clearly see them with my naked eyes. Those are...as tall as the mountains? Absurdly huge? It might be the kin of evil gods?

This is sure a spectacle I won't be able to witness on the surface...an encounter with the unknown living in the evil domain. No, something like that might exist on the surface as well, just that I haven't seen it yet...

"Rollo, make sure to not get close to those gigantic creatures, no matter what. We will observe while staying around here."

"Nyaaaao."

It's scary, but also exciting.

Naturally I took the beam rifle out of my item bag. I peeked through its scope, and zoomed up right away, observing the battle between the huge creatures.

Oooh, wow...

The huge monster on the left possessed bluish multi-legs and a human-shaped torso that was far bigger than that of the deidan. The huge monster on the right was a gigantic caterpillar with pink

and violet as basic colors.

The deidan-look alike had a futuristic head similar to that of a biker's helmet. Objects similar to the wings of fighters were attached at the sides of the helmet. Something like a triangle option floated just above the wings, having a shape matching the wings. It had grim shoulders. The long and narrow arms were split into two scissor-shaped arms starting with the elbow.

On the other hand, the caterpillar extended its pink tentacle horns as weapons. It also had compound eyes shooting anti-aircraft lasers.

Accordingly, the tips of the shoulders located on the left and right of the multi-legged one shed a dazzling light. At the same time, it unleashed an unknown whirling vortex magic that seemed to tear through space from its two scissor-shaped arms. Its energy source might be located at the tip of its shoulders.

The huge worm monster was struck by that unknown magic across its whole body. Its tentacles were cut off, and golden blood sprayed into the air.

No, it was no blood spray. Because its size is what it is, it's a sea of golden blood, huh?

However, it charged and crashed into the multi-legged deidan-look alike. The noise of the clash didn't reach this far, but it was terrifying.

It's funny, but a part of the huge forest was dyed golden like the leaves of ginkgo. One of the nearby mountains was whittled down...

I wonder whether its blood is actually real gold. My interest continued. But, somehow...

I was continuing the observation in the sky, but...it seemed as if the unknown beam attacks might come even our way after being perceived by something like an anti-aircraft radar? That's the feeling I got. Well, we're quite far away, so I think it should be alright either way.

At that point I stopped watching through the beam rifle's scope, and released my peeking stance.

The part of my fingers that had grasped the beam rifle had become white. It looks like I put too much strength into them out of excitement.

I suppose it's a salvation that the area with the treasure is in a completely different direction. I really don't wanna go to a place where decisive battles between superheroes and super-monsters take place every three minutes.[efn_note]Reference to One Punch Man[/efn_note]

"...Rollo, let's stop at this point, and return to everyone."

"Nn, nyaa? Nyaaa."

My partner asked whether we won't butt in on the battle. At least that's what I felt she had asked.

But, understanding my feelings, she shifted towards a circular movement.

Someday it might be an option to go join such fights, but for now I'm going to avoid getting in-between the mortal combat of gigantic creatures.

Time to get back to our friends. Seemingly with the intention of giving me an answer, my partner's tentacle tapped the back of my hand.

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"That's why it's dangerous to stay in the air."

"It has piqued my interest, but staying clear from that is the safer option." Mysty was curious about the huge monsters, but...that might be expected.

The magic treasure map pointed into a totally different direction, so it was unrelated to us. While looking in the direction of the forest, I kept recalling the spearmanship, hunting, and gathering training with Master Archilles.

"...I guess that's why we're going to advance while cutting down the trees and branches in this forest while at the same time using that as training." I stated.

The technique of swinging my spear in the shape of ∞ was one of the basics I had been taught by my master. The applications of the Wind Spear Style were tremendous. Well, I feel like the Wind Spear Style uses "one spear" as foundation. By being able to handle one-spear techniques with one spear, it will be possible to make use of two or three spears.

