

Chapter 127 - vs. Demon King Akira ①

It's the 15th day after we have started invading the Domain in Hakui ruled by the Dwarf Demon King.

The formerly thirteen sectors have dwindled down to one. The annexation of Hakui is advancing towards its final stage.

"Shion-san! At long last you're going to turn the Dwarf Demon King into your subordinate, aren't you?"

"Indeed."

I give a suitable answer to Kanon, who smiles optimistically, without any deeper thought.

"Huh? You don't look overly happy? Is there something worrying you?" (Kanon)

"What is your impression of the invasion's second half?" (Shion)

"The invasion's second half? Unlike you, I can't watch a live stream of what's going on, so...I don't really know, but...the invasion speed went fast, didn't it?" (Kanon)

Kanon gives an uncertain reply while tilting her small head to the side.

"In the second half we ran into almost no enemies." (Shion)

"——? That means...they gave up? Or——" (Kanon)

"They amassed their main force in the last sector...would be the valid assumption here." (Shion)

"I see... In other words, the invasion of the last sector will become a lot more difficult than before?" (Kanon)

Once I complete Kanon's sentence, Kanon follows my reasoning, and considers my assumption.

"There's that as well, but...for argument's sake, let's assume we were the enemy Demon King — Akira."

"Eh? You're saying the opposing Demon King's name is Akira!?" (Kanon)

I ignore Kanon, who abruptly breaks the flow of my words, and continue voicing out my thoughts.

"Demon King Akira is level 10. Their stats are Alchemy B and Creation B. The BP necessary to increase a stat from its initial value to B is 17. 55 BP can be obtained by reaching level 10. In that case, there's one more stat they can increase to B. If they are Alchemy-specialized, I think it'd be valid to expect it to be **【Body】**. In such a case, they would have 4 BP left. Those could be spent on Mana or Knowledge to assign all BP."

"Well, it is the best way how they can assign their BP without having too many left."

"Yep, in short, any other stats are out of the question."

The consideration I have voiced out just now is a pattern how Demon King Akira can assign their BP most efficiently to face me. It's also possible that they won't allot any BP to save them for Alchemy. In such a case, Akira's abilities would be lower than estimated.

Next, Akira's subordinates. Going by the fact that Akira is above level 10, they are capable of creating a special subordinate equivalent to a vampire baron. When I attacked them for the first time, Akira had 13 sectors. That would set Akira's maximum CP to 2300. I checked back with Takaharu and Sarah, but the special subordinates they could create starting with level 10 would have lowered their maximum CP by 1000, too. I find it difficult to believe that only the Vampire, Elf, and Beast species need to give up 1000 of their maximum CP while the other races have a different condition.

Going by that logic, Akira can create two special subordinates. However, it's unlikely for Akira, who specializes in Alchemy, to lower their maximum CP to 300. Hence, the maximum would be one special subordinate?

Next, former Demon Kings, like Kanon, Yataro, Saburou, Sarah, or Takaharu, and former humans like Rina. People like them can also become irregular elements, but...I wonder whether Akira has any such people under their rule?

My guess is — no.

Even if such people did exist, they would have likely shown up to defend before the Domain decreased to one sector.

Opposing this, my combat powers are: me with Body, Mana, Alchemy, and Creation at B; the former Demon Kings, Takaharu, Sarah, and Saburou; and Rina who's strong enough to match a former Demon King. In addition, my bloodkin, spearheaded by Cain, Kaede, Chloe, and Layla, are endowed with strength equal or above Akira's kin.

And Akira should have seen and comprehended the difference in power through their smartphone. Based on that information...

"Is there any chance of winning (for Akira)....?" (Shion)

"Eh? Are there actually any factors speaking for loosing!?" (Kanon)

Kanon is surprised by my muttering that omitted the part in my thoughts.

"I didn't phrase it correctly, I guess. You think Akira has any chance to win this?"

"Ah...that's what it was. I don't think so." (Kanon)

Kanon answers my question while looking quite indifferently.

"Makes sense." (Shion)

"——? What are you worried about, despite it being a battle you can win?" (Shion)

"I don't know whether there might be some kind of move left for Akira, seeing how they are an opponent I encounter for the first time...Akira is aware of our strength, no?" (Shion)

"Well, now that they've lost twelve sectors, I think they're fully aware of it, whether they like it or

not." (Kanon)

"Akira is a Dwarf species, right? Akira's subordinates are dwarves who excel at Alchemy, correct?" (Shion)

"Yes."

"Isn't it somehow possible to turn them into my subordinate without them losing a great number of subordinates?"

"Oh...now I get what's gnawing at you." (Kanon)

If I invade with my best members, usurping the Domain will probably be simple. However, in that case, many of the dwarves I have planned to turn into my subordinates will be lost in the process. If possible, I'd like them to surrender without spilling any blood. If I could make a wish, I'd like Akira to create a special subordinate with the remaining CP before surrendering.

