

Chapter 219 - Fierce Clash with the Evil Domain Monk



There was a group riding magic beasts in a place with unnaturally felled trees. They wore robes that flickered like shadows.

"This place, huh? Looks like we caught up." The person in the lead muttered.

The mouth peeking out from beneath the robe was dyed in darkness. The face's contours were unclear.

"...Kire-sama, are you really going to confront those unknowns?"

"That's right..."

The person was called Kire. He pulled out his hands from beneath the robe, and lifted his hood. What became visible was a mask that seemed to stick to the surface of his face. He took off that mask, seemingly tearing off the skin clinging to it. The hair, which had a color similar to new, green leaves, fluttered in the wind. He was of a race possessing three eyes that were similar to those of humans, an evil race.

His face was handsome, and if someone were to see him on the surface, they would consider him to be a subspecies of the human races owning three eyes.

As the person called Kire looked at his questioning subordinate with his three eyes, one of his other subordinates said, "Captain Kire, it seems as though Sosoyros is frightened."

"Gamuzo..."

"I can fully understand the feelings of Sosoyros. For countless trees, which stand towering over the surroundings like the Ursargul Mountain Range, to have been mowed down up to this point, that's a bit..."

All of Kire's subordinates took off their dark masks. They were under the direct command of the Evil Domain Monk Kire. They were part of the armed forces worshiping Evil God Shadow, a section of the evil domain monks led by Shadow Eagle King Slayd. They were members of the monk unit to which the evil domain knight Degu, who was defeated by Shuuya, belonged

"I agree with Gamuzo's and Kiri's opinion. This place is outside our territory. We might run into madmen of unknown origin we have no information about, strange demons, or other evil races. Moreover, on the other side of that mountain, different from the Ursargul Mountain Range, is an area where only the fittest survive, inhabited by such gigantic beings that even the gods leave them alone..." Sosoyros looked at the path of destruction left behind by Shuuya's party.

Two silver-shining hatchets were hanging at his waist.

"...Sosoyros, the eyesight of your race is great. Were you seized by fear after seeing the spectacle of

this forest having been mowed down like that gigantic being?"

Just as Kire had stated, his race was different from the others. He was of the Ulbami race, one of the evil races. Their eyesight was far better than that of the humans living on the surface. Moreover, they owned a unique magic technique called Evil Spirit Employment while being warriors at the same time, allowing them to see lights which the other evil races couldn't. His hair was black, and a tattoo decorated his forehead.

"...Yes. I'm scared. The eyesight of us ulbami is certainly superior, and since it allows us watch even things in the far distance, we can guess what kind of abilities the other party possesses. That's why I'm wary."

"You're an honest man. Are you going to go back to the other evil domain monks, to the evil army by yourself?" Kire laughed.

He donned an expression making it clear that he was asking even though he knew the answer.

"...Humph, Kire-sama, you must be joking. If I were to lose my commanding officer who always kindly listens to my complaints, there would be no meaning to my life. I shall protect you with these Seag Hatchets." Sosoyros answered Kire's question, and shifted his eyes towards the hatchets hanging at his waist while looking happy.

"Alright, then I will have you resolve yourself."

"As you command."

"We shall follow you, Kire-sama!"

"That's right. There's no way that we can allow Degu to go ahead of us all alone."

Kire's subordinates yelled out their fighting spirits.

"I will kill the unknown who recently killed Degu and threw my command into chaos!"

Once Kire looked at his subordinates with a face full of confidence and pride as an evil domain monk, he circulated the robe to the back like a shadow that split apart from within, revealing a smooth carapace armor covering his chest. Hilts of straight swords were visible beyond the tips of his shoulders on both sides. Two straight swords were dangling on the left and right side of his waist held in place by sword belts which were tied with strings and metal fixings, that had a function for attaching and detaching, to the waist belt.

Twin Sword Kire who was famous in the evil army, and was also referred to as Kire of the Four Swords.

This Kire was eager to kill the unknowns with his four swords, and thus turned the feet of his horse-shaped magic beast towards the woodland that had been unnaturally mowed down.



