

Chapter 123 - Troublemaker Party ①

——Notification to all teams: Start invasion all at once!

I order Rina's and Chloe's team, who are on standby at different entrances to the Domain, and I also begin the invasion together with the subordinates I have taken along.

The Domain of Hakui, we're invading this time, is structured in a way that reminds me of a mining tunnel. The floor is bare ground, and the walls are bare rock. Torches hung up on the wall at fixed intervals illuminate the vicinity.

As we proceed deeper inside with the living mails in the lead, we run many times into passages that seem to be narrow tunnels and forks splitting in two along the way. It's like a maze in here.

"Man, don't go on my balls... Lemme fight quickly!" (Takaharu)

When we encounter a dead end for the umpteenth time, Takaharu clicks his tongue in a bad mood.

"I like totally agree with Taka-cchi! It's damp and humid, a downer for real." (Sarah)

As Sarah leaks words filled with discontent, obviously agreeing with Takaharu...

"Nn, enemy." (Kaede)

...Kaede calmly informs us of an incoming enemy attack.

"Shion-sama! Princess! Please fall back!" (Cain)

Cain readies his sword and steps forward in order to protect Sarah and me.

"Leaving Sarah aside, you don't need to protect me." (Shion)

Wanting to earn some experience points, I line up next to Cain, and prepare my beloved spear — Gáelbolg.

"You mustn't protect me either!" (Saburou)

Saburou readies his thrusting sword and steps up next to me while grinning broadly.

"Hah? Stop dreaming you pervert. As if Ka-tsun would ever protect you." (Sarah)

Sarah holds up her wand behind Cain while slandering Saburou.

"Shion, it's ok with first come, first serve, aight?" (Takaharu)

As Takaharu cracks his knuckles and reveals a ferocious smile, more than twenty dwarves appear in front while loudly brandishing their weapons.

I guess, they are throwing combat power in here after blocking our path of retreat, seeing how they lured us into a dead end.

"So be it then, first come, first serve. Everyone besides the bloodkin are to standby. Bloodkin, show me your true power!" (Shion)

I encourage the bloodkin — Takaharu, Sarah, Cain, Kaede, and Saburou.
——《Dark Arrow》!

I release arrows of darkness into the group of dwarves as a preemptive strike. At the same time as the many arrows impact on the shields held up by the dwarves, Beast King Takaharu, who has turned into half man half beast, dashes across the ground. He jumps over the shielding dwarves with one big leap, and delivers a sharp roundhouse kick at the group of dwarves who had readied their bows in the rear.

"Hah! Nice! What a blast!" (Takaharu)

With adrenaline pumping through his whole body, Takaharu grabs the scruff of a nearby dwarf's neck, and drives his knee into the dwarf's solar plexus. The dwarves, who were caught off guard as they had readied their shields to the front, panicked and turned around in order to surround Takaharu, but...

"Nn."

One dwarf has his exposed neck stabbed by Kaede's dagger as she crept upon him like a shadow.

"Are they looking down on us?"

"They must be."

A dwarf receives Gáelbolg's thrust with his defenseless back, another dwarf is stabbed by Saburou's rapier.

"Let's get this party rollin'~ ——《Pillar of Fire》!" (Sarah)

A dwarf, who's right next to Saburou, is engulfed by the blazing column released by Sarah.

"——!?! Sarah! You almost..." (Saburou)

"Don't mind the small stuff." (Sarah)

Even though Saburou protests to Sarah after promptly escaping from the pillar of fire, Sarah continues to fire the next spell without feeling any remorse.

"Sarah! Keep the location of your allies in mind!"

"Don't look down on me. I've been properly calculating it, okay?" (Sarah)

I urge Sarah to pay attention, but Sarah reveals a cheeky smile and keeps hitting one dwarf after the other with single-target spells. It looks like she's messing around, but Sarah's magic accuracy is extremely high, and except for grazing Saburou's clothes from time to time, she never hinders Takaharu's, Kaede's or my battles in any way.

