

Chapter 177 - Future Strategies

One week has passed since the unification of the prefecture's north came to an end. Just when the residents also started to finally settle down after being bewildered by all the new changes to their environment——

"What a pain..." I sigh while looking down at the map spread out in front of me.

My initial plan was working on the infrastructure while simultaneously proceeding with the invasions, but——

Kahoku City

Ocean ■■■■■■■■△

Ocean ■■■■■■■■☆△ Toyama Prefecture's Oyabe · Tonami

Ocean ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Ocean ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ ■ = Shion △ = Demon King of Oyabe

Ocean ●●●☆☆☆☆☆ ☆ = Humanity ● = Demon King of the prefecture's south

Ocean ●●●●●☆☆☆

Ocean ●●●●●●●●

Komatsu · Kaga

The only surviving Demon King in the Ishikawa Prefecture besides me, who annexed one half of Kanazawa, headed north, and then unified the prefecture's north, is Kaoru — the Demon King who captured Komatsu, then everything around it, and is now ruling over the prefecture's south. Of course, some mob Demon Kings are left as well, but...sooner or later they will fall by the humans or Kaoru.

The biggest obstacle in my conquest of the whole Ishikawa Prefecture is Kaoru, but wedged between our Domains are South Kanazawa and a part of Hakusan, both in the hands of humans. The number of surviving humans amounts to roughly 300,000. The area under their rule has a size of roughly 200 km². With a pair of man and woman called 『Kanazawa's Saintess』 and 『Kanazawa's Sage』 playing the leading role, the humans have established an Anti-Demon-King organization.

Seeing how the only method allowing Demon Kings to usurp human land is 《Reign》, it's easy to predict that the battles against the surviving humans will intensify over the course of time.

I could also opt to fight against Demon King Kaoru first by invading one sector after the other, slowly chipping away at their power, but...as 《Reign》 has the condition to remove all hostile elements within a radius of 3 km, the degree of difficulty will shoot up remarkably.

Should I give up on fussing over the unification of the Ishikawa Prefecture, and invade Toyama Prefecture's Oyabe instead?

I trace Oyabe on the map with a finger. Yep, that's not going to work... If I spread my Domain

towards Oyabe, its shape will become distorted which means...the number of sectors adjoining enemy land will only increase. If I'm going to attack in this direction, I'd say, Himi, which is facing Nanao and Nakanoto, would be the best option?

However, in that case...it's likely that I'll draw the hate of Toyama's citizens.

Currently, many of the parent organizations running the Anti-Demon-King alliances are local governments. Some of them are also run by enterprises, yakuza, schools, and religious organizations, but all of those parent organizations share a single, common trait: A strong attachment to their hometowns. You could also call it a turf thinking. It might be alright if I were to go for the Domains within Toyama, but if I start enacting 《Reign》, it'd earn me strong hostility from not only the heroes of Kanazawa, but also those located in the Toyama Prefecture. Assuming the worst case scenario, I could face a joint invasion by the humans of Kanazawa and Toyama. Aiming at that opportunity, Kaoru would then invade Hakusan and Kanazawa.

That's a scenario I must avoid by all means. However, if I don't attack anyone, my growth will come to a halt...

Alright, I'll slowly invade the Domains in Himi with a focus on letting my main force accumulate experience points while I concentrate on infrastructure development until a good opportunity presents itself.

"I think it should be fine to go at it like this?" I mutter to myself while simulating the course of action I came up with in my head.



There's a lot of work to do. First I'll wrap up domestic affairs and the risk-free invasions, I suppose. I've decided to reshuffle the invasion teams while discussing it with Yataro and Kanon whom I had called over earlier.

"Heere! I will write it down on the board, okay?" In high spirits, Kanon floats in front of the whiteboard with a magic pen in hand.

"Write down what I tell you."

"Okaaay."

"First up, defense——"

Kanon begins to write the word on the whiteboard while repeating it out loud.

"Yataro, Izayoi, Saburou —— Kanon."

"Yataro-san, and Izayoi-san, and Saburou, and Kano—— eh? M-Me?"

"Shion, are you going to take Seta-boy off my hands?"

All of a sudden it turns into a verbal argument over the defense team which should be pretty obvious.

"Kanon."

"Y-Yes?"

"Do your best at earnestly raising your levels so that you can reach Knowledge A."

"I-I got it!"

If not for Kanon — the Knowledge B Kanon, I might not be where I'm right now. That's how much of a help Kanon has been to me. However, the time for Knowledge to be a big advantage has passed. For the sake of surviving as a winner, it's indispensable for Kanon to reach Knowledge A.

"Yataro, is the defense going to become a problem if I pull out Setanta?"

"T-That's not what I meant, but...Seta-boy's presence has a big impact on everyone working on defense."

"I will supply you with a replacement."

"You mean besides Kanon-jou?" Yataro asks after accepting my decision while looking at Kanon.