We defeated alien monsters with just one arm, and huge boars. Collecting their meat, bones, and large magic stones, we kept advancing through the forest at a good pace.

In the middle of it, Rollo-san, who had been resting in a catloaf-styled position on my shoulder, suddenly got up and jumped down while meowing, "Nn, nya~"

She then began running deeper into the forest.

"Rollo, don't go too far, okay?"

Did she smell something? Ah, maybe she wants to pee.

As I was watching Rollo's cute figure departing, my Grasping Perception detected abnormal presences behind us.

There were several magic sources. At this size and this speed, a behavior that had one objective. I turned around while staying cautious.

"Everyone, I don't know whether they are hostile, but several magic sources are headed this way." I informed everyone in my role as scout.

"Understood."

"Several..."

"I wonder what's going on?"

After a short time, the owners of the magic sources showed up from the direction where I had sensed them. The ones gallantly making their entrance were three-eyed evil races.

The evil race leading their group possessed a handsome face with a high nose bridge. A jet black mask had been placed on top of the green hair of his head.

"Found you, stranger!" He shouted while riding a magic beast.

Stranger, huh?

A jet black mantle and armor. The cloth-wrapped hilts of straight swords peeked out beyond the tips of his shoulders. He was a good-looking evil race.

As I'm honestly praising the looks of the guy in my mind...

That three-eye grasped the hilts of the swords on his back with his two upper arms, and drew the weapons out of their scabbard with a melodious, metallic sound. At the same time, he crossed his lower two arms, and drew the two straight swords hanging on either side of his waist.

Going by how agile he moved his body just now, he's definitely no villager. Someone who was present at the battle? There are signs of Magic Combat Style, too. A remarkable fighter at Degu's level, I suppose?

"Do you have some kind of business with me?"

"Don't play dumb, two-eyeeeee!"

Oh shit, he's angry. It's a raid, huh?

I summoned my Magic Halberd into my right hand.

"Master, shall I floor the enemy, starting with the one at front?" Viine got ready to use Rasheena's Bracelet while holding her Jade Snake Bow in one hand.

"Milord, leave this to me——" Kaldo said, seemingly influenced by the growth of his daughter who brought down a huge boar by herself.

Dude, you're already running...

Kaldo, who donned the expression of a father, drew his Magic Sword Hyuzoy while dashing in a forward-bent posture. As I burned his movements into my memory so as to try imitating his gait later on while analyzing the angle of his feet, his directions, his muscles, the distribution rates of his Magic Combat Style, Kaldo kicked off the ground and jumped.

He performed a twisted side rotation like a gymnastics athlete, unleashing a technique that seemed to increase the power of his weapon attack by adding the rotational movement.

Isn't that Yui's signature move? I have seen her carry it out several times. I also remember actually receiving that slashing attack and forcibly repelling it.

Kaldo's use of it seemed rough. It looked as though the blade of his magic sword blurred.

The three-eyed evil race swiftly swung the straight swords held in his four long, slender arms. A swift response and an amazing technique.

He's the enemy, but the trajectory of his swords is beautiful, a unique swordsmanship.

The evil race matched his timing with the trajectory of Kaldo's magic sword. The back of one of his straight swords received Kaldo's sword, offsetting the power of a sword blade with a sword blade.

At the same time, the remaining three swords seized Kaldo's torso. They moved so as to claw at Kaldo's abdomen.

"Guaah——"

"Kaldo!" I shouted out of reflex, but he's a <Servant Leader>, or in short, immortal.

Kaldo screamed in pain as a spray of blood scattered from his belly. But, he didn't let go of the magic sword in his hand. Landing on the opposite side, he swiftly took some distance with a calm face. However, it had turned into the face of a vampire.

He scooped up the blood surging out from the cut wounds at his chest and belly with his own hand, and licked his bloodstained palm. And then he wiped his face with that bloody hand as if to create some tribal mark on his face.

Kaldo-san is serious now.

"Dad!" Yui yelled.

Even though he's immortal, he's still her father.

Yui ran up to Kaldo, seemingly worried.

