

Chapter 228 - Shadow Infiltrator & Rescue

A/N: In the beginning Third Person View, then at the end, we return to the MC's point of view.



The place was a dim, wide underground cave. Huge iron cages were lined up side-by-side. Many captured women were inside those cages.

All of them looked dispirited with worry dwelling in their chests. Seeing the disastrous scene outside the cages, they embraced a fretful mood, wondering when it would be their turn, as they hung their heads in despair, sobbing.

Under such circumstances, there was a stout-hearted woman wearing maid clothes, who conducted herself properly, even after she had been just released by the rowdy men.

"...Everyone, cheer up. My Master isn't normal. He will definitely track us down!"

"..."

"What's with the not normal!? How many days of you saying the same old have already passed?" A woman captured together with the maid barked back.

Nothing but despair could be seen in the eyes of that woman.

"That is..." The maid faltered to continue.

That was only natural. She kept a calm mind by frantically believing that her master would come for her while encouraging the women around her and herself.

"I don't give a damn anymore about being raped by many men...but."

"...I feel like I'm going crazy."

"...Look, again...being eaten...by that monster..."

The women said as they gazed at the ritual from inside their cages. Eyes like dead fish, lacking any hope. One of them laughed to escape reality.

She had been watching the gruesome scene taking place in the center of the cave while laughing pessimistically with a slackened expression as all her entrails had been pulled out.

There was a round, depressed area in the cave's middle. A huge magic crest was drawn on the ground over there. Silver candlestands with lit candles had been positioned outside the crest in equal intervals as if matching the symbols at the crest's edges. The candles were also special, big magic flames were rising into the air from them. They brightly illuminated a part of the spacious center like bonfires.

Those magic flames brightened up an altar, which released black-colored mana and made one feel its history, and an old-fashioned, bloodstained offering table.

A huge person stood in the middle of others in eerie, jet-black robes. A cow face and the figure of a

human, but he was a man on the brink of being kin connected to demons.

His name was Banabi Ze Kreuz. He was a noble holding the rank of an Oseberian baron, and an adventurer.

Another man stood right in front of Kreuz. He was tall and also had a cow face. He had golden hair, and reminded one of a perceptive eagle. The chiseled features of his nose and eyes with their azure pupils were ripe with deep shadows. Except for his well-shaped mouth and earlobes tinged with a frog-like roundness, it was a face comparable to an Elganov Tree as it was beloved by the northern people. On top of that, he had a decent physique, and shoulders with horns growing out of them.

While that man, who looked like a hero, exchanged looks with his subordinate, Kreuz, he ordered with a dignified voice, "Kreuz, let's go with the golden-haired woman next."

Immediately following, he released mana from his whole body. Unique horns burning with flames of darkness at their tips grew out at the outer corners of his eyes, and a magic crest-like mark surfaced on his forehead. Turning into a finely, spiraling tattoo, the mark extended even to his ears. Long teeth sprouted out of his mouth. The blonde hair, his blue eyes, the frog-like earlobes, and the shape of his face didn't change, but he transformed into the figure of a demon.

"...Yes, Naromivas-sama."

Kreuz wasn't surprised about Naromivas' face changing. He sent an eye signal to the group of men as ordered, telling them to bring the woman.

"...Nooooo." The golden-haired woman screamed.

It wasn't a scream after seeing the demonic face of Naromivas, it was a scream towards the men grabbing both her hands after receiving Kreuz' order.

The woman had been hanging her head, but she bawled as if all of her face had become a mouth, not even trying to stop screaming. However, her shrill screaming only delighted the robed men instead.

They placed the shrieking woman atop the offering table while lifting the corners of their mouths and donning joyful expressions.

"Hiihiiiiii."

Feeling how her hair and back got wet by the blood on the stand, she whined. She tried to escape by twisting her beautiful, naked body like a caterpillar with her huge breasts swaying. However, there was no way for the woman to get away as her hands and feet were tightly cuffed with dark fetters. Countless muscular hands of the 【Apostles of Nightmares】 touched her seductive body as if toying with her while pinning her down as if crucifying her to the offering table

Naromivas cheerfully looked down at her state. The woman was at a loss what to do, but she had been waiting for a chance to release the light mana hidden in the depths of her eyes.

