

Chapter 273 - Black-haired Magician

A/N: Third Person PoV



The black-haired woman sighed as she looked at her state reflected in the big mirror. Medium hair, thick eyebrows, and long slit-eyes. A small nose bridge, small lips, and a triangle-shaped chin. She possessed a very cute face.

Her body was wrapped up by a light brown robe, making it obvious that she was a magician.

"...I don't know about the situation outside since I can't check, but at this rate, it sure looks like the plain slime and goblin scouts around the labyrinth were annihilated...they are soon going to rush into the first floor."

At that moment, a slime entered through a crack in the cave.

"Mistress~ It appears Lady Ancient Dragon can't come at the moment."

"Eehh? No way..." The woman lamented over the slime's report.

Her eyes reflected her sadness, as they kept staring at the slime Sliyo [efn_note]By the way, the yo stands for 吉, aka good fortune/luck.[/efn_note] as if wanting it to comfort her. However, her eyes recovered their strong resolve, and she shook her head. As her hair swayed, her somewhat small ears, which usually remained hidden, appeared and disappeared repeatedly.

"...Sliyo, thanks for the report. It's fine for you to return to your station."

"Okiii, Sojuuu. You see, I was of use!"

Sliyo spoke to the close aides standing close to the female magician.

She pulled herself together, and said, "...From the beginning, Lady Ancient Dragon is often not present. A crisis remains a crisis, but we've survived up until now, so we'll hang on until the very last moment! I have to consider our countermeasures...let's sort the information once more," while checking the situation of the first floor reflected in the mirror set up in front of her.

"...Since there's armed demonoids among them, it must be the lot of the Millennial Hazarn Empire. With an army of this scale, a corps commander might have come as well." The magician analyzed with a pale face.

The mirror showed her how the monsters of Hazarn one-sidedly slaughtered the moth-type monsters and ashen fang wolf (Est Wolf) monsters she had stationed to protect the labyrinth's first floor.

'Unlike with Geronas, Hazarn's military forces are powerful, not allowing the monsters of the first

floor to get solid hits in,' while making that assessment, the magician spoke up, "...I know that resistance is impossible for the monsters on the first floor. It's the second floor that matters. Combinations of pitfall and suspension bridge traps, with the cornerstone being the certain death attacks of the slighnights and slimurais. If it goes as usual, it should be possible to kill the majority of the monsters in that area. The problem is the corps commander..."

"Master, shall we head out to the front line?"

A large, blood red bone knight wearing a black mantle, which was open at its chest, suggested from the magician's side. Joining its four skeletal arms at its chest, the knight adopted a pose as if greeting a king.

"Likely...Mirei. But, the time's not ripe yet."

"As you command."

Mirei was the name of the bowing blood bone knight. As she stopped her pose, she placed her four long and slender arms at the sword belt at her waist, housing four bone swords.

Right now Mirei obviously had the appearance of a skeleton, but originally she was a vampire lord of the Twelve Branch Family's Halzelmar House.

The wandering vampire lord Mirei Halzelmar had a deep history with the female magician. Once she had invaded the labyrinth owned by the female magician in a place close to Zelbia's Mountain Range and the Eyhabra Plains, which were connected to the Great Goldix Desert, and thus her history as a head servant (Vampire) came to an end, but...after some twists and turns, she was reborn as unknown species called 『Blood Bone Heavy Soul Knight』 after being fused with various items in the labyrinth core.

As if serving as proof of that, three-dimensional ripples in the shapes of ink black hearts floated up from the pit of Mirei's stomach. A heart was situated in the center of a circle that seemed to have blood orderly flow through it. The heart ripples repeatedly flashed in a lighter and deeper black as if signifying a breath.

"Mirei...are you thirsting for blood?"

The one asking Mirei wasn't the female magician, but one of her close aides who had been talking with Sliyo nearby.

However, its appearance was abnormal. One arm and a brain. It had a shape directly connecting a person's brain to the end of a person's right shoulder below. It reminded one of a Kasa-obake, an apparition, but since it had an arm and not a leg, it was the very definition of an abnormal monster.

"Soju, don't state the obvious." Mirei referred to that one-arm-one-brain monster as Soju.

"...This time the enemies number more than usual. Blood will flow in large quantities."

Soju possessed a tear as a mouth on his palm. It allowed him to emit words in an eerie voice.

"...Rather than that, make use of your "head", and think about countermeasures against Hazarn."