"Your Excellency, this is our turn."

"The vanguard's——"

"No, let's first seal off their movements." Viine instructed the Burning Knights — invoking Rasheena's Bracelet.

Arm-shaped, small fairies successively came into existence from the magic gem of darkness at her bluish white wrist, rushing towards the evil race who had cut Kaldo.

At that moment, a yell of "Kire-sama!" was audible. It came from another evil race that was behind the first one. He threw silver-shining hatchets with <Throwing>. The hatchets, which contained mana, tracked the fairies released by Viine while whirling around and drawing arcs in midair. The silver hatchets clashed against one fairy after the other. The fairies kept vanishing as they were crushed. The hatchets, which seemed to be made out of silver, floated through the air while killing the fairies. The hatchets' surface seemed to have a dark mist coil itself around it. Including the guy who threw the hatchets, there were three evil races that appeared to be Kire's subordinates. They jumped off their magic beasts and landed on the ground.

"Nn, going by the looks of their equipment, they are definitely military personnel."

"The guys of the army we fought at the beginning chased after us up to this place? How unexpected."

"Nn, Shuuya, what are we going to do?"

I analyzed the evil races while nodding to Eva.

Their proficiency at manipulating the mana in their bodies is high. It's probably fine to judge that all of them can use something like Magic Combat Style.

"...I will fight the four sword user called Kire who's riding the magic beast in front. I leave dealing with the three, including the hatchet user, to you." While saying so, the silver hatchets finished crushing all the small fairies.

While revolving like boomerangs, the hatchets returned into the evil race who had thrown them. Are those hatchets a different version of the Adamantine Tree's Axe thrown by Hankai?

"...Nn, got it."

"Okay——"

Eva rotated sideways while sitting on her magic wheelchair. Once she grasped the evil races with her eyes, she released a violet aura of mana from her whole body.

Rebecca, who stood next to her, quickly ran sideways while creating blue fireballs and drawing Gulphon's Magic Wand which hung at her waist belt.

Then she stopped moving and got ready by turning the tip of her wand towards the evil races. As her golden hair swayed in ripples due to the wind, two, three, and then four spheres clad in blue flames floated around the small Rebecca as if to protect her.

"Eva, I'm going first——" She signaled to her friends and Eva.

The instant Gulphon's Magic Wand was charged with mana, not a fireball, but a fire wall extending wide to the sides was created, obviously separating Kire and his subordinates.

I could slightly feel its heat. However, it was a good call.

Furthermore, while furrowing her golden eyebrows towards the middle, she made the spheres, which floated in the air while being manipulated by herself, fly towards the evil race with the silver hatchets at the ready.

The blue fireballs were fast. The hatchet user decided that it was impossible to dodge them, and crossed the two silver hatchets in front of his chest.

The blue fireballs clashed against the silver hatchets, causing an intense flash as if the silver was melting.

"——Gunuuh!"

It seemed as if the evil race had blocked Rebecca's blue fireballs.

However, unable to block them completely, a part of the blue flames spread to his body, and as his opened robe burned blue, the fire also devoured a part of his body.

"Sosoyros, you okay?" Kire peeked at the state of his subordinate across the firewall and asked while adopting a stance with his four swords.

"Kire-sama, I will heal this level of injuries with <Evil Spirit Achievement>." Sosoyros activated the mana across his entire body while holding onto his silver hatchets.

A black aura, which seemed to heal the parts of his body that got burned by the blue flames, covered his body, causing the scalds to recover in an instant.

At that moment, the evil race called Kire showed a little gap in his defense.

——It's a chance.

I charged in a forward-bent posture, closing the combat distance to Kire. After firmly stepping onto the evil domain's soil as if crushing it, I unleashed a <Thrust> of the Magic Halberd's red spear, which was at the height of its spiraling as I continued the spin from my waist to my right hand, towards Kire's chest.

Kire swiftly moved, trying to dodge by twisting half of his body which was clad in a Magic Combat Style-like mana. However, at the time when the spinning spear penetrated through his flank while rolling up the robe Kire was wearing, the red ax blade shredded his flank alongside his armor.