"...This will be the 50th. Now that I think of it...you could even call it a day that should be celebrated. After all we captured the Great Knight who had been such a nuisance to us."

"Your Excellency, should we take down this woman and use the Great Knight as sacrifice instead then?"

"No, this woman will do for now. She has been showing such a strong will to resist while under the influence of the three-orbed jewel. She's trying to conceal it, but I'm sure...she's under the influence of a god related to the divine domain Seuros."

Kreuz was surprised at Naromivas' words.

"Your Excellency, are you certain?"

"Kreuz, are you only depending on the Brocade Hat of the Great Frog Dragon Guon? For you to even overlook it with your transplanted illusionary demonic eyes which were a gift from Goddess Vaamina-sama..."

Right now he wasn't wearing the Brocade Hat of the Great Frog Dragon Guon as pointed out by Naromivas, but it was the pointy hat which Kreuz usually wore on his head. Brocade Great Frog Dragon Guon was a monster species infesting the Great Goldix Desert, lying across the Mahaheim Mountain Range in the north, in droves, and a monster designated as S rank subjugation request. Moreover, the one who created the hat with the monster's materials was Tohri Brossen, an artisan affiliated to the Odobaril family, famous for employing countless noted artisans. It was said that the hat made by him pulled out the maximum of abilities from the raw materials.

"Excuse me, I'm deeply ashamed as holder of the illusionary demonic eyes...I thought it weird since she kicked up more of a fuss than usual, but..."

The illusionary demonic eyes mentioned by Kreuz were something he had been personally granted by the Goddess of Nightmares Vaamina, who possessed silver-colored hair, in the spirit world as a preliminary arrangement to allow him to reincarnate into a demonoid. He was still far away from having mastered them, but there were only few people who could escape from those illusionary demonic eyes.

To begin with, Vaamina obtained those demonic eyes by slaughtering the Illusionary Demon Deurothus, an apostle belonging to Desalobia the Evil God of Demon Eyes, when he came invading her own territory in the spirit world. Her way of obtaining them...was so hideous that it frightened the Darkness Rabbits and the Young Darkness Ogres who lived on the cruel side of life. As long as Kreuz placed a designated hostile target under certain conditions through those demonic eyes, he would acquire special skills he could reproduce in reality.

"...It's nothing you have to mind. Certainly, it's rare. She isn't just a strong-spirited, willful woman. Since she's maintaining a firm consciousness in this place...I don't know to which god she might be related, but..."

The golden-haired woman, who heard Naromivas' words, glared at the men around her.

"Upon Shafa's Light..."

The instant she muttered those words with her eyes shining like a wild beast, glittering mana was released from her bare body, and at the same time, a shockwave traveled into the vicinity. Moreover, the dark fetters, which had restricted her, were flung away.

"Uwaaah."

"Guaah."

The men, who had been pinning her down, were blown away by the shock wave. Several of the candlestands surrounding the magic crest were knocked down as well.

Seemingly having found hope, many of the captured women started to stir within their cages due to the rarely seen spectacle.

The golden-haired woman had regained her freedom. She quickly got up from the offering table, radiating a fierce spirit from her eyes cladding her body in light. What appeared was a shining armor, a lightsword in her left hand, and a light shield in her right.

The woman thrust out the point of the sword, which cast a dazzling light, towards Naromivas and Kreuz.

"Heretics...you have incurred God Shafa's wrath."

"...Oh my, what a surprise. You awakened in this place...?"

"She seems to be someone connected to the God of Justice Shafa...Naromivas-sama, are you going to eat her personally? Or..."

Neither Naromivas nor Kreuz showed any unrest after seeing the shining woman. Naromivas listened to Kreuz, and smiled.