"The installation of the bewitching forest in front of the command room has already finished. Besides, considering that you might head out to the front line like last time, I brought my "hand"

with me, you see?

"Is that so? But, just as the mistress said earlier, I won't dispatch."

"...I'll follow orders. But, I think my bewitchment will come into play after all, as she said that we're concentrating our combat forces."

Soju moved his arm, that seemed to be his torso, upwards as he kept floating. The brain moved downwards, and with the arm being above, a small laughter leaked out of the crack on his palm.

Having listened to the conversation between their two aides, the magician spoke up, "...You guys are the guardians of this third floor. You're my strongest combat assets and at the same time my and the command room's final defense, so it's crucial where I'm going to put you to use."

"Soju seems to be discontent with that, but I believe your judgment to be correct, mistress."

"Just as I said before...I hope that the all-out-war will take place on the second floor where the slimes are."

"...The decision of an all-out-war is still too premature. Since I'm pretty sure that a corps commander will be among the enemies this time, victory or defeat will be decided when that corps commander shows up."

Indeed, Blood Bone Knight Mirei and Arm Brain Soju also were trump cards for the female magician.

"That's why we're going to use a tactic of stalling for time."

As the magician made that declaration, she averted her slit eyes from Mirei and Soju, turning them in the direction of the mirror. She moved her arms, spreading the robe with its opening at the chest even further to the sides, as if to expose her bulging breasts. Then she retrieved a thin steel plate that connected magic lines with her left hand out of her gauntlet-type item box she wore on one of the extended arms.

That thin steel plate was a display-shaped terminal. Its surface showed the detailed values of her mana, the number of magic stones, the number of souls, the dungeon core, etc. as graphs. She began to operate the windows shown on that display with her slender fingers. As the thin plate seemed to be linked with the mirror, the plate's display was reflected on the mirror as well. Fretfulness colored her face as she worked with the terminal. But, even so, the finger movements of her delicate hand as she swiped and pressed the terminal were cute. Her nails were dyed with a pretty, mysterious color.

The terminal asked her whether she wanted to spend mana next to the picture of a wolf with a Yes or No question. She quickly chose Yes by touching the display with her finger. In response, the figure of an Ash Fang Wolf was reflected on the mirror as a three-dimensional picture.

In the next moment, a mysterious dimensional hole opened up in the wall of the first floor, and great numbers of wolf-shaped monsters, looking just like the wolf reflected on the mirror, appeared from within. It was an army corps of wolf monsters that had manifested all of a sudden.

A monster possessing the lower body of a locust and the sickening upper body of a human fell down out of surprise. However, wind and fire spells were poured down in succession on those wolf monsters by a group of magicians holding wands.

The Ash Fang Wolves, which had suddenly entered the first floor, were wiped out all too quickly. But, without minding that, the female magician kept operating her terminal, making small goblins spawn from another dimensional hole.

Those new arrivals were easily slaughtered by Hazarn's soldiers, but just as the magician had spoken about buying time, it definitely slowed the enemy's advance.

Then, after several hours had passed, the mirror gave off a warning sound alongside a message, stating 『Invaders on the Second Floor』.

"At last they've reached the second floor..." The magician muttered as she looked at the mirror.

The mirror then showed how the empire's monsters swarmed into the second floor's pitfall area. The great numbers of large goblins had butchered the first floor's labyrinth monsters with ease.

However, just as their appearance suggested, they were no different to monsters, lacking discernment, and the ability to think. Thus, the large goblins, the Hazarn Empire was so proud of, didn't notice the unnatural depressions in front of them, and traveled across the pitfalls, naturally triggering the traps.

They fell into the holes while loudly screaming in death agony, where they were awaited by stakes at the bottom. The fallen goblins were stabbed and skewered by the stakes, dying helplessly. However, the locust monsters avoided the pitfalls by jumping across them, and continued their advance.

"We're the first to arrive. Time to head deeper inside!"

"Yeaah——"

A half-human, half-locust monster - a creation by the empire's fusion technology - yelled full of fighting spirit to rouse its allies. It was just natural, but since it had a head like a human, it also possessed a mouth.

At that moment, one of the female magician's skilled subordinates, a 『Sliknight』, moved.

『Sliknights』 were humanoid spear wielders with a spear in each hand and a slime body.

That sliknight threw the spears in its hands at the locust monsters, which jumped while yelling, using <Throwing>. One locust monster had its torso stabbed by a thrown spear, was hurled back towards the wall by the force, and clashed against the rock face.