"Ouch——!"

Even while having his balance thrown into disorder as his flank was torn open, Kire didn't fall down. Jumping off his magic horse beast, he landed with one knee touching the ground, immediately stood up, and readied his four swords.

His four sword stance was unique and refined. By slowly retreating, he stayed out of my reach.

At that moment, a red-haired evil race crossing swords with Viine and Yui while using four swords entered my field of vision, and the intense clashes of swords reached my ears.

Nearby, the hatchet user Sosoyros drew close to Rebecca with Magic Combat Step, brandishing his hatchets.

For a moment I was worried, but Rebecca transformed the shape of the blue fireballs floating around her, and blocked the hatchet after using those fireballs for defense. Or rather, she has created blue flames from both her hands, and is actually pinning down the hatchet blades in reverse?

"...So you tried to kill me by bringing the battle into close combat because I'm holding a wand, eh? Normally that would be the correct move. However, different from before, I'm no "normal" magician." Rebecca said while glaring at her opponent with her cute face.

"I don't understand what you're saying...but, what's with those blue flames..."

I feel like I can slightly understand Sosoyros' surprise. I can't let my guard down either. Kire, who got ready in front of me, slipped out of my reach, opening up some distance between us. At the same time he unclasped the snap fasteners of his armor, and dropped a part of his steel armor to the ground, checking the place which got cleaved open by the red ax blade.

He swiftly retrieved a potion from a cloth bag, and healed his wound by applying it to the affected place.

It looks like Kire doesn't possess a special healing skill like Sosoyros. It's not that I'm negligent, but I once again happen to see Rebecca's actions.

While adopting a stance of spreading her left hand diagonally above and her right hand diagonally below, she was releasing blue flames from both hands as if creating a coiling vortex. The blue flame vortex between her hands enclosed the silver hatchets. Obviously overcoming the resistance of Sosoyros, who excelled her in physique, with the power of the blue flames, Sosoyros' stance had completely fallen apart.

Blue flames started to dwell in Rebecca's eyes, and the instant they did, the power of the blue flames released from her hands increased explosively. It was a powerful growth as if gunpowder had exploded.

The coiling vortex cluster of blue flames melted the silver hatchets held by Sosoyros, covered his whole body with small blue flames, and blew him away. Sosoyros crashed against a thick tree while turning into blue cinders.

His special healing wasn't in time either, I guess. But, wow...can I pull off such moves as well?

"Sosoyros!" A female evil race holding four swords screamed.

She was about to head towards Eva, but her eyes veered off. That was a fatal mistake.

The blades of the countless green metals manipulated by Eva gouged out the half of the female evil race's body.

Nothing less of Eva.

However, it was probably a result of the woman, who died after having lost half her body, having tried to swiftly dodge. The opponent was fairly strong as well.

While admiring that, I perceived a dagger glittering with a silver light in my visual field after it had been thrown by Kire with <Throwing>.

In a hurry I swung my halberd, which I had held in an overhead position, sideways, bisecting the silver blade with its red ax blade. The cut dagger parts scattered to the left and right, stabbing into the ground. At the same time I shot <Chain> from my left hand.

Kire avoided the chain by shifting his body to the side with a blurring movement.

I made <Chain> draw an arc in the air, and had it target Kire's back, but once again he dodged the chain by shifting half his body as if swaying. For him to evade <Chain> after seeing it for the first time, his reflexes must be in a different league of the other guys.

I made <Chain> disappear after it stabbed into the ground.

Once Kire, who avoided with a way of moving that reminded me of the branch of a willow, stopped moving, he addressed me with, "...Humph, stranger, it seemed as if you had been looking away, but for you to properly keep me in sight, are you really a two-eyed race? Aren't you a demon possessing four eyes?", as his three eyes looked at me sharply.

The colors of the pupils within those three eyes were filled with mana. Once he amassed mana in his feet as well, he released mana from his whole body.

His mana manipulation was peculiar, but it was obvious that he was quite skilled at it. Moreover, he's causing guidance sorcery-like magic lines to extend towards the vicinity?