『Shuuya, even if you use two or three spears together, a lot of it will eventually just become a mere show. Understand that the basics will lead you to the secrets of each style. In the end, it's the Wind Spear Style that ties loose ends. It's a teaching for one spear.』

That's what Master Archilles told me so as to admonish me who messed around by holding a black spear in both hands.

It might be still too early for me to talk about exquisite spear skills as I haven't grasped yet what might lie ahead of master's words from back then, but the one spear techniques are certainly very deep. It looks like there are also <Spear Kumite> combined with Magic Combat Style...I guess there's no end to martial arts.

"...Shuuya's thoughts always revolve around training, don't they? Well, I will go along with it, though."

"Is it the influence of your master, after all Shuuya?" Yui said while looking at her Dad.

"Nn, I was probably influenced by sensei as well." Eva said.

"Everyone has someone who influenced them." Viine summarized.

"...Even you, Viine?" After pondering for a bit, Mysty asked Viine while staring at her silver hair, seemingly feeling somewhat doubtful.

I really feel an urge to touch that glossy, free-flowing, pretty hair of hers. Is Mysty envious of it? I guess I will try asking her whether she wants me to change her hair's color with <Servant Development> next time.

"Yes..." It might not have a deep meaning, but Viine stared at me.

I thought of her story about her mother, who taught her, her older sister, who spurred her on, and her younger sisters, who shared her hardships during the harsh training by the Sorcery Noble, during her childhood...

"I think I was influenced by Dad, and a bit by the teachers at school, when I was a child."

"Speaking of school, once I consider that a mountain of papers is waiting for me when we get back, I get all depressed..." Mysty lamented.

"You sent a letter that you would take a short vacation, didn't you?"

"Yeah, I asked a servant employed by master to deliver it when she goes shopping." Mysty answered. (T/N: Duduumm!!)

I suppose she did that while we were getting ready. Is it a paid vacation for two, three days? Ah, come to think of it, how does the time flow on this 20th floor of the labyrinth, the evil domain, in the first place? Is it the same as on the surface? No way, it's not the same as with Urashima Tarou's travel, right? [efn_note]You can check it out under wiki to get the reference, if you don't know the fairy tale yet[/efn_note]

For just an instant I imagined something really bad, but my bloodkin continued to chat happily.

"Nn, once I get back, I will give Dee and Lily the meat of the huge cow as a present!"

"Shuuya mentioned it, but its name is guniguni."

"The number of guests might increase with guniguni meat as new menu."

"Fufu, Eva, you're really excited." Rebecca observed.

"Nn, it was delicious..."

"But, I do understand you. I really wanted to allow Betty-san to eat the soft, boiled tongue, too." Rebecca added.

True, I think Betty-san will be fine with that soft meat. She might actually even say, "Actually my jaw is strong, and this is super delicious. You don't have any more of it?"

"The evil race in the village? I didn't understand what they were saying at all, but...the taste of those fish and meat dishes was something you can't experience anywhere else."

"I didn't understand the language, just as my daughter said, but from their gestures, it was clear that they were expressing their gratitude. The house, they led us to, felt elegant as well. It reminded me of the sight in the 【Shijima Town】, which got influenced by the island nation in Zamalia's east." Kaldo said.

Shijima Town? It has the image of Four Island Town[efn_note]The town is called Shijima in katakana, Four Island = Shi Shima in kanji[/efn_note]

"...Yui, Kaldo, you went to the island nations?" Viine asked.

"Nope. However, since I often visited 【Shijima Town】 for work, I have heard various folklore from the humans, demi-humans, and demonoids flowing in from the island nations." Kaldo answered.

"Yep, same here. It had to do with work and the people related to it." Yui added awkwardly, apparently recalling her work as a hitman.

"Various folklore..." Did it pique Viine's interest? Her eyes seemed to sparkle.

It's a bit lonesome, but...sooner or later, the girls might discover their own paths as well. Now then, I guess I will give them instructions from here on out.