"Kanon won't really be much of a replacement for Setanta, right? The replacement will be —— me."

"Hooh... That means, I'm going to be dismissed as well?"

"No, I'll leave the command of our defenses to you."

For the time being, I have no plans to enact any 《Reigns》. Hence I think it'd be best for me to earn experience points as a defender in my Domain while keeping an eye on internal affairs. I'm currently at level 19. It's necessary to aim for A rank in Creation or Alchemy at an early stage. As long as I get many chances to go out to the front during defense battles, it'll be more convenient to leave the defense command to Yataro.

"That sure is an abrupt development of many drastic changeees."

"Fuofuofuofuo, Shion is going to found a country. I guess this is only one part of the reforms awaiting us."

Kanon flies around, obviously having lost her calm, whereas Yataro has a good-natured smile as typical of old men.

"The next is ——"

I tell Kanon what she has to write down next.

【Attackers (Melee)】 (8)

Rina, Kotetsu, Takaharu, Setanta, Blue, Red, Rouge, Cain.

【Attackers (Ranged)】 (6)

Sarah, Chloe, Dakel, Kureha, Layla, Flora

【Tanks】

Hibiki, Iron, Abel, Noire

"18 bloodkin forming the main force, huh...?"

"Are you not going to add Kotetsu-dono's pupils?" Yataro hurls at me as I'm gazing at the whiteboard while groaning.

"We might gather some if we recruit possible candidates, but...first I'd like them to work in defense."

"Hoh."

"I'll have them participate in combat under the motivation of protecting their families, friends and other residents. For the meantime we'll have them focus on the monsters invading us. At the same time, we will get them to familiarize themselves with cooperating with my created subordinates... Or do you have a better idea? After getting rid of their emotional distance from monsters, I'll let them join the invasion teams if there are any notable guys among them."

I inform the two of my plans how to handle the humans who became my subordinates during the battle of Suzu's City Hall. It's indispensable to be very careful how I'm treating humans. Although I can force them through orders, I can't bind down their hearts with that. If they had become my subordinates all alone because they had no other choice like Rina, it'd be possible to handle them a bit rougher, but...as they've become my subordinates alongside many of their own kind, it's necessary for them to slowly get accustomed to their new circumstances.

Nowadays you can find humans, who became the subordinates of Demon Kings because of 《Reigns》 or simple oaths of allegiance, all over the country. Of course, many humans are thrown at the front-lines, tied down by strict orders, but in such cases, the Demon Kings in question are heavily persecuted as villains by human propaganda. Something like that would only create big disadvantages for any upcoming 《Reigns》.

Ultimately it's important that it's commonly known that my residents participate in the fights voluntarily. With this being said, the only humans I can actively put to work are Rina and her grandfather. Be it as allies or foes...humans sure are a bag full of troubles.

Chapter 178 - Reorganization of the Teams

"Not turning Kotetsu-san's disciples into invasion team members means...you've got 18 people at your disposal... Are you going to split them into teams of six?" Kanon mutters while looking at the names of the bloodkin noted down on the whiteboard after she finishes writing.

At present I have three teams: Rina's team, Chloe's team, and the Former Demon King team. Since there had been many «Reigns» during the second half of the prefecture's northern conquest, they've rarely worked in their usual team setups. I've put them to use in a somewhat half-assed state, but...now that things have calmed down, it's a great opportunity to reshuffle them.

If I consider the present state, it'd be the conventional approach to split them into three teams of six, as Kanon says, but...

"A two-team or a three-team formation, which do you think would be better?"

"Hmm...a lower number of teams will raise the power of the respective teams."

"However, more teams will broaden the options of deployment."

Kanon and Yataro voice the merits of the two alternatives.

"So, which do you think would be better?"

"Hmm...since bloodkin, and especially the bloodkin written down here, are precious assets...I think two teams would be best as it boosts their chances of survival?"

"Let's see. Considering the current situation...there's no need to hurry with the Domain's expansion, right? In such a case, I would think two teams are a good idea."

Kanon and Yataro's replies align.

"You're right. I've also thought about putting them together into two teams." I show my approval of their opinion.

"Then...are you going to reorganize them into teams of nine bloodkin each?" Kanon tilts her head while staring at the whiteboard.

Thinking about it normally, you'd split 18 bloodkin into nine each when going with two teams, but...I take an extensive look at all the names lined up on the board.

Be it people (former Demon Kings, humans) or monsters; compatibility plays a role. For example, if I take Kotetsu's emotions into account, I should team him up with Rina. If I go by compatibility, Noire and Rouge are a set, same can be said about Sarah and Cain. Chloe, Blue, and Kureha should be together since they have fostered a strong team spirit over a long time. On the other hand, the compatibility between the Former Demon Kings and the bloodkin with a high degree of loyalty like Chloe or Layla couldn't be any worse.

