

Chapter 230 - Goddess of Nightmares Vaamina

Cow-face, handsome demon, and silver-haired woman turned their heads towards me who was behind them. I made the Magic Halberd in my right hand rotate, and powerfully rammed the Magic Dragon Gem into a section of the magic crest drawn on the floor, crushing it.

The instant the gem smashed the section, the sound of glass shattering resounded, and large sparks scattered into the vicinity.

—— I was surprised.

Hmm? Darkness symbols are reflected among the scattering sparks?

『Your Excellency, I feel divine mana from those sparks.』

『Yeah.』

I perceived a pseudo sensation as if being arrested by those symbols. Moreover, three magatama symbols clad in black flames manifested within the sparks. Those symbols suddenly closed in on me with a terrifying speed.

『The darkness symbols have——』

"Nya?"

Neither Helme nor Rollo could react. The symbols penetrated through my body with a speed not allowing any evasion, and then vanished naturally.

Just when I wondered whether I had experienced an illusion, I could feel a faint pain at the side of my neck as if a stinging, shocking electric current ran through it.

※Piing※ <Dark Dream Celebration> ※Permanent Skill acquired ※

The faint electric pain disappeared alongside the skill acquisition.

Once I touch my neck as if tracing the pain with the back of my fingers...I feel some blood and a small wound as if I have been cut. It kind of feels like a tattoo.

Did I absorb the darkness power seeing how I acquired a skill? I don't really understand.

『...I'm terribly sorry, Your Excellency, it was too fast, so I couldn't react...』

『Don't worry about it. It's good that it was just me. A way that could wound even you, Helme, would be an emotionally hard blow.』

『...Yes, I feel your love, Your Excellency. Ahnn——』

I showed my feelings with actions rather than only using words. I just sent mana her way, though. As we were having such a conversation, an image oozed out from among the sparks released through the symbols. The image's world and the real world in the cave, where the magic crest had been drawn on the ground, overlapped with each other. Thereupon, ceiling and ground suddenly switched places by turning around. Everything in front of my eyes vibrated with thunder and lightning while heaven and earth got reversed.

I'm at a lake shore? A transfer? How?

Illusion magic? Have my senses been confused by the symbols?

A world of moonlight that is similar to a pale firelight...? Starlights of fireflies and deutzia petals are floating through the sky. An indistinct fog obscures the area's details. The silver world's white lake extends far and wide, and a large, purple-gold tree emitting an aureola into the sky floats above the lake's surface.

Silver water continuously flows down like a huge waterfall from the parts of white stalks, the roots of the tree.

That cloudy water forms the silver lake?

Compound eyes tinged with rainbow colors were embedded into the thick, purple-gold trunk floating in the air. Black flowers with the shape of three magatama and coral leaves bloomed on gorgeous agate branches, and black pearl-like fruits, I had never seen before, were attached to them. A gigantic, black rabbit with its body clad in black flames floated around the impressive, huge tree. It was an unknown intelligent life in the shape of an animal.

Beneath the rabbit was a woman dipping her feet in the lake. Since the woman wasn't overly tall, the lake must be rather shallow. The color of her hair was just like that of the lake, silver. She wore a dress that opened at her back, and a beautiful garment similar to a single-folded

hakama[efn_note]Please look at this:

https://blogimg.goo.ne.jp/user_image/36/27/00518593b3b86e555fe6707bfb827bfc.jpg if you're curious. It's the layer the woman wears above her shrine maiden outfit.[/efn_note].

The woman's appearance from behind...graceful and a white skin that's almost transparent. As the scenery moved with a smoothness of more than 60 frames per second...I had become unable to take off my eyes from the sight of one or two frames as if having entered slow motion.

That woman...as if worshipping something, had been lifting a big, round monster head with both her hands.

A festival? A ceremony of celebration? I don't know.

Then cloudy water was spit out from the monster's big mouth as its head was hoisted up over the woman's head. The water showered her head.

Is it something like praying for a good harvest with a cold-water absolution? Moreover, the water isn't ordinary either.

As that water splashed into the surroundings, midgets clad in white flames and midgets clad in black flames, were created inside and outside the lake's surface as if new child spirits had been born.

