

Chapter 240 - <Servant Leader> of the Valmask Family

I guess night and dusk is just the perfect time for vampires and their ilk.

With those thoughts I headed towards the origin of the <Inhalation of Odor Technique> smell emitted by unknown vampires with Rollodeen (Black Panther). The smell came from an alley's street corner.

I caught sight of Veronica's back as she rode her blood sword, and passed her when she flew around the corner.

"Ah, fast."

"I'm going ahead——"

"Oki."

While hearing Veronica's voice from behind, I kicked off the ground, heading deeper into the alley. As I exited the narrow alley, my field of vision opened up to the sides. A gentle breeze brushed across the aloes-wood-colored ground, passing through my body. I sensed the wind's touch, pregnant with a nightly chill.

The enemy was inside a blind alley with a vacant lot and scrap material scattered across the ground. You could call it the ideal place to stage an ambush.

The owners of the smell revealed their presence in the center of the lot. They numbered three. Since there were other magic source responses around us, they probably intended to surround us.

They, who stood stock still in the center, seemed to have released Pheromone's Touch. It was a thick smell, releasing the presence of blood in all directions, coupled with the wind.

One of them, a female vampire wearing seductive clothes, stepped forward.

"...For the Taboo Veronica to follow our invitation while bringing Magitora with her, how unusual." She said with a faint smile on her face.

Mana was gathering in her eyes. And, a ring with a beautiful jewel that had three small flames dwell within decorated the end of her long and narrow finger. Of course, the ring contained mana. Is she a magician-type vampire who makes use of that ring? Though, it might also be a ring to counter the sunlight, like Veronica's.

"...Since they're next to Taboo, they must be the spearmaster and the black cat who we hadn't seen recently." A largely-built, black vampire said from behind the female vampire.

He identified Rollo and me. He was wearing a wild attire that was open at the chest and short sleeves that seemed to have been cut in a zigzag at the shoulder area. His breast was burly with a golden spiraling chain necklace hanging from his neck, showing off his muscular body.

"Tsk, I hadn't expected the spearmaster to be here though... Gold, Nalga, be careful. He's an opponent with a strength we don't know yet."

The one warning those two peculiar vampires was...a vampire with a handsome face.

"Rui, that's why I have come here, right?" The female vampire answered with haughtiness seeping

out of her voice.

Once she assertively told this to the vampire with the handsome face, she raised an arm and hurled an order, "You guys, come out as well——"

In response, men and women that appeared to be low-ranking vampires bustled out from all directions on the open lot. Those vampires held different kinds of longswords, and some of them had even sickle-like blades. The silver blades of the sickles shone dully as they reflected the moonlight.

Veronica showed a reaction to that group. She lightly jumped off the blood sword, landing on the ground.

"...It's the usual weak-blooded small fries. Shuuya, I leave the left side to you." Veronica said with a voice that sounded like the ringing of a bell, and made a blood mist appear through the gaps in the goth attire she was wearing.

Wobbling blood mana, looking like an aura of blood enclosing her whole body.

"...Sure, Veronica. But, it's not just me."

"Eh?"

"Well, just watch. I will counter a group with a group. Helme, Catiza, come out."

Immediately following my order, Helme landed on the ground in front of me after taking a human shape while spiraling out of my left eye, and immediately genuflected.

"Your Excellency, Spirit Helme answers your call."

It looks like she's imitating the Burning Knights.

At the same time, my new finger dropped to the ground, and then transformed into the silver-haired Catiza.

As expected, it took a bit of time for her to transform.

Next I touched Hellish Bone Knights of Darkness on my finger, summoning the Burning Knights. No different from usual, two magic ray threads released from the skull ring connected to the ground, and at the same time as a simmering boiling sound reverberated, smoke rose up with a poof. In the next moment, the Burning Knights appeared from within the smoke.

"——Your Excellency, leave the right vanguard to this Zemetas."

"This Adomos shall turn the enemy into trash as left vanguard."

"I shall turn the enemy to ash." "I shall turn the enemy into magic sources." Both Burning Knights announced as if firing themselves up.

They had just appeared from the skull ring, but were already at the height of the situation. While readying their bone swords and bone shields, they targeted the low-ranking vampires.

"I will take of this place then." Helme stood up in a calm motion.