He held out a hand towards a horn burning with flames of darkness at the outer corners of his eyes. Once he did, the shape of the dark horn became soft, and transformed into a hilt, similar to that of a katana. It perfectly fit into Naromivas' palm.

"Haha, it's obvious that I will do it personally, isn't it Kreuz?"

Tightly grasping the cloth, Naromivas pulled out the hilt from the outer corner of his eyes in one go, retrieving a sword of darkness with a long, deep black blade that was emitting mana.

"The woman over there, those are insolent words in front of Goddess Vaamina-sama. They deserve death. Obediently lie down on the offering table!"

Naromivas swung down his sword towards the woman while speaking in a calm manner.

The woman sensitively responded with her light sword, intercepting the black sword, and then adopted a swords stance associated to Shafa's war maidens.

However, the sword swung down by Naromivas altered its trajectory irregularly. It unnaturally stopped moving in midair all of a sudden. A black fog oozed out of the dark sword. The fog, which inflated as if overflowing, grew as it expanded to the left and right with a billowing. In a flash it made one feel a small dark night...creating the sky of a gloomy nightmare only above the woman's head. And then, within a few milliseconds, countless black arms that seemed to be coiled up by evil fire swooped down on the woman from within the dark night produced by Naromivas.

"——Receive God Shafa's Judgement!"

The woman held out her sword towards the sky while shouting her god's name as if opposing the black hands raining down on her from above. The black arms were torn apart in an instant while the light sword was wrapped up by a brightness.

The light and shadows gave birth to a strong contrast. However, that lasted only for an instant. Her

light couldn't cut through the small dark night produced by Naromivas.

The light sword lifted up by the woman didn't work against the night...

New arms fell down onto the woman in succession like the dead of hell that had been lured by the darkness of night.

The woman's light sword burned for a short while as purifying the arms, but gradually it stopped catching up to the sheer mass of arms. Before long the sword was swallowed up, and the armor cladding the woman's body, her shield and everything else of her were covered by arms.

While resisting by using Shafa's powers, the woman was pinned down on the offering table by the arms, obviously being forced to submit. And then, alongside a sound of evaporation, the woman's light armor lost its power, and she returned to her previous nudity.

"Gununu. Surely...for the <Needles of Lisurg> to not work." The woman muttered in mortification under her breath.

"One of the war maidens, and a staff of Shafa's temple, huh...? Our goddess will be likely very pleased with this sacrifice. Fufu, let's start the ritual that is long-awaited by everyone while prioritizing this soul!"

Naromivas addressed the Apostles of Nightmares, including Kreuz, with a lively voice, making the sword of darkness in his hand disappear. Even after the sword itself vanished, the burning arms pinning down the woman didn't.

"...Apostles of Nightmares, I shall thank you for tonight's sacrifice. Enjoy a nightmare to the limits of lust over a woman's blessings!"

Naromivas stood in the middle before the offering table, making a speech to his comrades as if talking to an audience. A truly demonic smile adorned his face.

""We're grateful——""

"We offer this sacrifice to the Goddess of Nightmares Vaamina-sama."

His father, Duke Alosange, didn't know the reason why his wife died right after giving birth to his son. That his son had been given the blessing of Vaamina. That his son had created a secret society called **【Apostles of Nightmares】**. That his son had left the capital and was now spending his time living in a mansion in Pelneet. That his son had developed into a murderer, burying countless corpses in the basement of his mansion. That his son was acknowledged by the Goddess of Nightmares, accomplishing the reincarnation into a demon in body and soul. And that his son had turned the Spearmaster and the Black Cat, who had caused various gods to fear them, into his enemies.

"We offer the sacrifice——"

"We offer the sacrifice——"

The **【Apostles of Nightmares】** followed Naromivas, reciting his words with deep voices.