Ogre children of darkness? The midgets, which reminded me of child spirits, glided across the lake's surface like the wind, dancing. Black rabbit faces with gigaku-men masks endowed with a helmet's stag-beetle ornament.[efn_note]The stag beetle thing refers to what's labeled as 1 on this site: <https://rekishiplus.com/?mode=f3>[/efn_note]

All of them have only noh mask faces, Hannya noh mask faces, and characteristic facial features mixing black and white. Those midgets kept playing noh songs with nyohachi-like cymbals[efn_note]Please look at this site with a video:

https://www.geidai.ac.jp/labs/koizumi/asia/jp/japan/nyohachi_hogakubys/002174.html[/efn_note] as they were used at temples, four-bamboo instruments handled with the palms of both hands, and transverse flutes.

Several of the midgets, which didn't possess any instruments, wore nurikasa[efn_note]Those things: <https://item.rakuten.co.jp/sumitaya/10003536/> (Scroll down a bit)[/efn_note]

Just as there were midgets dancing like dolls clad in puppet mantles while holding heart tree branches and paper lanterns with bow-shaped handles in their hands, there were others who danced as it was done during Buddhist ceremonies or shrine festivals.

Other midgets were drawing three-orbed jewels on the small faces of the midgets using writing

brushes that seemed to drip with ink.

『This is the real world? I suspect, it's the spirit world then.』

『Probably.』

It was a mysterious late spring world with child ogres dancing on the water surface.

At the time when I had been in a dumbstruck mental state for a short while...the divine, silver-haired woman moved her head, turning in my direction.

She had long eyelashes like Helme, and broad eyes. Those eyes were shockingly, rich emeralds, having a hue that made me feel the abyss' darkness. The small, universe-like pupils inside those emeralds were beautiful. She had a pretty, slender face with a white porcelain-like skin.

However, her nose and neck...

Her nose had a straight, black flame wound as if it had been bisected. Her slender, lovely neck had a scar as if it had been cut almost halfway by a sharp blade.

The mysterious woman still held the doll-like monster head above her head. The mouth on the head spread to the sides as if laughing. Because of the huge, well-shaped set of fangs and teeth peeking out from that mouth, it looked just like a demon.

Even now the woman was continuing to be showered by the water as it energetically gushed out from the monster's mouth. Her fingers were moist, but didn't swell.

『A spirit world goddess. The mana waves are divine...』

Helme muttered without showing herself in my visual field.

I guess the goddess acquired her blessing through this ceremony as spirit world deity. A goddess basking in cloudy water.

No blood flowed from the cut wound at her neck. She inspired terror in me, but it didn't change the fact that she was a beauty. That woman showed me a tasteless smile as if loving to indulge in a bad mood.

『Who art thou...where art Naromivas who were to offer sacrifices to me?』

A voice reverberated in my mind.

"Who knows. I'm Shuuya, and you?"

She moved her faint rouge lips, seemingly matching me.

"Shuuya? I am the Goddess of Nightmares Vaamina..." She approached me after introducing herself with a fluid voice. "Shuuya, thou do possess beautiful black eyes. However, for thee to be able to directly connect to me, Shuuya...what being art thou?"

Similar to the spirit world's Goddess of Magic Poison Misea...and yet a different tone.

The goddess drew close, but she kept being showered by the cloudy water as she still held the ogre's head. Her slender elbow lines were beautiful, and I could also take a peek at her curved armpits.

While being fascinated by those armpits, "...If I had to put it in words, a lancer, I'd say."

"Hoh...a lancer, so, a spirit world knight....no, I guess someone like a martial arts king. I shall

remember it."

Martial arts king? That's a term I heard for the first time.

The fabric of the garment worn by the goddess was thin and transparent. And since it clung to her skin after having become wet by the water, her pink skin was exposed...lovely...truly, a soaking wet goddess. No, she's the goddess of nightmares.

As if it was only natural, the peaks of her pink breasts, which expanded in the shape of a hemisphere, obviously seemed to taper to a point. The form of the wax tree bean-like nipples looked as if they popped out. I want to press those buttons. Unintentionally I swallowed my saliva. That's how attractive and seductive they were.

I hadn't expected that at all...from a goddess of nightmares. Paired with the mysterious, strange spectacle in front of my eyes, it turned into an indescribable excitement.