Creating an ice loop similar to a hula hoop around her slender, tight waist, she waited for further orders next to me.

"Emissary-sama, we're going to get rid of those vampires, right?" Catiza, who had finished her transformation, asked while forming a question mark with her silver hair.

"Nya, nyano."

I don't know whether it's Helme's influence, but Rollodeen used several tentacles to lightly beat Catiza's butt while meowing.

"Nn, nyaa."

It seemed she said, 『My new subordinate nya』. She started to give instructions to Catiza with her meowing and her tentacles.

While making her hair change into an exclamation mark, Catiza gave an answer of "Okaaay" with a cute voice in response to Rollodeen's instructions.

"...I guess we'll play it by ear." I laughed lightly at Rollodeen's and Catiza antics while summoning the Magic Halberd into my right hand.

Putting my other hand on the halberd's handle as well, I shifted into a two-handed grip, and prepared it in a seigan stance. The big red ax blade at its upper end seemed to shine crimson. That gleam made me feel as if it was appealing to me to quickly offer prey to it.

Having said that, today this magic spear might not get much of a turn.

Veronica gulped, "...A spirit-sama, first-class warriors, a silver-haired woman...you sure are employing various people."

While flashing a smile at the surprised Veronica, I replied jokingly, "Yeah, I'm aiming to become an all-rounder."

At that moment I could feel how my bangs were toyed with by the wind blowing across the vacant lot. The wind had picked up in strength.

"——What? He's a man with a carefree, smiling and good-looking face and black eyes that give one the impression of a mischievous boy and draw you in, but summoning magic? He has summoned superior warriors from the spirit world. There's no mention of that in the reports..." said the female vampire, who was called Nalga, while facing us.

Her appearance was sexy. She wore silver clothes that appeared to be transparent like a *négligée*. I could see the color of blood beneath her skin. Something like nipples flickered at the tips of her dome-shaped breasts, but since they were pierced by piercings that contained mana, I ignored it, pretending to not having seen anything.

"...It doesn't matter anyway. I leave the small fry to you. I will finish off that black-haired spear guy."

"Gold, Nalga, don't rush out. Think about the reason why that Magitora user, Taboo Veronica, who had so far thoroughly stuck to escaping and leading around the pursuing servants by the nose, came out here."

"As if I give a fuck. You're babbling too much...the imperial edict by Lunz-sama has already been handed down, no?"

"...Just ignore Gold. I'm on your side, Rui."

"Yeah, we should be cautious. Taboo hasn't called her friends of **【Remains of the Moon】** either. Neither that mutant leopard man."

It looks like the vampire called Rui, who's giving orders in the middle, is the heart of this group. He had golden hair knotted in the back, long and narrow eyebrows, a fair skin, a high nose bridge, and emerald eyes. You could call it an appearance filled with a calm grace.

...He had a cleft chin, but still possessed a crisp appearance. He appeared to be smart. And as the only one he wore an armor with black as basic tone.

"Acting calm and all is fine, but Rui, you haven't forgotten the procedures of a hunt, have you?"

"...There's no way that I would, is there?"

"Humph, then I will move first as always. Got it?"

"Yeah..."

Once he heard Rui's approval from behind, the dark-skinned with the huge frame called Gold stepped forward while laughing in obvious delight. Rui donned a worried expression. Is he something like a squad leader?

"...First I'm going to see how they're going to react to <Triumphal Beast Blood>."

Once the black vampire muttered Triumphal Beast Blood...
Although they are talking among themselves, I guess I will try to ask something.

"...Say, you guys are the Valmask family with the **【Blood Court】**, **【Blood Court of the Great Tomb】**, and such, right?"

"...Indeed. Spear user, if you get in the way of Lunz-sama's order, you'll be destroyed by us." Gold responded to me while standing in front.

They will destroy me, eh?

"That's quite a problem."

"Gold, just for your information, the erasure of Taboo has the highest priority. Get them——"
Nalga called out to the surroundings from behind Gold.

The gathered low-ranking vampires swooped down on us.

"No matter how many low-ranks attack, it's pointless. Since I'm going to wipe the floor with them! Magit, I'm going to borrow mana!"

"Nyagoa!"

Veronica pressed a finger against the green magic gem of Magit's collar.