"...The precise definition is different, but I might be a demon..."

As a matter of fact, half of my blood is that of a vampire. I'm a demon who's half human and half monster. Human, demon, a race changed through <Granted Seal of Light>, but it's no lie.

"The same kind as the madmen, huh...?" Kire appeared to grasp something.

""Your Excellencyyy,"" screamed the Burning Knights as they were defeated.

It looks like they were brought down by the evil race with the unkempt, red hair. Yui and Viine, who fought with them, were unhurt.

"Gamuzza, you did well!"

"Captain, these guys have——"

At this moment, Yui's and Viine's movements went up to the next level.

Yui, who had activated her <Eyes of Baycala>, succeeded in cutting off one arm on the right after going opposite of the four sword user with acrobatic movements.

"Guuaaaa."

Next, the arm on the other side was cut off by Viine.

"I'm going."

"Thanks——"

At the same time as they spoke, Yui and Viine matched their movements. Yui, who crossed and overlapped with Viine as if it was an Othello combination, approached the red-haired evil race.

"Don't come any closeer!"

The red-haired evil race was still up to ball even after having lost two of his arms. Blood was gushing out from the two cut sections, but he tightly grasped the straight swords in his remaining two arms without paying any heed to that, and flourished them.

While accelerating, Yui ran through his legs and slashed him. The magic katana in her left hand targeted the evil race's leg, mowing down half of his shin.

And, as if snatching away the best part, Kaldo, who had gotten close unnoticed, extended one arm. The sword thrust, which reminded me of a white tiger, decisively pierced the chest of the red-haired evil race.

Another cool technique...

"...Kuuuh, Gamuzza and Sosoyros have also died, huh...? Stranger, I swear on my honor, I will slay you!" Kire made a vow.

He put the mask, which had rested on his hair, back on, and spread his four arms with the straight swords to the sides as if cheering with a hurraay.

Hmm, what does he plan to do? Taunting me? At least it looks like that.

Kire charged at me with lightning speed, and unleashed a right and then left turn kick with movements that were as flexible as a black panther. In a hurry I used the red ax blade of my halberd as a shield.

The black panther-like Kire truly possesses sharp movements. [efn_note]It's a word game as Kire also means sharp, cutting[/efn_note]

It's not the time to make stupid puns as Kire ran through the air while unleashing rotational kicks at me.

At the moment I blocked his final rolling kick-fighting move targeting the side of my left foot, Kire landed nimbly, and spoke up, "——Humph, your reaction speed is abnormal. For you to have blocked all of my <Evil - Chain Kick Fangs>."

So it was a skill after all, huh? I don't know whether I fully grasped it, but...I will try practicing it later.

"...I blocked it, but I was quite surprised."

"Only surprised, eh...? Come to think of it, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm called Kire. Evil Domain Monk Kire."

Apparently considering it unexpected that I would be able to understand him, he suddenly introduced himself.

"My name is Shuuya."

"Like I care——"

No sooner than I started considering him to be polite, this. He came scything me down.

I avoided the sword sweep that breezed past me as I crouched down, but Kire brandished one of his swords from the right side while rotating his body like a spinning top. I pulled back my body a bit, and even while the sword's blade barely grazed the tip of my nose, I swung the red ax blade from the lower right to the upper left with the image of slashing Kire's torso apart.

However, Kire slanted and held out the sword in his lower right arm, which seemed to be for defense, repelling the red ax blade. Without minding that it had been blocked, I rotated my body sideways with my toes as axis, performing a round swing with the halberd, as if scooping up Kire's legs, towards his lower body while also lowering my posture.

Kire made a forward somersault, leaping towards the right side. Once he dodged my sweeping stroke while splendidly performing a jump somersault, he quickly turned around with Magic Combat Step as soon as he landed, crouched down, and unleashed his straight swords towards my head as if to fully scissor it from the left and right.

I moved the Magic Halberd in the hand, which I rotated, to the right side, blocking the right sword with the top part of the violet staff. While sensing the violet sparks, I defended against the sword approaching from the left by trying to wrap it up with <Magic Hand guided by Thought>.