"Oh Spirit World Goddess Vaamina-sama, please guide us **【Apostles of Nightmares】**, showing us the way to your world. And, using this sacrifice, I, the divine son affiliated to Goddess of

Nightmares Vaamina-sama, shall subjugate the people, and establish a kingdom of nightmares on this land like Hongjian's Wings[efn_note]It's a reference to a Chinese story. Hongjian flies high and travels far away by virtue of his wings. It is a metaphor for great talent; high talent. That's what I got from Chinese sites with google trans. Don't ask me for further details. Not even sure why the author used that in the speech of an otherworlder...[/efn_note]." Naromivas recited with a tenor similar to Dr. Faust[efn_note]Reference to Goethe's Faust[/efn_note].

"Kingdom of nightmares!"

"Kingdom of nightmares!"

The **【Apostles of Nightmares】** said with low voices full of delight. They played out a drama in this round depression that had a bass tone as the central part like the song by Mephistoles[efn_note]Faust's counterpart in the drama[/efn_note]. It was close to the atmosphere on an opera stage that had an eerie, neon light added to it through the magic crest.

"...I shall eat the sacrifice personally. She won't just become the goddess' power, but also mine. And thus being changed into the mana of all **【Apostles of Nightmares】** present."

Naromivas didn't even try to hide his power as kin of a spirit world goddess. With his still demonic face, his voice, which had lost all restraints, reverberated repulsively through the cave like ripples.

"Now then, let's enjoy the feast!"

The words that coiled around like vortexes in the depths of their ears fanned the dread of the many women forced to spectate while being held in iron cages. The effect was tremendous. The joyful voice of Vaamina resounded from the magic crest like an earth tremor.

And then Naromivas alone was showered by looks of fear.

"This is the art of death recognized by the goddess. This is proof that I have been acknowledged by the goddess. This is proof that I'm a divine child of the goddess.

Naromivas heart bounced in rapture.

"Let's enjoy."

"Let's enjoy."

The **【Apostles of Nightmares】**, who had dazzled looks entranced by nightmares, all spoke in one voice as if urging on Naromivas to devour the sacrifice. Their deep voices turned into a single wave, and the instant they made Naromivas' earlobes tremble, the demonic Naromivas laughed ecstatically.

He widened his mouth that was densely packed with fangs as if forming a full circle. The golden-haired woman resisted by desperately shaking her head. However, Naromivas didn't stop. His glittering fangs sank into the woman.

"Aaaahhh!"

The instant he bit her, the woman raised a lewd voice, different from a scream. Indeed, Naromivas's bite made her feel pleasure. This was owed to the Extra Skill he possessed.

"How about it? It's the same nice feeling as removing nose hairs, right?" Naromivas talked with a sticky tone, using his own habit of pulling his nose hair as example.

He blew his breath close to the ear of the woman who revealed an enthralled expression after being bitten. After whispering as if giving her a gentle kiss...

"Now, once more~"

Once again the countless, sharp fangs, which were similar to that of a demon or monster but completely different from those of a vampire, dug into the woman's thigh.

"Aaahhh."

The woman started to sweat. At the same time, contrary to her sweating, something dripping down from her buttocks made one smell an indecent scent.



"Again, huh...?"

A man standing next to an iron cage muttered. His face was powdered like a clown, and his mouth tore open widely to the sides. His name was Noran. He seemed to smile, but the truth was different.

'...Even though it's a mission, I have infiltrated this place for a long time, but unlike women being raped, I don't wanna watch something like that. Speaking of Shafa's war maidens, priest girls...it's a well.known fact that they rank next to the priests of the 【War God Doctrine】 worshiping War God Vice, but they are at an disadvantage with Demonoid Naromivas as an opponent. Either way, I wanna quickly get away from this shitty group,' he thought.

Watching the same spectacle taking place each and every single time, he felt disgusted. Officially Noran was a leader of the 【Apostles of Nightmares】 and Kreuz' subordinate, but truth was different here as well.

Yes, on his right foot...was the black wing seal, proof of a certain organization. Currently that seal wasn't visible after he had a certain person use a certain skill to hide it for the sake of his disguised infiltration. It had been changed into the drawing of two crows picking at a peach, the mark of the elite unit said to be only allowed to be worn by the special military police forces of the southern major power Seven Phoria.