"I guess the time for reclamation has come. Burning Knights, start on it." I ordered.

"Yes, leave it to me!"

"I, Red Burning Knight Adomos, shall gratefully accept to be the vanguard!"

"Nuuh, you trying to pull ahead!?"

Adomos and Zemetas started to plunge onwards while cutting the branches, obviously having a little competition.

"Okay, I have to be careful about not starting a huge fire." Rebecca said.

"Nn, cannot lose to puff-puff."

With a slight delay, Rebecca shot a series of blue fireballs. Just as she had mentioned, she kept them at fireballs that didn't burn too intensely.

"You can tamper with the property of those blue flames?"

"Yeah, to some extent."

Hee...

Eva cut several branches with her mana-clad chakram from the distance. Viine, Yui, and Kaldo started to prune the branches with slashes of their blades. Mysty broke the trees by having her golem do it for her.

"I lose out to Rollo-chan, but it looks like I can contribute the most to this kind of work."

Certainly the steel punches of her golem mowed down the trees with a violent force. Rollodeen (Divine Beast) cut them down with the thick claws at her front paws.

『Your Excellency, shall I help out as well?』

『No, it's just pruning anyway. It's fine.』

『...Okay.』 Helme gave a spiritless reply.

Sorry.

Alright...I will do my best and whittle down the trees, I suppose.

"Everyone, don't step out in front of me—— If it's this, I'll probably be able to whittle down quite a bit——" I warned everyone after I went past the Burning Knights and stood at the head of our

group.

I unleashed <Darkness Drill - Demonic Destruction Lance>. Destruction Spear Gladopalus drilled through many thick trees. Then the darkness lance vanished as if having caused a hole in space.

—Nice! The number of trees growing in front has been reduced significantly.

Like this all of us forcibly pushed onwards while destroying a part of nature with its many crooked trees, albeit I didn't know whether you could say that those trees were naturally growing in the evil domain. As we got closer to the spot marked on the magic treasure map, the number of animal trails gradually increased. I also spotted magic source responses here and there.

"It's the response of a monster."

"Yep, it's closing in from the left side." Viine pointed out.

A huge wild boar-shaped monster showed up. It had large tusks, and was smaller than the huge cows on the plains.

It charged at us while frantically chasing a medium-sized, white rabbit.

However, it didn't only have large tusks, but also angular horns growing at its forefeet. Its appearance was that of a different kind of huge boar.

As I observed it, Yui stepped forward with her <Eyes of Baycala> activated. Yui's eyes started to transform. Many snowflake-like, white speckles manifested in her obsidian-like eyes. Then there was an illusion as if swaying, silvery-white snow fluttered down within her eyes, causing many beams of light. And finally her eyes became completely silver.

"Allow me to handle that." Yui turned the point of the magic katana in her right hand towards the boar.

She placed her left fist at her waist, and after hitting the mouth of her katana's sheath with a clank, she grasped the leather-wrapped handle of her katana while opening her fist, and drew that katana as if performing an iai technique.

At the same time, a silvery mist of mana was released from her eyes. The mana layer of the silvery mist connected with the katana in her right hand. Then both her katana got covered by a silvery mana layer.

Silver mana surged out from the tips of the katana. It looked as if a hot plasma-like energy was produced from within the blades. That emitted mana turned into particles, dancing in the air. The way the particles vanished seemed fleeting, as if circulating into the atmosphere.

The two magic katana connected with the silvery mana layer created from the mana of her beautiful <Eyes of Baycala>.

The black-haired female high-school student, no, Yui, handling those magic katana was the epitome of beauty.

"...Understood." I answered shortly while being mesmerized.

Yui nodded at me while smiling, and then stared at the boar. She adjusted the angles of her two silvery-shining magic katana. A metallic sound of a clinking, and slightly later, that resembling a key chain reverberated from the wrapped hilts of both katana.