At that point, the goddess noticed my pervy look. Seemingly embarrassed, she twisted her body in a cute way, and threw the ogre head in her hands at me. Moreover, her mouth warped into something like a scream as she hid her chest.

The ogre head closed in on me at an amazing speed while scattering cloudy water. The next instant, as I was about to move in order to avoid it, a bell rang quietly in my head, and my sight suddenly changed.

Just like before, my sight was replaced, and was returned to the cave in reality.

And then, in the true real world, a woman's scream roared out of the huge magic crest both my feet were standing on, making the soles of my feet vibrate.

For a moment I'm confused...hmm, I might have been mesmerized.

However, no one, including Rollodeen and the surrounding apostles, had apparently seen the divine possession-like event that took place within milliseconds just now.

Only Helme and me, huh?

I wanted to talk with that goddess for a bit longer. Well, whatever.

『For the time being we will focus on those three.』

『Okay.』

I puffed up in pride as if replying to the gazes of the three, adopting an imposing stance, obviously protecting the blond woman sleeping on the offering table behind me, and spoke up.

"...Yo, cow-face, was it you who ate the woman?"

"That spear, and the black beast at your feet...don't tell me..." Cow-face didn't answer my question.

After twitching his bushy brows, he looked at my partner and me with a sharp glare. Since he was holding a magic painter-like frame in one arm, that must be his main weapon.

A long time ago he had boasted about it...I suppose he intends to let the monster in the picture loose.

"Oh my? ...This scent." The silver-haired woman facing cow-face and the demon said.

She was a beauty with a swarthy skin. She looked my way with her blue eyes. After her nose moved with its nostrils widening and shrinking like a dog's sniffing, the shape of her hair changed into that of a question mark.

『...She's at a whole other level as monster, after all. The other two, who seem to be demons, also possess vast amounts of mana. You can't let your guard down.』

I don't plan to do so, just as Helme has cautioned correctly. That silver hair is interesting as it changes its shape, but I recognize this one as an enemy, too.
...The enemy of my enemy might become my ally, though.

"Kreuz, do you know this lancer?" The demon asked.

"Yes, Naromivas-sama. I happen to have talked with him once before."

He's addressing the demon with -sama? So the demon is cow-face's boss. No way, is it the same as with Zarbid of the Magic Labyrinth located in the outskirts of Hekatrail? If I remember correctly, there was a talk about six or seven demon generals.
Back then, there was no reason to fight, but now it's different...

"...Cow-face, I asked you who of you ate the woman."

"You're annoying..."

Kreuz, cow-face, apparently had no intention to reply. He accumulated mana in his eyes, and sent it to the frame in his hand at the same time.

In the next instant, a magic beast with three heads appeared from the frame while producing a gale as if compressed air was allowed to escape. It was the same monster as the one on the painting in the frame. The carapace parts covering its body served as armor, looking hard and smooth.

"Garuruuu."

"Guuugah!"

"Gauuugau!"

Cow-face had an imposing, warrior-like physique, but this three-headed magic beast easily exceeded him in size. Drool trickled down and fangs grew out of its three, big muzzles. It's a monster as you'd expect to inhabit the spirit world. I imagined Cerberos, the guard dog of hell, as it was introduced in Dante's works. I wanna turn it into my pet.

"Nyagooo."

Rollo raised her voice and roared with an unusual voice, obviously indicating her enmity towards the dog. Looks like it won't become my pet.

"Ah, that doggy! I'm going to spank it for the other day!" The silver-haired woman yelled, and moved first.

Black nails extended from her fingers, drawing an arc in the air, and their sharp ends headed for cow-face and the three-headed dog.
Let's use this situation.

"Tsk, Liliza. Just like the other day——"

I casually shot ten 《Ice Spheres》 in a row. As if timing it with Liliza's attack, I made the bullet magic head for cow-face.

Even as he suddenly got attacked from two directions, cow-face kept his calm. After giving the dog a short order, he calmly retreated while causing footsteps as if every single step continued to drive in a nail, and then made lamination layer-like magic crests appear from something like a magic scroll he had been holding in the other hand.

Once magic swords and spears were born from those magic crests, he made them offset my ice spells and Liliza's nail attacks by clashing those weapons against them. The magic dog beast released an ice breath from the mouths of its three heads. While making the air freeze as if creating ice roads in midair, the breaths intercepted and froze the black claws and ice bullets, too.