I wonder what would be necessary to have them accept a surrender — without spilling any blood. In the first place, does Akira know about «Surrender»?

Next, the merit in case of a «Surrender» is — the guarantee of a livelihood as former Demon King. To clear those two preconditions — it's probably the best idea to recommend it together with my former Demon King subordinates.

In that case, the invasion members will be me, Takaharu, Sarah, Saburou...and I could also add Kanon for good measure later as well. I'd like to take Yataro along as well, but I want to avoid any holes in my defense. Next, as a threat, I will also bring along the bloodkin of Chloe's and Rina's teams. Akira should clearly understand the true power of my bloodkin.

Mastermind, who created this broken world, planted a subconscious feeling of hate between humans (Law) and Demon Kings (Chaos). In the same way, such subconscious feeling has been planted in Demon Kings (Chaos) towards their own race. I myself would likely throw a fit of anger if I was urged to surrender by a pretending Demon King. However, the fear of imminent death exceeds that feeling of hate.

This time there might be merit in trying to start with persuasion.

If it fails, I just have to make them obey with force as usual.

That settles the plan.

I summon my bloodkin, and head out to the final sector of Hakui's Domain.

Chapter 128 - vs. Demon King Akira ②

Leading my strong bloodkin, I step into the final sector remaining of Hakui's Domain.

Just like with the twelve sectors so far, it's a mine tunnel system type. I had thought that they would at least change the last one into an outdoor type as precaution against me, a vampire, but...

The owner of a Domain is a Demon King. Seeing as they own it, they can manage and monitor their own Domain.

I take a deep breath and step forward.

"Mine name is Demon King Shion. I'm the Demon King who took rule over Kanazawa, the Kahoku District, and Kahoku City. The number of domains under my rule amounts to 89. An explanation about my subordinates' power...is probably unnecessary."

I speak up as if making a speech towards the empty ceiling.

"Demon King Akira, I will get straight to the point, and state my demands. Surrender to me. You're very likely intending to stage a final resistance. However, can you see a vision of you winning this? Let me spell it out for you: My victory is set in stone with your defeat being an unshakable truth."

I continue with words of advice.

"Isn't it better to avoid unnecessary bloodshed? Assuming you become my subordinate, I will at least...no, fully guarantee your livelihood. Demon King Akira...how about it? Won't you talk it over with me?"

I pose a question at the end, finishing my speech.

All that had to be said has been said. Now I just have to wait for Akira's reply.

"What're we goin' ta do?" (Takaharu)

Takaharu asks me.

"We'll wait." (Shion)

"How long?" (Takaharu)

"Let's see...one hour. If there's no reply even after we've waited for an hour, we will start our invasion." (Shion)

"Tsk! Don' drag me here for a borin' round of yappin'." (Takaharu)

The belligerent Takaharu snorts while looking displeased.

"Unlike Takaharu-chi, I'm all for pacifism~ That bein' said, it kinda looks like there's nothing to do? To wait around in such a damp and gloomy place for an hour, that's like no way." (Sarah)

Following Takaharu, Sarah starts complaining, obviously lacking any will to cooperate here.

"Nothing to do, eh...? Oh, right. Come to think of it, it's the first time for you guys to meet each other, isn't it? You can kill some time by introducing yourself to each other." (Shion)

I suggest a way to spend the free time while looking in the direction of Rina's and Chloe's teams.

"Introduce ourselves? As you command. But before that...the lowly beast over there! Watch how you talk to Shion-sama! It's disrespectful!" (Chloe)

"Likewise, the inferior long-ear over there, you really need some training in how to act as bloodkin of Shion-sama, don't you?" (Layla)

Chloe and Layla become angry at Takaharu and Sarah who whined around just now.

"Hah? Oi, missy! Lowly beast, yer talkin' 'bout me!?" (Takaharu)

"Haaah? Me being called inferior by the likes of a subordinate? That's like totally absurd!" (Sarah)

It's tit for tat. Sarah and Takaharu get enraged upon Chloe's and Layla's words.

These guys...were the types that don't mesh with each other at all, eh...?

——It's absolutely forbidden to fight among allies!

Since it's troublesome, I mediate by forcing them through an order.

"Man, you guys...try to get along with each other at least a bit."

I sigh while a dangerous mood hangs in the air around me.



After 30 minutes of waiting for Akira in an awkward atmosphere.

I hear several footsteps and the sounds of metal grazing against metal from the front.

"So they finally show up, huh?"

Once I turn my eyes in the direction of the footsteps, I spot a group of dwarves holding silver-shining, big battle axes and shields with their bodies being fully clad in Mithril armor.

Those dwarves open a path by stepping to the left and right, and a huge dwarf, who's one size bigger than the other ones and wears a jet-black armor — a cursed mail like Iron, heads in our direction.

That's Demon King Akira...?

Once the big dwarf arrives at a spot one step ahead of the other dwarves, he shifts to the left, goes down on one knee, and bows.