What caused the sounds might be a part similar to a trench knife covering the handle of Versage.

Yui's forelocks swayed slightly. Her eyes were silver, but it was obvious that they were piercing. It seemed that the huge boar had a red border added to it by the ability of her <Eyes of Baycala>

which expressed her menace as killer.

She gathered mana in her feet, and in an instant, dashed forward — in a forward-bent posture. She charged towards the boar with an explosive acceleration.

The huge boar was in the process of opening its muzzle to devour the white rabbit any moment now.

At that moment, the katana in Yui's left hand seized the edge of the boar's muzzle. Its muzzle, which looked as if the blade got stuck at its edge, was directly torn apart in a horizontal direction. It was severed as if widening the opening of the boar's mouth against its will.

Yui, who had fully swung the magic katana through, ran up next to the boar. Next, at the moment when I wondered whether her feet had sunken in a bit, she crossed the boar above its head.

——A left turn jump.

At the same time, matching her cartwheel maneuver, she turned her two katana towards the underside, and swung them.

The spiraling blood spray was pretty. She cut in deeply, as if tracing the boar's head. Immediately after landing on the left side, she moved her slender arms with wonderful agility, resembling that of an acrobat, without braking. She unleashed a technique that switched from a motion of thrusting out her katana at a blurring speed that seemed to be a dual-katana skill to a cross slash.

The boar had its skull and muzzle roughly cut apart in the shape of a cross. Spinal fluid and chunks of flesh of the huge boar head were scattered.

Having lost its head, the boar pitched forward and dived into the ground while causing a huge impact. The surviving rabbit shook its tail as if thanking Yui, jumping around her feet.

"...Magnificent katana technique. It had a decent cutting ability."

"...Thanks. I have piled up training and live combat experience after becoming a <Head Servant Leader>." The look sent forth from her pretty <Eyes of Baycala> was overflowing with confidence.

...<Dark Katana Blood Killer> Yui.

What if she grew further, learned <Blood Mana>, and acquired an Open Second Gate skill...

I wonder what kind of skill it would become. It really interests me...would it be blood katana, or an assassin's katana?

Open Third Gate would probably allow her to learn <Blood Acceleration> after grasping it.

Well, different from me, it likely won't be a skill allowing her to suddenly grow by directly sucking out a soul...

Her acquiring Open Third Gate might take a few decades or centuries. Besides, it's not like she has understood it yet, going by appearance. At least that's what I think. But, it might happen unexpectedly fast if she keeps killing guardians spawning to protect labyrinth rooms, or guardians spawning from treasure chests.

While pondering such things, I spoke up, "...It looks like your katana techniques have also improved after you obtained the combat occupation <Dark Katana Blood Killer>. It's the same with the technique just now, right?"

"Yep, is it obvious after all? It's a new skill, derived from <Eyes of Baycala> after I inherited your blood, <Soft Silver>. I tried to use it together with <Cross Slash>." Yui explained.

She acquired such a skill?

"Hee, so that's why a silver mist came out of your eyes?"

"Looks like it. A silver smoke from my eyes, huh? I knew that something like that came out, but I haven't actually experienced it myself. I think I will become more proficient at handling it if I use it a few more times——" Yui happily coiled the leather wrap at the hilt of her magic katana around her finger, and skilfully handled her magic katana by rotating it around while smiling.

No matter how often I see it, her appearance as she smiles and her forelocks sway is lovely.

"...I see. I look forward to your growth from now on."

"I cannot lose to my daughter either." Kaldo looked at Yui while lifting his magic sword and leaning it against his shoulder. He smiled happily, befitting a father.

He must be happy with his daughter's growth.

"Oh, there's a large magic stone inside the boar." Rebecca pointed out.

A jewel-like magic stone peeked out from within the fallen corpse.

"I will loot it."

After retrieving the large magic stone, I checked the magic treasure map.
I think it's a little bit further ahead, so we are going to proceed through the forest.