From outside it might seem like all of them rampage around as much as they like, but when archer

dwarves try to ready their bows, Takaharu and Kaede immediately deal with them. All dwarves, who try to rush over to Sarah, are intercepted by Cain. And, the dwarves holding shields and axes are steadily slaughtered by my and Saburou's hands.

The one giving me the most headaches in this team was Takaharu who seemed inexperienced in team battle as he has been fighting alone until now, but Yataro has thoroughly trained him on that part. Following theory, Takaharu has been eliminating enemies that fire ranged attacks with a good efficiency.

Two former Demon Kings who had exceeded level 10 during their time as Demon Kings, and one former Demon King who was level 9. Two high-ranking subordinates who are equivalent to a level 50, and me, a level 13 Demon King. No doubt, the six of us exhibit the power of a big army. As a result, more than twenty dwarves are laying in the dirt as corpses after ten minutes.

"Hah! Was this all they've got!?" (Takaharu)

"Those were somewhat lacking to take on an exalted being like me." (Saburou)

"Ain't it me who has killed the most?" (Sarah)

Takaharu snorts as if unsatisfied, Saburou looks triumphant while adopting a weirdo pose, and Sarah proudly throws out her chest.

I continue the invasion of this sector while leading subordinates who have a strong urge to stand in the spotlight.



Six hours later.

We have finally found the stairway leading to the second floor. The way down is protected by a golem exceeding a size of three meters, but...

"Oh? Dat a big one." (Takaharu)

Seeing the golem, a cruel smile forms on Takaharu's lips.

"In front of someone like me, it's no more than a blockheaded rock. It will simply be swallowed by the abyss of darkness." (Saburou)

Saburou prepares his rapier without any hesitation.

It's truly big... Would it be the best method to break its legs and then target its face with our attacks? As I'm pondering about the method to defeat the golem which I see for the first time in my life...

——Dong!!!

A loud, impact sound reverberates throughout the vicinity. The huge golem in front of crumbles apart, turning into rubble.

"Hah?"

"Hey!"

"Wha-!?"

"Like you don't know that the core is its weak point?" Sarah asks me, Saburou, and Takaharu as we feel dumbfounded while revealing a cheerful smile.

Once I ask, it looks like Sarah is invading a Dwarf Demon King's Domain for the second time, and she has already experienced fighting against golems, too. She apparently learned back then that if you fight a golem from the front, it's an impulsive enemy with a lot of stamina, but if you strike at the small gem buried in its chest — the core, you can bring it down easily.

"Nihihihi, how about some gratitude for me?" (Sarah)

"Hah? Don' fuck 'round wit me! Lemme enjoy battle for a bit!" (Takaharu)

"I was about to reveal my awesome powers here!" (Saburou)

"Haah? It's suuuper annoying to fight those things from the front. Also, I got like no interest in the powers of a pervert, so get lost!" (Sarah)

"Wha-!? How's Mr. Takaharu a pervert!?" (Saburou)

"Hah? Why'd you bring me up here!?" (Takaharu)

"T-Then...Shion-sama——" (Saburou)

——Shut up!

I stop the pervert (Saburou), who keeps trying the impossible feat of passing the buck, from speaking.

The former Demon Kings Takaharu, Sarah, and Saburou. All three of them are subordinates I can label as strong, but...aren't there any Demon Kings with slightly more decent personalities around? I descend the stairs to the second floor together with my subordinates, who are suitable to be called **【Chaos】** in a certain way.

Chapter 124 - Troublemaker Party ②

Fourth day of the invasion.

Right now we're taking a rest since we have arrived on the 9th floor.

The number of traps has increased starting with the third floor, and Takaharu has fallen for them several times as it's his first invasion, but we haven't encountered a dangerous situation that you could call a pinch. Beginning with the fourth floor, Kaede, who's accustomed to investigating Domains, saw through the traps in advance, resulting in us not being harassed by traps any longer. I asked Kaede about the trick to spot traps, but her answer was...

"Nn. Uncomfortable feeling." (Kaede)

...something I couldn't use as reference at all.