"Tsk." Kire clicked his tongue.

At that point he temporarily created some distance between us, making me think that he would start speaking again.

However, he's releasing the mana accumulated in his three eyes?
And then that mana joined the guidance-sorcery-styled mana, which he had been releasing for a while now, in the air.

"I will have you taste my secret technique...bou de shubibum de arow." Once he chanted that spell, Kire's dark mask split apart as if cracking.

He had created two clones of himself.

I felt how Holker's wood splinter in my bandolier faintly reacted to this. This is his trump card? I have no intention to go on the defensive, even if he might have split into three. I still haven't used <Demonic Brain Speed> or the blood mana's <Blood Path - Open Third Gate> —I just have to defeat the main body without being led astray.

"Nuooooo——"

I clad my whole body in the Magic Combat Style, and charged in a forward-bent posture. Meanwhile I invoked five <Chain Spear of the Ray System> targeting the right clone from a short distance. Next I invoked the advanced spell, water-attribute <Frozen Snake Arrow>, and shot it towards the main body. Lastly, I shot <Chain> towards the left clone from my left hand.

《Frozen Snake Arrow》 was easily cut vertically apart by the main body Kire.

The spell had been blocked, but it served its purpose as restraint. In the meanwhile I had closed the combat distance. While twisting, I unleashed <Thrust>, pushing out my Magic Halberd. Kire completely blocked the spinning red spear with two swords. As he repelled the thrust while indicating a heavy looking recoil, he lowered his body and released a roundhouse kick from his low position.

Kicking the ground with the tip of one leg, I avoided his low kick by lightly jumping, and at the same time, targeted his chin while scooping up the butt end of the Magic Halberd.

Kire bent his body back with a frantic expression, dodging the jaw breaker attack of the Magic Dragon Gem. Seemingly because of the created wind, Kire's green hair was ruffled up. Right at the same moment, Kire thrust the sword in his upper left arm straight at me, trying to pierce my face. My quick evasion by tilting my head to the side didn't dodge it completely and my cheek got penetrated.

That fucking hurtsssss! His sword's blade penetrated up to my ear.

——It hurts, but I have no time to mind.

I'm going to cut his arm that had fully extended.

I summoned Demonic Sword Beet into my left hand, and activated <Waterwheel Sword> as I slashed upwards from below. Beet's crimson blade sliced Kire's elbow in two.

"Guaah——"

I extracted the arm grasping the sword, which had pierced my cheek - the part that used to be Kire's arm and was now bleeding profusely. It hurt because it had been repeatedly regenerated and wounded, but after pulling out, I tossed away Kire's arm alongside his sword.

Kire had an expression as if he was biting his tongue while leaking a painful voice. He was trying to suppress the cut wound where his arm had been with his remaining three arms.

Now's the time. I'm going to pressure him in one go.

I activated Blood Mana <Blood Path - Open Third Gate> and <Blood Acceleration>, increasing my speed.

Me seeing Kire's face being dyed in despair is not because his arm was cut off, I believe.

While feeling the blood pump through my body, I twisted my waist, and shifted into the motion of unleashing a thrust that created a spiraling motion with the Magic Halberd in my right hand. My speed had increased, but somehow it felt as though I was moving in slow motion. The halberd penetrated Kire's chest with a <Darkness Drill> seasoned with the darkness attribute, and while I pulled out the Magic Halberd in an instant, I unleashed a <Thrust> at his abdomen, and finished it with a <Darkness Drill> aiming for his head. Kire's head was torn to pieces and scattered. A fountain of blood sprayed out of the headless torso. On the other hand, <Chain> pierced the left clone, and the right clone was captured by the light nets after the light spears stabbed into it. Those clones vanished without trace once the main body died.

"...They attacked all of a sudden, but he was a formidable enemy."

There was no need, but I bowed my head towards the corpse anyway.