Behind Noran, the woman in maid clothes once again started to speak firmly.

"You mustn't look at such a spectacle! My masters are called the Spearmaster and the Black Cat! They will definitely come!"

Hearing those words, Noran looked at the maid in surprise.

'What was that...!? They kidnapped personnel from 【Remains of the Moon】? I had expected that they would get involved sooner or later, but... If that woman is truly related to the spearmaster of the rumors, it might actually be better to abandon this mission and get away from here.

'I have heard that not only played the spearmaster an active role in the three-front battle of dark guilds which **【Remains of the Moon】** won, but also that he was the ringleader behind the destruction of **【Owl's Fangs】** who had started to expand towards other cities while using Pelneet as their stronghold.

'...Since it's also my duty to gain information about this city, I investigated anything related to the spearmaster, who is shroud in mysteries, as far as I could. However, even the thieves guild **【Gate of the Secluded Evil】** doesn't seem to have grasped much information about the spearmaster, and hasn't given me much more than information that you could hear at any bar.

'Well, that might be inevitable. The spearmaster is the top of **【Remains of the Moon】**. Since it looks like he has been acknowledged as one of the Seven Lights, they probably don't want to do anything that would cause unnecessary friction with him. And yet I moved around to investigate independently while doing my infiltration mission.

'I found out that the spearmaster possessed excellent adventurer friends, and superb subordinates. I can surmise that they are fairly strong. There was rumor going around that the soldiers and leaders of **【Skull Ogre】** were eradicated when the friends and subordinates of the spearmaster joined the fight on the side of **【Remains of the Moon】** in the southern business district. That information doesn't have much credibility since it's still unconfirmed.

'Anyway, they are the friends of that spearmaster. They might not be ordinary either, and there's also the matter of Naromivas and Kreuz.

'And, as they are called the Spearmaster and the Black Cat, I also investigated the black cat, the spearmaster's familiar. It transforms into a horse, panther, and lion. It runs on walls. And there's also gossip about it flying through the sky. Certainly, since a great number of lesser demon users, magic painters, beast users, and tamers exist in Labyrinth City Pelneet, it's a very believable story.

'It's just my imagination from here on, but...although that black cat is called the spearmaster's familiar, it might actually be a kind of "artificial magic being" created by the spearmaster. It's a secret ancient magic said to have misappropriated during the dawn of the old era. I don't really wanna think about the possibility of another guy, who possesses an ability like leader, existing... But, seeing that a being like leader exists, the possibility isn't non-existent.

'Even the other members of **【Remains of the Moon】** can't be underestimated. They haven't conspicuously expanded towards other cities, but they seem to be considerably excellent. Even among them, I hear that "Flash Legs", the former guildmaster, doesn't have only fast legs, but gets things done quickly, too. She might have concluded an independent deal with **【Gate of the Secluded Evil】** to restrict the information on the spearmaster. **【Remains of the Moon】** with the spearmaster as leader of such members towers at the very top in this city. I guess it's inevitable for my work to become difficult to do. I don't wanna die, so I will directly appeal to leader and my comrades to stop this.

'And, if the maid behind me is truly related to that spearmaster, I will have them give me the permission to end this solo infiltration mission of **【Apostles of Nightmares】** that was scheduled to last until this year's end.

At this point Noran stopped brooding, and listened carefully to the maid.

...Listening to her words for a while had made him nod his head a few times. The things he had investigated himself overlapped with what the maid was saying.

Gradually Noran's face turned pale.

'Shit...she's definitely someone working for the spearmaster. That settles it. I will open the lock and release her as insurance. I wanna bid farewell from this shithole as well.

'Damn it! Leader, don't send me on such a mission all by myself, okay? Stealing, assassination, or information gathering; any of those are tough for me myself. Kreuz is also remarkable, not leaving

any gaps allowing to assassinate him...