What was unexpected is the fact that Sarah is the most sensitive to traps second to Kaede. Sarah also notices the traps in advance, and has been avoiding all of them. Occasionally she deliberately tricked Saburou into triggering non-lethal traps, but since it led to a waste of time, I had her stop through an order.

As far as I can confirm through my smartphone, Chloe is in the middle of invading the seventh floor, and Rina's team is in the middle of the eighth floor.

The unit of me and my subordinates, who are currently eating their meals next to me, consists of team members that work together for the first time. It's a team that still has a lot of room for improvements in teamplay, but because of the members' individual strengths, our invasion speed is faster than that of Rina's and Chloe's teams who exceed us by far in invasion experience and teamplay.

"The most annoyin' part about not bein' a Demon King anymore's the food n' sleep." (Takaharu)

Takaharu grumbles while eating jerky that can be preserved for a long time.

"I think, I don't dislike my current life as there's rice. However, I kind of hope for something a bit more delicious?" (Sarah)

"It's not that I have any complaints towards the food alchemized by you, Shion-sama, but...it makes me want to taste some home cooking. —Ah! A handmade bento by Kanon-tan will—"

(Saburou)

"Dream on, pervert." (Sarah)

"——! I see, I fully understand. Sarah, you're saying you're going to make one for me? My favorite dishes are——" (Saburou)

"You gotta be kidding me!!" (Sarah)

Sarah angrily shouts at Saburou's prank.

"Wait, Shion, ya can turn humans into subordinates as well, can't ya?" (Takaharu)

"It's troublesome, but yes." (Shion)

I answer Takaharu who suddenly addresses me.

"Then ya just gotta turn a guy who can cook well into yer subordinate next." (Takaharu)

"Huh?" (Shion)

"I'm tellin' ya to turn a guy, who can make delicious food, into yer subordinate."

"I agree. I totally agree with Takaharu-ccchi's opinion!" (Sarah)

"Hmm...I do not dislike this idea either." (Saburou)

Sarah and Saburo support Takaharu's suggestion.

"Didn't you hear me telling you that it's troublesome? Turning humans into subordinates requires a huge amount of CP and work, you know?" (Shion)

"Work, ya say...ya mean turnin' them into kin, right? I'm gonna help ya with that." (Takaharu)

Takaharu casually replies to my words. Helping me or whatever, my orders are absolute for you guys, don't you understand that?

Former Demon King subordinates are truly troublesome... They do have ability, but unlike created subordinates, they possess free will. It's possible to tie them down with orders, but...then they won't be able to exhibit their full abilities. They are bothersome, but — they got the skills backing them. Food, clothes, and shelter...those things are indispensable for humans to keep living.

Saying that it's troublesome, I will be someday overrun by tough enemies with just created subordinates. Former Demon Kings are essential for the sake of furthering my power. I know after actually fighting together with them. Former Demon Kings are strong. Even if it comes to Saburo, it would take a huge amount of time and effort to raise a subordinate with the same strength.

Shit, what a pain...

"Okay. I will consider it once I have turned the Dwarf Demon King here into my subordinate." (Shion)

I reply in a way of shelving it for the time being.



Fifth day of the invasion.

Right now we have advanced to the deepest part of the 10th floor. In front of us is a small room with the true core enshrined within. In front of it, a defense line of more than 50 golems and dwarves has been deployed.

That means the Demon King here is level 10, huh?

It's a feeling based on my own experience, but once a Demon King passes level 10...the experience necessary for a level-up grows tremendously. To go beyond level 11, it's necessary to rule over more than 50 sectors like me, repeatedly invade other Domains like Sarah, or defeat all invaders personally like Takaharu...

"My name is Sein Akira! Insolent invaders! Leave milord's territory at once!"

A small, muscular dwarf, who held a shield that was taller than himself and wore full-plate, yells at us so loudly that the air trembles.

So the Demon King ruling over this Domain is called 『Akira』, eh?

Although there's no particular need to return the introduction...

——Sarah, introduce yourself!

"Eh? I'm——" (Sarah)

——Be silent!