"Magitora Abranahm Azroha Te..." Veronica spun a spell with her nightingale-like, sweet voice.

Alongside the melody of her chant, her slender finger sunk into the green gem of the white cat's collar. And then, just when I thought that the ominous green mana, which crept up her arm from her finger, might leak to the outside, an illusion of a white fox with many heads manifested from the magic gem, the source releasing the green mana. That fox illusion overlapped with Veronica's whole body.

The fox apparently fused with the blood magic power released from her body, leading to Veronica's clothes changing into a costume that interwove dazzling silver and scarlet colors in the blink of an eye.

Her goth dress was already nice, but the gorgeousness of this one had its charm as well.

In her two hands she held a longsword made out of spiraling crimson and white metals. I wonder whether it's an artifact weapon originating from Wild God Magitora.

Seemingly having her speed increased as an effect of the transformation, she broke into a run with magnificent footwork. Next she brushed away the vampires' swords slashing away at her with her white and red flamberge she had held with both hands in a side hold, and then unleashed two slashes, one a torso sweep and then a diagonal slash crossing a vampire's body from the shoulder down to his chest. She kept chopping up the vampires with successive attacks, hindering them from getting close.

At times, she resorted to ranged attacks by creating a flock of blood swords, letting those swords soar through the sky, and skewering the whole body of a vampire. I suppose it's a special offensive method combining the wild god and blood magic power. Just wow.

Oops, it's no time to stare in admiration...I think I'll also start with a ranged attack.

I shot <Chain> to the left and right from both wrists' chain factors.

——The targets are the heads.

The chains, which extended like lightning ripping through darkness, penetrated the vampires' head, and made them burst in all directions. The low-ranking vampires collapsed after losing their heads. Is it because they are low-ranking? It looks like they'll die if their head is blown away. Though, they might be alive, just incapable of moving.

Based on those considerations and since there were also my comrades, I erased the chains. Even during that time, I could see how Adomos and Zemetas kept slaying vampires with their beloved sword and shield.

The shield's name was...I forgot, but Adomos' handling of the shields was superb, even better than before. As Adomos blocked a vampire's slashes from the right and left by holding his shield upwards slantingly, Zemetas, who suddenly appeared behind Adomos, mowed down the torso of that vampire, and then stabbed his sword through his chest. Those were the kind of combination attacks they performed.

Moreover, as if partaking in that teamwork, Catiza extended her black nails from both hands, piercing the chest of a low-ranking vampire.

"Leave the follow-up to me!" Helme shouted from a position behind Catiza and the Burning

Knights.

She had created round ice cocoons on both her palms. The moonlight made those cocoons sparkle. She fired ice pebbles at the vampires from both hands, backing up the Burning Knights and Catiza who fought in front.

At that point Rollodeen who had shifted into a combat stance and stood on the left side as vanguard, entered my sight.

"Garururu." Rollodeen widely opened her fanged mouth and released a beastly roar.

A stream of fire was vigorously blown out of her mouth, creating a flame curtain on the vacant lot as if erecting a folding screen. While the surging waves of flames loudly swept across the ground, they swallowed up the vampires in their path on the left side, and burned them down to ashes.

"——Hiiii."

That scream didn't come from an enemy, but Helme. While stabbing the chest of a vampire on the right side with an ice sword, she backed off even further in order to get away from Rollo's fire breath.

"What's with those flames?"

"To evaporate that number of vampires in an instant..."

"...Hey, Rui...it's above the quality of my fire, isn't it? I'm starting to get a bad feeling about this."

"...Up to such a level..."

The <Servant Leader> were surprised and flustered, repeatedly blinking as if they were watching a dream.

That was my cue. After making my Magic Halberd disappear, I shot instances of ten 《Ice Spheres》 in succession at the three <Servant Leaders> standing in the middle.

""——Multi-Spell!?"""

Could they tell that it was advanced level? The three vampires were surprised.

"<Triumphal Beast Blood>"

Gold created a tall monster with crimson blades growing out of its entire body in front of him to oppose the swarm of the restraining 《Ice Spheres》. A few of the spheres pierced into that monster. I could see how a thick, worm-like tongue extended from the monster's crooked head's big mouth with its uneven teeth.