'The female leader Camis, next to me, is troublesome, too. That stupid woman is prying and lashing out at every single thing I do. However, I do the least amount of work, and I also got my hands on a three-orbed jewel that lost its power. In addition I'm at the point of wanting to obtain items associated with the spirit world, including the spirit world's 4-9-3 document's dream scriptures owned by Naromivas, but...

'Just like Kreuz, the founder of this sect, Naromivas, shows no openings. He's the son of a viscount, but...right now he's a crazy demonoid in the middle of practicing cannibalism. Getting in touch with a spirit world goddess, Naromivas succeeded in reincarnating from a human into a demon. Is such an act favored by the goddess of nightmares, or does the goddess of nightmares condone it?

'I'm also an eccentric and villain, liking to tear off raw skin, but to go as far as eating the flesh of a living woman raw...

While Noran repeatedly brooded over such things, he was careful to not expose his face by deeply pulling down the hood of his jet-black robe once again. And then he inserted his key into the lock of the cage. Unlocking the iron door by turning the key with a click, he opened the door slowly so that it didn't cause any sound.

"...You guys, stay quiet. I opened the door as you can see. If you don't want to be eaten by that demon, hurry up and get away. As you can see, they are right now in the middle of their ritual. There are guards at the entrance, but well, if you escape in a group, you might have a chance."

The illusionary magic afflicting the women should have been undone. However, since he couldn't remove their handcuffs, they had to go as they were. Noran jerked his chin with that intention.

"Eh?"

"We can escape?"

"It's a chance. Let's go."

"Now!"

The women left the iron cage and escaped.
Noran silently opened the doors of the other cages.

'I cooperated in catching the Great Knight, but I guess I will let her get away on this occasion, too. If this number of sacrifices flees all at once, it might produce a chaos like an uninterrupted sea roar, trigger a great turmoil among the 【Apostles of Nightmares】, who are engrossed with their ritual, too. Even Vaamina's apostle Naromivas, and her kin Kreuz should need time to put all of them in order. I will also take advantage of the confusion, steal what I can, and quickly retreat to Tandarl.



Rollodeen (Horse Lion), who had been following the blood chain's direction with an explosive speed, suddenly dropped her speed. Right now we were in Pelneet's northern area, at the border to the noble district. Rollodeen continued with a walking pace, advancing into the neighborhood that

was densely packed with small houses.

Is she being held inside one of those houses?

While I harbored such a question, Rollodeen didn't stop walking along the way indicated by the blood chain of <Blood Chain Search>.

Just when we reached the deepest part after turning several through small side streets, Rollodeen came to a halt. We were in a blind alley.

An iron plate that had been split open to the left and right in an unnatural way was laying on the ground in front of us. Something like a stairway continued downwards on the right side, next to the plate.

I guess the broken plate was the lid that had hidden this stairway.

The sickle-anchor-shaped blood chain also pointed ahead of those stairs while still swaying repeatedly.

However, judging by the way this lid was broken...it means that another outsider like me went down those stairs and intruded, doesn't it?

"...Mimi might be at the end of these stairs. Let's get off."

Whether she's alive or dead...I think she's at the end of these stairs either way.

『This basement is fishy.』

I dismounted Rollodeen while listening to Helme's telepathic message. Everyone who rode with me followed my lead and got off as well. However, only Viine's legs were shaky.

"Viine, you okay?"

"Y-Yes, I'm sorry."

Once Yui worriedly asked Viine, Viine apologized while feeling shaken and using a strangely shrill voice. I thought that she had gotten slightly used to it, but...I guess it's very unlikely for her to cure her acrophobia and her morbid fear of Rollo's speed.

On the other hand, Yui, who had also experienced the jet ski-like speed of Rollo, seemed completely unperturbed, donning a calm expression.

"Nyao."

Rollo, who had transformed back into her usual form after everyone dismounted, briskly walked ahead with small steps, and peeked down at the stairs that seemed to continue into an abyss.

"Shuuya, your familiar has truly amazing abilities." Fran muttered while looking at Rollo in front of her.