I thought that it would be a lucky outcome if we could lead them astray with the idea that an Elf Demon King has come attacking by having Sarah introduce herself, but...it's very likely that Demon King Akira has also seen how Sarah looked back and thus acted suspiciously through the eyes of the kin in front of us.

Me naming myself...would be equal to telling them that the Demon King himself has come invading.

In that case...the ones who are at the end of Sarah's look are me...or Saburou, I suppose.

I guess I will go with Saburou...

——Saburou! Introduce yourself! Pretend to be the leader!

"Hah! Mine name is Dark Dracul the Third! As the most beloved subordinate of Shion-sama, I'm a being ruling over all darkness! Leave, thou say? Fufufu...I regret to inform thou, but thou have caught the attention of our king. Curse thine own fate —— thou shall despair at the depth of mine abyss!" (Saburou)

Saburou makes a cryptic introductory speech. The enemy has probably recognized Saburou as a created kin. They certainly won't expect a queer guy calling himself Dark Dracul the Third to be a former Demon King. I think we have succeeded perturbing them in a certain meaning...?

Sarah and Takaharu look coldly at Saburou who finishes it up by spreading his hands with a triumphant look.

I wonder whether we got the enemy to mistake Saburou as leader? While I harbor a touch of uneasiness, the trigger for the battle marking the end of our invasion is pulled.

"To send in such a cryptic kin...you lot, we will defend this place to the last!" (Sein)

Alongside Demon King Akira's kin's — Sein's order, the golems form a wall, and countless arrows are shot in our direction from behind them.

"Jeez, don't take me for a fool! ——《Wind Storm》!"

Sarah's storm forces back the airborne arrows. Even the several arrows that escaped the storm's area of influence are all blocked by the shields of the living mail.

——Sarah, can you destroy the cores of the golems?

"Those golems are like totally impossible! It's common sense to have Takaharu-cchi beat them up, or such?" (Sarah)

Sarah, who has a surprising deep knowledge about golems, informs us about the weakness of the golems lining up in front of us. All the golems we encountered on the way here were destroyed by Sarah's magic. As expected, the enemy seems to have taken countermeasures for their final defense line.

——You've heard her, you can handle them, right Takaharu?

"Hah! Finally I can crush those big ones!?! ——Uuuoooooh!" (Takaharu)

Takaharu reveals a savage smile, transforms into half man half beast, and charges at the golems.

——Kaede, you assist Takaharu in hitting the cores as well!

"Nn."

Kaede nods lightly and disappears.

——Sarah and Cain, you cover Takaharu with magic!

"Sure! You can totally leave it to me!" (Sarah)

"Affirmative!" (Cain)

Sarah blows away the incoming arrows with wind, and Cain casts a magic barrier on Takaharu.

——Saburou, you're going to knock down the enemies getting close to Kaede and Takaharu together with me!

"Acknowledged! Mine darkness shall pierce through everything! ——《Dark Lance》!" (Saburou)

Saburou unleashes a lance of darkness at a dwarf who has jumped out from next to a golem.

——《Dark Lance》!

I also counter a dwarf, who has jumped out in the same way, with a lance of darkness.

"Yahooo! Go doooooown!" (Takaharu)

Takaharu kicks off the ground, jumping high up into the air. He cuts up the core buried in the chest of a golem with his sharp claws. Having its core torn apart, the golem's body shakes widely.

"Hah? Not goin' down with one blow?" (Takaharu)

Feeling angry at the golem for not crumbling apart from one blow, Takaharu jumps once more. Kicking up the crossed arms of the golem that tried to protect its core, he drives his heel into the exposed core. The core, which resembles a jewel, is smashed into pieces, and the golem transforms into a lump of earth.

Takaharu is surrounded from all directions by dwarves once he lands on the ground. Saburou and I fire 《Dark Lances》 at them while making sure to not hit Takaharu, but...we can't dispose of them as fast as they are replenished.

I guess I will throw the living mails into the fray...

——Protect Takaharu!

I order the living mails who have been on standby with their shields at the ready.

I will...kill the pesky dwarves in the rear.

——《Darkness Veil》!

I conceal myself with darkness and launch an attack against the arrow-shooting dwarves.