『Your Excellency, you were magnificent.』

『Yeah, he certainly had the skill to cut Kaldo.』

『The soldier was apparently called Kire, but he might have been a renown opponent.』

『Now that you mention it...』

At the time when both armies retreated from the battlefield, there were calls for Kire, Evil Domain Monk Kire, weren't there? I recall that even the residents of the Ragni Village mentioned someone along those lines.

"Nn, nyaoooo." Rollo came running back.

"What's wrong?"

"Nyan."

She stared at me with her red, round eyes, and then tapped the ground once with one paw.

"Dig here? This ain't a dog fairy-tale."

"Nn, nyaon nyaa~"

Rollo made her small face bend towards her back in a huff, and then started to walk inside the forest as if saying, 『This way nya~』.

"You're guiding, eh?"

Rollo looked back at me after walking for a bit, and tapped the ground again as if telling me to hurry.

"Rollo, wait a moment — everyone, you don't have to loot the equipment of those guys. If the straight swords used by Kire look usable, you might pick them up, but come back."

After my chosen bloodkin had gathered, we started to walk while led by Rollo.

A little while later.

On the way I had resummoned the Burning Knights. Rollo seemed to walk with a certain goal in mind, but...I had my doubts. While watching the cute tail and thigh fur of Rollo, we walked onwards as if loitering through the forest. And then we arrived at a place where a great amount of fallen and fresh leaves was being sucked into a hole in a rocky area.

Are they sucked up by the wind?

The swirling leaves were vanishing inside the hole.

"Nyao." At the front Rollo came to a halt.

I see. She smelled a strong scent from here, huh? I'm kind of bothered about that strong scent... The spot on the magic treasure map was just on the right side from that hole.

"Well done, Rollo. This is also our destination. It's the treasure map's excavation spot."

"It's a cave, isn't it? There are also traces of something having been whittled down. Buckets, lumber, and several lumberjack axes are leaning against the wall. Is someone living here?"

"Nn, there are drawings on the wall over here."

"My curiosity is throbbing——" Mysty ran up to the wall, where Eva was, while taking her golem along.

Throbbing; I feel like it's a slightly lewd expression, but I won't point it out. [efn_note]ビンビン (throbbing here and above) is also used when talking about a dick being hard/erect[/efn_note] I guess the height of the ceiling is thirty meters, and it's plenty wide as well. There's no doubt that someone is living here, but I can't feel any magic sources from the entrance area.

"Look, there's some tables, lanterns and a cabinet, as well." Viine pointed at the old-looking furniture with the tip of Black Snake's scabbard.

"Just as the village chief had cautioned, someone seems to live here. However, why of all places at the spot of the magic treasure map..."

"Ah, Master, please look at this."

What was hanging at the tip of Viine's Black Snake scabbard with the tip put through a hole in the fabric were holey leather pants.

"They are no longer used, I suppose."

"Looks like it."

"Nyaon." Rollo expressed her interest in the pants.

Ah, possibly...

Rollo brought her small face close to the discarded leather pants dangling from the scabbard's tip,

and sniffed them.

"——Kuchoo!" Rollo sneezed.

They seem to stink quite a bit. On top of having triggered a Flehmen response, she has even sneezed.

She sniffed them once more...she had sensed this smell from far away, after all. She might like a thick pheromone smell. Or she might have felt threatened by the new, unknown smell and this was her own styled security check.

By the way, I saw the Flehmen response of a horse. The horse had a really amazing expression.

"...Rollo, it's better for you to not sniff it any further."

"Nyaon."

Since her sneezing face was cute, I feel like I want to see more of it, though.

"Viine, you too. Your sword will stink, so..." I told her.

"O-Okay."

She swung her black scabbard, tossing away the stinking pants.

But, since it's a poison sword, its effect will double? Well, it's the scabbard, so it's different, I suppose. Can it be used for a new stinking swordsmanship using the scabbard?

As I was having such weird delusions, "Hey hey, I found several kinds of black tea and medical plant bundles. I think the black tea is a high-class tea, but it has tea leaves I have never seen before." Rebecca, who possessed a vast stock of knowledge about black tea, said with a serious expression.