She should have experienced Rollo's speed for the first time, but she didn't seem to be affected by fear like Viine. If I remember correctly, she was a half-ghost, wasn't she? She might not feel fear because she's no ordinary human.

"...Yeah, she's the best partner."

"Nyao." Rollo meowed as well.

It might have been a reply similar to 『That's right nya』.

"Come, let's head down those stairs. Everyone, get your weapons ready in advance."

The stairs seemed to be narrow. It might be better to assume that it will turn into an indoor battle. After summoning the Magic Halberd into my right hand for the time being, I went down the stairs first. With a little delay, Rollo got on my shoulder.

"Okay."

"Alright, I will draw Blacksnake."

It's not the sword's name, but the visibility was filled with darkness while the stairs continued downwards like a winding snake. I put <Night Vision> into action.

"It's a basement, or maybe heretic believers..."

Yui might have experienced underground battles during her assassination work for dark guilds. Even I can imagine the opponents in such underground battles. After all, I once fought against evil believers of the King of the Ten Layered Hell in Holkerbaum's underground. Back then Rollo sterilized the area by burning it to cinders with her fire breath. This time the same might happen...

『Your Excellency, the veil is thin here.』

『I'm sure it is...』

It's getting more and more shady. Is it related to the gods of the spirit world?

Only an ominous sound similar to grinding of teeth, and our footsteps reverberated languidly. The field of vision is dark...did the temperature fall a bit? It smelled as if wet, fallen leaves were being burned forcibly.

While smelling that stench, I felt as if a tingling pain from coldness pierced my nose deep inside. Just in case, I looked back to check.

"It's pitch dark, but Fran — you alright?"

"No problem. I told you before, I'm not an ordinary human."

"I see."

It looked as if a little amount of mana was dwelling in her reddish brown eyes. She appeared to fully perceive my face even within this darkness.

By the way, all of my bloodkin are fine with darkness. Well, Fran is a B rank adventurer and a skilled multi agent. I guess, there's no need for me to worry about her. Let's focus on the front. I turned back to the front, and continued to quickly descend the stairs. At the end of the stairs, I sensed several magic sources from ahead of the cave. At this point I activated <Inhalation of Odor Technique>.

It's been a long time since I last used the smell of blood to search for enemies. At the same time, I

turned this into my territory as a vampire.

"Ah."

"Master's...smell..."

"Nyaon, nya~"

My chosen bloodkin and Rollo cutely moved their noses to sniff the scent for a moment, noticing my smell.

Fran looked puzzled as she looked at us. She held a one-handed half sword and had taken off the bandage around her left hand.

I had seen it a while ago...several eyes were squirming and rolling around on her hand. Since there was a hole on her palm, it must be some kind of projectile weapon after all.

As I was thinking about such things, I generally grasped the faint sweat of women, a womanly body odor that combined cheese and orange, a great amount of blood, and the location of rotten men and several bleeding women. Blood, eh...? I have a bad hunch.

The owners of the bleeding smell are moving? The location indicated by the blood chain reacting to Mimi's blood, and the responses of <Inhalation of Odor Technique> are pointing towards the same place. Mimi is definitely inside this cave.

"...I found Mimi's response in the cave ahead of us. There seem to be several women, too. There might be other women who have been abducted like Mimi. It looks like there are also bleeding women. It's quite unlikely that all of them are hostile women."

"...You can grasp all that information in an instant?" Fran asked with an astonished expression.

"I mentioned it since I can."

"So it's not just martial arts...I understand the reason why big sis recommended it to **【Gate of the Secluded Evil】**, no, the country..."

A recommendation by Remrona? Well, we will rush towards those responses for now.

"The area becomes wide from here on out. All of you, get ready for combat. Let's go."

"Yes."

"Let's."

"Okay."

"Nn, nya."

Rollo transformed into a black panther with a poof.

Since we couldn't leave Fran behind with the explosive acceleration using a Lucival's physical ability, I headed to the indicated place while lightly running with Rollodeen at my feet.

After a short time, once we turned to the left through a tunnel-like place, people noisily came running while making loud footsteps.