Without looking at the result of its throw, the sliknight continued to <Throw> in succession, creating a drawing of skewered locus monsters on the wall.

Moreover, another of the magician's capable subordinates, a 『Slimurai』, which was a humanoid slime wearing a samurai helmet, transformed its own slime arms into long and slender cutter blades, charging. While shrewdly moving around, the slimurai finished off the monsters, which were still breathing after having fallen into the pitfalls, by beheading them.

At that point, the slimurai encountered a black-furred gorilla monster possessing a pig head that had avoided the pitfalls.

"Buoboo!" The pig gorilla screamed, apparently agitated.

"..."

The slimurai silently ran past the pig gorilla while brandishing its cutter arms, unleashing a blade flash at the gorilla's hairy torso, and thus cutting it down.

Just as its name gave away, the slimurai was a slime capable of transforming its jelly-like arms into

sword blades. Since her melon-like boobs had swayed in the process, even the gorilla got distracted for an instant by her big tits.

"Yep, yep, nice moves. It looks like it'll work with the sliknights and slimurais doing their best!"

"Strong. All I can do is to charge~"

"Sliyo, that charge of yours is plenty amazing! It's no wonder that Lady Ancient Dragon likes you! But, the children doing their best right now are trueborns whose evolutionary growth I quickened by giving them plenty of magic stones and my soul fragments." The female magician was happy while looking at her subordinates making every effort in the mirror.

Just like that, time kept passing as the fierce battle on the second floor kept going.



The brightness of the surface as the morning sun rose across the horizon illuminated the labyrinth's entrance. That sunlight was completely unrelated to the battles continuously raging on the first and second floors of the labyrinth.

The sliknights and slimurais had carried away deep cuts in the interior part of the second floor due to Hazarn's fierce attacks that went on without making any distinction between day and night. During all that time, the female magician, the labyrinth master, sent simple slimes, moth monsters, and soldier goblins as reinforcements, allowing the defenders to somehow weather through the continuous onslaught by the attackers while stopping any enemy to set foot on the third floor. However, by now, all the pitfalls were filled, and the suspension bridge area had been ignored. The female magician watched the change of the battle's progress nervously. As obvious from her expression, it seemed that the second floor's breakthrough, which they hadn't allowed to happen so far, was only a matter of time at this point...and just at that moment, High Ancient Dragon Sazihali was reflected in the mirror around the labyrinth's entrance area.

"Yahoooo! Lady Ancient Dragon has come for us! As I thought, it's good to have a great dragon as a friend, right?"

"Yes, mistress!"

"It was the right decision to have sent Sliyo over!"

The female magician seemed to be very happy, and embraced Sliyo, rubbing her cheek against Sliyo as if to indulge in his soft skin.

"Mistresssss...it hurts."

"Fufu~"

The battle at the entrance area of the first floor quieted down. The magician naturally judged that the ancient dragon had finished off the corps commander, who hadn't shown up as of yet, and the rearguard.

"All that's left are the monsters invading the first and second floor."

"Hmm?"

"Huh...? It looks like there's someone else besides Lady Ancient...Dragon,...th...ough."

Soju stared at the big mirror while creating several eyes, similar to demonic eyes, on the surface of his brain after transforming a part of it, but...going by his state, it wasn't the usual Soju who loved to analyze things. He was obviously panicked.

Noticing his behavior, the magician released Sliyo out of her hug, and looked at the mirror's display, reflected at the end of Soju's line of sight.

"Huh? Someone else...eh?"

The female magician became dumbfounded for a short while due to the spectacle visible in the mirror. What she saw there were a large, black panther, and a spear wielder with movements as peerless as those of a war god as he handled three spears and a shining katana.

'Black hair like me!? Three arms? A mana hand? What's going on here! His face is to my liking, though...'

It wasn't as though the female magician had directly looked into the special, night-like eyes of the spear wielder, but during the instant she saw his splendid, artistic fighting style, she was captured by him and received such a passionate stimulus that her mind overheated. Even the attire of the black-haired youth, who wore a knightly armor combining beautiful violet and dark green colors, seemed to only intensify that stimulus.

The black panther shown next to him looked lovely and dignified to her with its refined, black fur covering its body like black velvet. Four black tentacles extended from the neck of the black beast, and silver-colored bone fangs grew out of those tentacles' ends.