Even after being hit by the ice bullets, the bipedal monster didn't budge at all. Although particles of blood danced in the air each time a spell hits its huge frame, it appeared to stay composed.

"Kuu——"

"Humph——"

The other two vampires resisted by using peculiar blood magic powers. Nalga emitted a mist of blood from her whole body like Veronica. She had narrow eyes as if carved into a rock, but she widened them with all her might. At the same time she held one of her slender arms above her head. It was the hand with the ring.

Thereupon, the blood mist gathered around that ring. The ring and the blood magic power combined, and the ring's mana and the blood mana blended into each other straight away as if showing a chemical reaction, giving birth to a darkish fire magic from the ring with an explosive force.

The black flames expanded as if covering the surrounding vicinity. It looked like a curtain of black flames with spiked drops attached to it.

Those flames continued to block a part of the many ice bullets fired by me.

On the other hand, Rui created blood spears in both his hands. Using those spears, he swept away the ice bullets approaching him.

Those blood spears are cool. But, I won't go easy on him. At that moment I activated <Chain Spear of the Ray System>. I created a total of three light spears one after the other, with a delicately shifted timing.

The three light spears approached the vampires as if inviting them to heaven.

One spear was absorbed into the chest of the tough-looking crimson beast created by Gold in the beginning, causing the beast's chest to melt in a circular shape with a force full of vigor and vitality. The light spear easily penetrated through the beast's chest. A steam of blood blew out of the round hole in the crimson beast.

"Wha-!?"

The light spear, which had pierced through it, even stabbed into the torso of Gold, who was behind it, and then stopped.

"——Guaaah, w-what the fuck is thiiis!?"

Next, the other two light spears chased after Nalga and Rui, who were behind Gold, while drawing arcs in the air. In order to block the light spear, Nalga raised her arm with a nimble motion, and augmented it with the ring's blood mana. Imitating a barrier, she piled up thick black flame curtains in layers, but the instant the light spear came in contact with those flame curtains, the curtains melted away like heated cheese.

Just like that, the light spear stabbed into Nalga's right chest.

"Ooooooooouuuchh, t-this kind of light...magic...archbishop class!?" Nalga screamed, but since the light spear pierced through her torso and stabbed into the ground, she became unable to move about.

Rui tried to evade the light spear pursuing him by nimbly moving to the right and left of Nalga, but to no avail. Next he attempted to offset it with the blood spears in his hands, but the moment blood spears and light spear clashed, Rui's blood spears evaporated as if exploding. Having become defenseless, the light spear pierced into Rui's torso.

"——Guuh, light magic like this...don't tell me, he's a member of the Demon Extermination Agency at a rank higher than Mad Knight!?"

The butt-ends of the light spears that pierced the chests of all three wriggled like sea anemone, and

while rotating in spirals, they transformed into nets with threads of light being strung up over and over again.

Once the nets of light dug into the flesh of the vampires, they turned into scattered chunks of meat without being able to do anything.

"My boooodyyy."

"Hiiii."

"...I had heard...that you're...a magic spear user, but for you to have the divine protection of a light god..."

The vampires had become head-only. They talked while revealing pained expressions, but their intestines squirmed, and their flesh and blood wriggled around, trying to regenerate while gathering. However, each time they collided against a part of the light spear's net stitches, the blood and flesh evaporated as if melting. Their regeneration speed dropped visibly, creating a spurt of blood.

"Rui <Servant Leader>-sama!!"

"Gold-samaaa."

"For Nalga-sama to have been done in..."

Once the remaining low-ranking vampires on the right side became shocked and stared this way with stupefied looks, they were hit by Helme's ice spells. In succession, they were cut by two slashes of Veronica's gleaming flamberge, cut by the combined efforts of the Burning Knights, and turned into skewers by Catiza's black nails.

Rollodeen's tentacles coiled around their legs and made them fall over, and lastly, "Well then I'm going to smash them up~♪"

While yelling happily, Catiza swung down her silver hair that had adopted a shape similar to a locksmith's hammer on the head of a vampire laying on the ground, crushing it in the process.

"——Uuaaaahh."

"——Run awaaaay."

The surviving vampires escaped all at once. Due to their action, Helme made the blue leafy skin across her whole body wave.