"This is a place similar to the surface. I think new tea types exist here as well."

"Yep. I'm interested, but I will just keep looking."

"Well then, everyone, we're going to postpone the investigation of this area. Let's head inside, okay?"

"Nn, go."

"Okay."

"Milord, let's proceed."

After looking at Kaldo's manly, handsome face, I walked inside the cave. The ground was hard to walk on because of its depressed soil.

In the middle of advancing through the cave, I spotted a big carpet, as if to hide the unevenness of the ground, slightly ahead. Moreover, it was releasing golden mana. It was a carpet with Persian patterns mixing golden and silver colors.

"The carpet is containing mana?"

"Master, is that carpet a special item with defense functions?" Viine asked.

"It's possible..."

Is it going to fly up into the air if I step on it? That, or it's a trap with the function of suddenly opening up the ground with a needle-filled pit beneath?

"Nyaoon——"

Argh, while I was hesitating, Rollo laid down on top of the carpet. Rollo-san was happily playing around by rubbing her back against it.

"...I guess we were too wary."

"Yep. Rollo-sama is cute." Viine gazed at Rollo.

"Jeez Rollo-chan! I will join as well!"

...Rebecca has started to roll around on the carpet together with Rollo while embracing her.

"Fufu, Rebecca funny. If you add cat ears, you'll be a female kitty?" Eva smoothly moved on the carpet with her magic wheelchair, and chatted up Rebecca while joyfully watching her rolling around.

"Rollo-dono has been showing her belly!"

"What a wonderful appearance. She could become the soothing god of the spirit world!"

The Burning Knights were excited. It seemed as if they wanted to take Rollo back with them to the spirit world.

I can really understand their feelings, but it's not allowed. She's my partner.

"...But, it's strange. There are alcoves that had been chiseled into the wall." Yui had been looking at the wall, disregarding the Burning Knights' remarks.

She's right. There were depressions at fixed intervals in the wall. There was a small room protruding outwards. It was decorated with small sculptures and some kind of lantern magic items.

"...I wonder whether the spiraling patterns continuing to the ceiling have some kind of meaning?" Kaldo muttered.

"It's probably just simple patterns."

"Is it fine for me to pick up this lantern?" Mysty appeared to be interested in the items within the alcoves. She asked while holding a lantern in her hand.

"No, not right now."

"Okaaay."

However...from time to time, I sense a wind laden with a nice aroma from deeper inside the cave. Is it just my imagination?

While harboring doubts about that smell, I continued walking across the carpet, and then arrived at the deepest part. It wasn't a dead end. A huge iron door had been installed in the rock surface. A big bag filled with many leaves was next to the door.

Those might be the leaves which had been sucked in from the cave's entrance some time ago. Well, it doesn't really matter anyway.

I could feel a single magic source behind the door.

"There's definitely someone on the other side."

"Master, shall I examine the lock?" Viine asked.

"Please."

"Okay."

She bent her long legs, and peeked through the keyhole while crouching. Nodding her head, she retrieved a wire from the cloth bag attached to her waist belt. She put that wire into the keyhole, and twisted it around.

A weak, metallic clicking sound could be heard. Then Viine nodded once more.

At that moment, there was a loud clicking sound.

It looks like the lock has been opened.

"It succeeded. It was a lock with a fairly high level of precision, but I managed to open it somehow."

If she says so, it must be the truth.

"Magnificent. Viine-san, you've got really skilled fingers."

"Mysty, you seem capable of opening locks as well, aren't you?"

"I think I can reproduce the key since I have refined demonic steel. I planned to open treasure chests in the labyrinth with that, but because I never tried it, I don't know whether I can actually open a lock."

"...I see. Let's proceed onwards then. As we don't know what's awaiting us, get ready for combat, just in case."

""Okay!""

"Understood."

"Nn."

"Together with milord!"

Looking at my friends, I confirmed that they were all ready. As all of them were holding their respective weapons, they seemed ready to go.

I turned around towards the big iron door, and pushed the surface with its cold sensation. When I opened the door after pushing it forward with both hands...