——?

Is he showing his will to surrender...? Having said that, he hasn't lowered his head in my direction. As my wariness goes up due to the weird behavior of the dwarf in front of me, a small girl, who's one head smaller than the other dwarves, appears from the path opened up by them.

"Nice to meet you, Demon King Shion."

The small girl — wearing a yellow safety helmet on her head and an outfit that looks like a work coat — calls out to me while being expressionless.

"Demon King Akira...?"

Once I voice out the name of the enemy's leader, the girl lightly shakes her head vertically.

"Even though I may look like this, I'm an adult. Don't look down on me." (Akira)

The girl — Akira mutters with a quiet voice.

"I'm not looking down on you, but...you having shown up here means that it's fine for me to assume

that you're going to surrender to me?" (Shion)

"It's not fine." (Akira)

Akira denies my words.

"Are we going to fight to the death then?" (Shion)

"No." (Akira)

This time I feel a slight tinge of anger in her words.

"What is that you desire then?" (Shion)

"Demon King Shion, are you an idiot? Remember your own words." (Akira)

My words...? ——!

"So you came to talk, huh?" (Shion)

Akira consents.

"Let's talk then. I will confirm the major premise before our discussion. Demon King Akira — you guys can't win against me." (Shion)

"That's a threat?" (Akira)

"No, I'm just stating a fact." (Shion)

I reply calmly.

"Demon King Akira...do you know of 《Surrender》?" (Shion)

"I do." (Akira)

Akira nods.

"So you do know. Is it information you obtained through 『Laplace』?" (Shion)

"...『Laplace』?" (Akira)

"If you don't know the term, forget about it." (Shion)

I continue speaking to Akira who tilts her head to the side in confusion. Her knowing 《Surrender》 without being aware of 『Laplace』 means that Akira's Knowledge is C or above.

"If you know about 《Surrender》, it makes things easy. Surrender to me." (Shion)

"I don't want to...what if I said that?" (Akira)

"There won't be any other way but for us to duke it out to the end, I'd say." (Shion)

Our side is predominant in these negotiations. It's likely a bad move to unskillfully show any weaknesses. Akira reveals an expression full of anguish.

"...Then, what's the merit in a 《Surrender》 to you?" (Akira)

"You and your subordinates will be able to survive." (Shion)

"What about the livelihood you mentioned before?"

"I will guarantee it." (Shion)

"What's the guarantee that you will keep that promise?" (Akira)

"I can only tell you...to believe me, but let's see. For example, the ones over there are former Demon Kings as you would be. Are you guys leading a good life?" (Shion)

——Nod with a smile!

Because I order them at the same time as saying this, Takaharu and the others agree with stiff smiles. It's unrelated to this, but Chloe and Layla are nodding repeatedly with fanatic looks.

"You're telling me to trust you who I met today for the first time?" (Akira)

"That's how it is." (Shion)

"...Harsh." (Akira)

"What do I have to do to gain your trust then?" (Shion)

Once I toss that question at Akira, her eyes gleam.
Was I lured into something here...?

"Equip this..."

With those words, Akira holds a red loop — a collar out to me.

"You're telling me to put on the collar?" (Shion)

"This is the 『Collar of Pledge』. You will have your neck wrung if you fail to keep your promise." (Akira)

"Huh? You're asking me to put on something so dangerous?" (Shion)

"It won't be any issue if you keep your promise." (Akira)

"Don't mess with me... If I put this on, my right over life and death will be taken by you. You don't call that a 《Surrender》." (Shion)

"Muu... In that case, put this on your most trusted subordinate." (Akira)

"Trusted subordinate...?" (Shion)

"Yep. It won't be any issue if you keep your promise." (Akira)

Akira repeats the same words as before.

"How do you specify livelihood?" (Shion)

"A livelihood that guarantees my safety. I don't wish for luxury...but, being used as disposable pawn is unforgivable." (Akira)

"That's unexpectedly modest. You won't ask for a daily 《Random Creation》 or pointlessly, extravagant meals?" (Shion)

"Assuming I were to 《Surrender》, it would be nonsense if you died because I wasted your CP." (Akira)

The girl in front of me might really be an adult... I'd like to let a certain old guy hear this line.

"Understood. In that case I will guarantee three meals a day and a place to live for you and your subordinates." (Shion)

"Also, prohibition to use as disposable." (Akira)

"I won't use you as disposable either... However, I will have a part of your subordinates participate in combat. It might also happen that they will be asked to serve as shields. I will handle them carefully, but it's still possible that they will lose their lives." (Shion)

"That's understandable." (Akira)

"In that case, I will accept your demand as well." (Shion)

I look at my subordinates to select the one to be offered as a sacrifice. Chloe and Layla looked back at me with an intensity that made it clear that they were volunteering for this, but...

"My trusted subordinate is——" (Shion)

"That woman...she will do." (Akira)

Akira looks at Rina.