"Your Excellency, shall I pursue them?"

"Nn, nyaaa."

Rollodeen adopted a low stance with her tail swinging back and forth. At the same time she repeatedly extended and withdrew her bloodstained beast claws at her paws. In the same way, she extended and withdrew the bone swords at the tips of her tentacles. It looks like Helme and Rollodeen want to go after them.

"...Go for it. But, don't get normal citizens involved."

"Okay, Rollo-sama, the competition is on."

"N, nyaooo——"

Rollodeen and Helme, who emitted sheets of water spray, ran off as if dancing through the sky. The image of the vampires being chased down came to my mind...

Just when I wanted to offer a prayer with one hand for the pitiful low-ranking vampire's fate, the three heads laying in the vacant lot spoke up.

"Time to escape."

"Aye."

"Yep."

They were in a state of being just heads, but they activated their blood magic powers. At that moment, they seemed to manipulate not only their heads, but also their blood which was scattered in the vicinity...causing blood mist consisting out of blood particles to amass in three places of the night sky. And then those mists turned into two bats and one crow.

The bats and crow flapped their back wings, flying away into the night.

——You think I let you get away!?

I summoned the Magic Halberd into my right hand once again. Charging Magic Combat Style into my legs, I ran with Magic Combat Step, and while running, I powerfully kicked the ground and jumped. During the jump, I activated <Magic Hand guided by Thought> beneath my feet in midair. I created a foothold in the air and used it.

While performing a two-staged jump, I held the red ax blade of the halberd horizontally. I moved through the air with a terrifying speed as if I would have wings growing on my back.

In no time I approached as if bringing my body close to one of the escaping bats, and powerfully swung the Magic Halberd at that bat. The ax blade, which had been thirsting for prey, bit into the bat, cutting it completely apart.

Without a scream, the bat turned into a mist of blood, and vanished. Do they become extremely weak after transforming?

In the middle of sensing my body drop due to gravity, I made another foothold with <Magic Hand guided by Thought>, and while continuing to leap as if dancing through the sky, I erased the halberd in my right hand. I'm going to try to catch the crow, and have the other bat die.

I rotated by twisting my body in the air, and in the middle of my shifting visual field, I spotted the fleeing bat and crow. I extended my right and left hand diagonally, aiming for the bat and crow. I shot <Chain> from both my wrists, and made them head towards the two escapees. The chain shot out from my left wrist with the speed of a bullet drilled through the bat. Just like the bat that had been bisected by the ax blade, this bat disappeared after turning into mist.

While registering its disappearance on the left side, the chain released from my right hand pierced through the wings of the crow. Immediately following I manipulated the chain to twine itself around the small torso of the crow. Lastly I reeled in the chain towards the right chain factor alongside the crow.

I grasped the crow with my right hand while erasing the surrounding chain, and then addressed it as

it struggled inside my right palm, "I don't know who you are, but..."

The crow made its eyes shine red. It raised a dissonant cry of "gaa gaa," but once I strengthened my grip, it made its body go limp as if it died, and the annoying crying stopped.

Using <Magic Hand guided by Thought> for footholds, I returned to the vacant lot, and landed on the ground.

Thereupon, ""——It's our victory!!"" , the Burning Knights yelled while crossing the bone swords.

"The first victooory. But, boneys, you're strong, aren't you?" Catiza ran up to the Burning Knights and chatted them up. It looks like she was curious.

Or rather, isn't this their first meeting?

"Non non, same to you."

"We still have a long way to go, Your Excellency's new subordinate."

"Fufu, boney, your voice is nice. My name is Catiza, Ca-chan."

"Catiza-dono, it is? I'm the Black Burning Knight Zemetas."

"I am the Red Burning Knight Adomos. I have the confidence to serve as His Excellency's shield."

They started to introduce each other.

"Oh, I see. I'm an <Apostle of Light Evil>. Nice to meet ya, boneys." Catiza bowed.

It appears that she perceived them as boneys.

"It looks like you possess a bond with His Excellency."

"Yep♪"

After that they continued to have a cheerful chat.

"It's just a bit, but our territory in the spirit world is expanding."

"Hee, Zeme-chan, how cool."

"We're secretly aiming to exceed the spirit world knights."