When a sharp glint entered the intelligent, crimson eyes of the panther, black tentacles sprouted out of the beast's entire body, except for its neck, and assailed the monsters.

The female magician was surprised by the movements of that panther. First it made a demon fall down by entangling its tentacles around their legs, then it killed a nearby large goblin by stabbing its torso. Afterwards, the panther pulled the legs of the fallen demon, tossed it to a place where other demons were gathering, causing several of them to topple over, and then unleashed a barrage of its tentacle bone swords at the bulk of demons in a way that vividly reminded one of a Gatling gun. Satisfied with the result, the panther ran along the cave's wall while stabbing two tentacles into a monster with a divided head. While making it fall down, the panther dragged the monster close to itself, and heartily bit into the monster's head.

In the end, after happily eating the head alongside a roar, it jumped backwards as if possessing eyes on the back of its head as well. Once it extended its spear-like hind legs towards the chest of a locust monster, the black legs penetrated through the monster's chest.

Just like cats often do, the panther tapped the ground with both legs at a nice rhythm as if shaking them to remove the dirt at its paws, and blew away the corpse.

The spear wielder fighting next to the panther also exhibited fearsome movements. Using a <Chain> extending from his wrist, spears in two hands, and a shining blade in another hand, he eradicated the monsters and soldiers of the Hazarn Empire, who had been advancing into the cave, while running through the first floor. All of this was reflected on the mirror after zooming up.

"The black panther is magnificent, but...so is the black-haired lancer."

Her chest naturally started to throb...'What should I do? Even though I'm just looking at him...' The female magician pressed a hand against her pulsating chest.

"What, that out-of-the-norm lancer is..."

"Can't you see it in my vision? If we limit it to what's visible, his mana is unnaturally gathering in his legs and arms...uwaah, what the hell? His mana manipulations skills aren't ordinary...his weapons aren't either. It's a blessing that he's not the enemy's corps commander. He might be an apostle of Spirit World Sebdola which is confronting the Demonoid Empire." Soju fluently rattled down.

"Come to think of it...Lady Ancient Dragon mentioned that she had a guest, who uses spears. He said that he wants to meet with you, mistress."

Sliyo informed everyone of his conversation with the ancient dragon. The female magician merely nodded in silence...

"How cool..." She muttered curtly.

'He wants to meet me? Absolutely! I want to get close to him! I haven't seen such a black-haired man around here for quite a while now! Aaah...it's not for quite a while, but ever since I came to this world... Such a cool, strong man is Lady Ancient Dragon's friend? Unbelievable! Moreover, moreover! It's a development of him coming to rescue me? Such a prince-like entrance... I might not get such a chance ever again. No, that's not correct. It's not 100%. Aahhh, at this rate, I'll be able to talk with this guy, giving me a strong image of a warring state commander? Fufufu, very well, I'll absolutely make sure to not let this opportunity escape my hands. Ever since I've been dragged into such incomprehensible battles, my frustration has kept accumulating! Three arms? I don't give a damn!

'I have a weird subordinate combining brain and arm next to me. Above all, this place is full of slimes! Sure, they're cute, but I definitely need a refreshing, handsome man around me. Yep, it's decided. I'll get him to talk with me, even though I'll be nervous...if possible, I'd like him to become my friend... Umm, and if even more is possible, I want to try touching those hands, which are holding the spears right now, fufufu.

Just like that, the female magician remembered her feelings as a woman, which she had locked away in her heart, and got excited all by herself.

"Mistress has a beautiful, womanly face...with a smile she has never shown us before. I think I also showed such a smile to my beloved before I became a bloodsucking monster, long, long ago."

"It's an expression similar to that of someone having fallen to the charm of demonic eyes...I'm worried about my mistress. Bah, even Mirei's face on her bone head is blushing."

"Her lovely cheeks are dyed crimson! It's the same color as that of my acquaintance, Slicrimson-kun."

The magician didn't listen to the words of her precious subordinates with whom she had surmounted many life-threatening situations. Drawing close to the mirror...she widened her eyes while following all movements of the lancer.

However, that lancer, who had moved to the ceiling, suddenly glared at the mirror and shot objects similar to darkness stakes at it on the spot, causing the mirror to black out for an instant before switching to a live-feed of the second floor.

"Eh? He noticed my monitoring of the first floor? He can even see the faintest mana waves? What sharp senses he has. But, he might have become wary of me now...what should I do?"