"Kyaaaaaa."

"Everyone, it's dark, but we have to escape this way."

"The meeen!!"

"I can't see ahead~~~~~kyaaaa."

"There's light from behind...the pursuers are comiiiiing!"

"Just keep running!"

"Y-Yeaaah..."

"Kya!"

"Waaaaait——"

The screams of women and the voices of the chasing men echoed as if overlapping into a cacophony. And then we encountered a big number of escaping women. They didn't care even seeing me, and kept escaping at full speed towards the end of the cave. At that moment the tip of <Blood Chain Search> drastically reacted by shaking suddenly. The blood chain's tip charged into the midst of the vigorously escaping women while dripping blood.

"What's this——"

At once the denying scream of a woman could be heard. And the one who was moved to me while rolling around with the blood chain coiled around her was wearing torn maid clothes I recognized. It was one of the young women working at my mansion. I remembered her face a bit.

"Are you Mimi by chance?"

"Aaaaahh! Master! You really came to save me! I'm soooo happy..."

So she was alive....that's a big relief. She was still entwined by the blood chain. But she apparently felt relieved. As if all strength left her hands and feet, she went completely limp. I canceled <Blood Chain Search> at that moment. The blood chain, which had finished its job, flickered out of existence as if sinking into a world of darkness.

"I'm sure you want to rest more, but can you speak for a bit?"

"Sure, please ask me anything."

She put her breathing in order, and spoke up powerfully with a strong will dwelling at the bottom of her blue eyes, apparently a trait she obtained at Resonante.

"You're a great woman. Then I will ask. It seems to be the same for these women, but going by the

situation, you have escaped up until this place, haven't you Mimi?"

"Yes, we were rescued. Back then...I couldn't see the person well since they wore their hood low, but I felt like their mouth was torn. That person opened the locks, telling us to run away if we don't want to be eaten by the demonoid."

An intruder? I guess they trespassed from the same spot we did after all.

Given that it felt as though that iron door had been broken in an unusual way, there might be a hero who intruded into this underground. Or, there were split factions among those who abducted the women to begin with?

Well, whatever it is, it resulted in Mimi's rescue, our first objective. It seems also a good thing that the women escaping has caused confusion.

"I see. It's great that it allowed you to survive. Everyone else will likely be relieved as well."

"Yes, Master..."

Mimi's eyes became teary and her body trembled once she heard my words of appreciation. Since I sensed that the fear she had experienced had turned into a weight in the depths of her heart, I instantly crouched down and embraced her to give her a peace of mind.

"Ah..Mash, ta...umm."

"It's alright. It must have been scary...you really held out well."

The small girl tightly hugged me. The clothes that used to be her maid clothes were torn, and her blond hair was sticky with excretes, but...

"O-Okay." Mimi shed tears.

After gently wiping those tears away with my thumb, I separated from her, stood up, and faced Viine.

"We will give priority to Mimi's safety. You take Mimi and go back to the mansion ahead of us. Explain the circumstances to everyone."

"Okay. What about you, Master?"

"Yui and I will proceed while helping those escaping women.Maybe Remrona can be found deeper inside here as well. Fran, you come with us as well."

"Of course. Even if you told me to withdraw, I wouldn't do so in this situation anyway." Fran smiled.

"I guess that's true as well." I replied with a smile while suppressing my rage.

"Understood." Viine bowed lightly, and quickly moved to Mimi. "Mimi-san, I will escort you to the mansion. Can you walk?"

Viine sheathed Blacksnake, which she had held in her left hand, into its scabbard, and put the scabbard back into the sword belt.

"Yes, thank you. Master, thank you a lot."

"No need for thanks. Hurry."

"Okay."

Viine started to run quickly while carrying Mimi. Viine, who had grown as <Head Servant Leader>, rapidly ran back through the path we came with the small Mimi in her hands. After I couldn't see her silver hair sway any longer, I turned on my heels, looking in the direction of the cave which the women were escaping.

"...We will head inside just like this."

"Oki."

"Big sis..."