"Ado-chan, that's marvelous as well! But, Ado-chan, your armor has slightly many cuts."

"What, this is nothing! Once I return to the spirit world, it will go back to its original state."

"Oooh, did you fires increase just now, Ado-chan?"

For some reason, it looked like they immediately opened their hearts to each other. And then they

began to compare the Burning Knights' bone swords with the black nails.

"Ey."

"Ey."

"Oooh~"

Matching the rhythmic signals, they lifted their bone swords and black nails overhead. It seemed as if they made some kind of vow with each other.

It was Catiza-chan's composition that allowed her to hit it off with the Burning Knights.

"...There's the superior warriors, but also a girl enslaved by Shuuya? How mysterious..." Veronica muttered as she watched from the side.

"Nyaa, nyaon." At Veronica's feet, Magit meowed as if agreeing with Veronica's opinion.

Even if she said so, her appearance was mysterious as well, with that dazzling red and white armor attire. It had a style similar to that of a magic knight or magic girl.

"It's mysterious just as you say, but what's with that outfit of yours then, Veronica?"

"Ah, as expected? Are you so curious about me?"

"I am."

I had asked after consciously narrowing my eyes for a bit.

"Fufun, your intense look makes me go numb, guildmaster~. But, I'm happy, so I will tell you. This has the prerequisite of me borrowing mana from Magit, but it's a special skill of my blood mana's third gate. It expends quite a lot of blood and mana, though. It's pretty, right?"

"Yeah, it's lovely and an amazing skill, I'd say."

Hearing those words, Veronica looked embarrassed and became bashful. Then she canceled her blood magic power, returning to her goth dress outfit.

"...But, but, Shuuya, you too. Light spears possessing light nets beyond the templar's abilities is something I've seen for the first time since I was born... The light cross magic used by the templars was dreadful as well, but yours were way too amazing with their chasing ability... They easily defeated the blood magic powers of the Valmask family's <Head Servants>. No way, I heard it in rumors...you were a single-digit member of the Demon Extermination Agency or something?"

I guess they are elites? I'm not really all that informed in that area. I guess I will ask Tsuan about it in due time.

"No, no. Veronica, you previously experienced a part of it as well, didn't you?"

I was back when I still stayed at the Lodging Moon of the Labyrinth. At that time she burned her

finger after touching my blood.

"Yep, I remember. That means, you're really no vampire lord..." She muttered with a disappointed expression.

"I told you, I'm a Lucival."

"Oki, so what are you planning to do with that weakened crow in your hand?" She pointed at the limp crow in my right hand.

The crow was still alive.

"I will interrogate it."

Well, at the end I will suck out its soul, though.

I shifted my eyes from Veronica to the crow. I looked into its half-opened eyes.

"...Can you speak normally?"

"...I can, but..."

"What's your name?"

"Rui."

It were the eyes of a crow, but I could feel coldheartedness from them.

"Your parent is the guy called <Head Servant> Lunz or something?"

"...Tsk, Lunz-sama will definitely track you down. You will regret having turned our blood court into your enemies."

Once I asked him, Rui opened his beak and spit bloody saliva at me. I guess he's trying to threaten me in reverse.

"Shuuya, it's pointless to ask a <Servant Leader> under the direct control of Lunz. Unlike the low-ranking weak-blooded vampires born through Lunz' second gate's skill, his blood connection with him is deep."

Hoh. Different from the <Servant Leaders>, the low-ranking vampires, who escaped, were put under Lunz' rule with yet another <Blood Mana> skill?

"I see. Then I have no further business with you——"

I bit into the crow and activated <Drain Soul>.

"Ahyaaa." Rui raised a weird scream, but he vanished in an instant.

Although it had diminished already, I received rich blood and a soul.

"Ufuu, looking at your face, I get mesmerized." Veronica said, but I didn't understand at all.

Now then, things are done here. I guess I will wait for Helem and Rollo to get back, and then go home. I will take a nice n' easy rest, and then go out to get the items appraised tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

Furthermore, I'm excited. Not only that, but I also wonder whether I should get the items in my item box appraised, while at it. Ah, come to think of it, Collector Shiki mentioned it, didn't she....? If I get the Picture Scroll of the Gods of Sebdola appraised, I might find out whether it's a Legendary item.