Wow...I hold respect for his polished sorcerer moves even though he's an enemy.

The ice bullets shot by me were frozen, and fell to the ground after becoming bigger as a crust was able to form on them.

Rollo, who possessed agility and power at the same time, used the little gap to grow bigger in size than usual, and moved ahead. She extended several tentacles that had grown out of her neck towards the dog. The bone swords, which were clad in silver light after extending from the tips of her tentacles with a wet sound, stabbed into parts of the dog's torso.

"Nyagoo——"

Rollo roared threateningly while filling her whole body with strength, and very easily lifted the large dog by bending her tentacles. Then she tossed the dog outside the depressed area and outside the magic crest that had stopped shining.

The dog crashed against one of the big iron cages lining up around the depressed center area. The shape of the cage was dented in by the dog's shoulder alongside the dull sound of flesh being crushed.

The magic dog beast was stabbed into its torso by a part of the horizontal bars protruding out of the cage, scattering a large amount of blood into the vicinity, but it easily pulled those bars out, and jumped back up.

Making its three heads scan the vicinity, it zeroed in on Rollo, and I could see how it charged at her after ferociously howling in apparent frustration.

Let's leave that dog to the divine beast Rollodeen.

And just when I thought that I would leave the cow-face to the silver-haired woman, "Aaahh! The cow-face prey is mine! This stupid panther has——"

Contrary to her words that were full of jesting, her face looked as angry as a raging fire. That shitty bitch extended her swarthy hands, and released her black nails and her bonefish, which she might be enslaving, towards Rollo.

Given that Rollo made use of her powerful limbs to nimbly run like a breeze, the rush of nails and fish didn't hit her, but that Liliza apparently won't move as conveniently as I'd like her to.

"Fedelaos, now."

Cow-face, who had something like a halo pregnant with mana surround his eyes in a circle, ordered the dog called Fedelaos, which had charged at Rollo, causing it to turn one of its three heads towards Liliza while changing course. It unleashed an ice breath from her side, flooding Liliza with

the ice breath.

That woman's body froze over... Her head is slow, and so are her movements, is what I thought, but it was different.

The parts of her body that didn't freeze changed their shape like winding snakes, and moved as if shedding off the frozen body parts. While reabsorbing the frozen part just like that, she returned to her previous, womanly shape.

She's a slow-moving monster, but I guess she's tough...

The appearance of the white guardian I fought on the 20th floor, which freely used its boobs illusion magic, crossed my mind.

Nay, nay, evil begone! Let's forget that monster...

It apparently ended up hammering more wedges into the history of the Boobs Research Society than I thought. I wanna get healed by my head servant leaders.

However, if it's a tough monster, it matches the description given by Mamani. As expected, she must be the monster that targeted my combat slaves.

That Liliza prioritized that cow-face and the demon over Mamani back home? Was there a dispute between their group and Liliza?

As I analyzed Liliza's behavioral pattern...from her acting, Fedelaos was heading towards Liliza as ordered by Kreuz. On the other hand, Rollo charged at Fedelaos.

Rollo jumped at Fedelaos as if hooking on with the claws at her forepaws, heartily bit into the flank of its torso while making it slide, and quickly separated from it.

Fedelaos howled in pain, and chased after Rollo, who had taken some distance as if showing off her physical strength, with trembling legs.

『Your Excellency, I can join the fray at any time.』

『I know, but watch it from your special seat.』

『Okay』

Helme didn't appear in my visual field, but I felt her desire to enter the battle. However, this time I intend to handle it just together with my partner.

Now then, it's a 3-way struggle similar to a huge, winding maelstrom that mixes wild enthusiasm and chaos into one pot, but my real target at the moment is this guy, the unknown, handsome demon who was the leader of the group that captured the women. The demon called Naromivas.

He drew magic blades from the corner of his eyes while cow-face was fighting, and adopted a dual-wield magic sword stance. I can suspect that such swordsmanship isn't all he's capable of, but let's ask something first.

"You were the mastermind behind the ceremonies after capturing the women, right?"

"...Correct. I indulged in many sacrifices. Their just-right meat was perfect. However, I feel an affinity with the something in your eyes that makes me sense the night..."

The perpetrator who ate the women, eh...? What affinity? I got pissed off, and closed the combat distance to the demon.