I stand up and get close to the whiteboard, beginning to add a drawing of the general relationships between the 18 bloodkin.

"Hooh... You've been watching them rather closely, haven't you?" Yataro says in admiration while looking at the relation chart I've added to the whiteboard.

In the end, I finish up by writing the team compositions down.

Team A: Rina, Kotetsu, Takaharu, Sarah, Cain, Setanta, Abel

Team B: Chloe, Layla, Blue, Red, Noire, Rouge, Flora, Dakel, Kureha, Iron

As a result of having taken their relations and roles into account, Team A fields eight people, and Team B ten. Team B has more members, but——

"I see. Still, Team A is the stronger one, isn't it?"

"I think this is greaaat!"

Yataro nods with a smile while Kanon agrees with her right hand in the air.



After having decided on the team setup, I call the 18 bloodkin of the main force to me.

"——With that said, please do your very best during the upcoming invasions with these teams, starting from today."

I inform the bloodkin of the reorganized teams. Some fold their arms, some smile, some repeatedly shake their heads, and some silently stare at the whiteboard.

"Eh?" Rina shows her surprise, eyes wide open.

Well, no wonder. Compared to the previous team setup, it's only Rina who's joined a team with completely different members.

"Hmm? What's wrong?" Seeing his granddaughter's attitude, Kotetsu asks Rina.

"N-No, it's nothing."

"Whaa!? Rina-cci! You're talkin' casually with Shion-cci, and yet you go, like, all polite with your granddaddy?" Sarah retorts at Rina, obviously teasing her.

"Rather, don't give me, your lord and master, some weird titles, girly."

"Don't call me girly."

"Rina...I totally get how ya feel." Takaharu places a hand on Rina's shoulder, saying this with a serious look, as I sigh at Sarah.

"...Huh?"

"Ya hate it to be in da same team as dat retarded elf, aight? And yer right, dat lass is noisy 'round the clock. Most of da stuff she's sayin' is bible-babble. Lastly, her attitude sucks 's well..."

"Eh?"

Rina widens her eyes staring into Takaharu's eyes, but as she listens to the insults gushing out of him...she becomes dumbfounded.

"Haah? Taka-cchi, you gotta be friggin' kidding!"

"But ya see, it might be unbelievable, but...she never shoots her allies from behind. Her magic's power n' precision ain't half bad either. Becomin' anxious about entrusting yer back to such a retarded elf——"

"Like for real!? Taka-cchi, you're impossible! Also, I'm no retarded elf, gotcha!?!"

Afterwards Takaharu and Sarah begin to bicker with each other as if they had planned to do so all along.

"Takaharu-san, Sarah-san, please calm down. You're in front of Master, you know? If you're going to insult someone, I'm avai——"

""Shut it, you pants-only bunny!""

Takaharu and Sarah are in a magnificent harmony when dealing with Hibiki who tried to mediate their arguing.

——Shut up!

I forcibly shut up everyone to regain control of the situation.

"Rina, I understand what you want to say. Are you uneasy about being in a different team from Layla and your former team members?"

"It's not uneasiness or anything like that... Just...our teamwork..."

"You're right. I've watched the exploits of all present here through my smartphone. The teamwork of your team, and Chloe's team is something I have witnessed with my own eyes. ...You guys...got to work a bit harder on that." Towards the end I turn my eyes at the group of the Former Demon Kings, smiling bitterly.

"In that case...!"

"I predict that things will become much harsher down the road. Now that we unified the prefecture's north, it's become necessary for us to aim for new heights."

"New heights...?"

"Team B that will definitely accomplish the mission given to you through your unyielding loyalty towards me, and Team A which will break through any difficult situation through individual power and flexible thinking. Both teams will be essential for any future expansions of my Domain. You get the meaning of what I'm saying, don't you...?"

Rina looks at me, and nods silently.

"Are there any other questions?"

I scan the faces of my 18 bloodkin.

"Yees!"

...Her again? Sarah has raised her hand with an innocent look.

"Who's going to be the team leader?"

"The leader of Team A is Rina!"

"You're fine with me doing that...?"

"I've decided based on your evaluation so far and your total experience points. If that's not enough to persuade you, you're also one of those working the longest under me."

"...Okay. Everyone, please take care of me." Rina bows to the members of Team A after being nominated by me.

"The leader of Team B is Chloe!"

"Yes, Master! As you command!"

"The reasons are the same as with Rina, and Chloe, you're the oldest bloodkin after all. Any objections?"

Once Chloe bows respectfully, my other subordinates imitate her, bowing their heads deeply.

"Lastly, I'm going to tell you about the future tasks of Team A and B."

I point at Himi which is recorded on the map spread out in front of me.

"For the meantime, you'll proceed with the invasion of Himi's Domains. However, your highest priority isn't the invasions, but getting experience points. Advance with the invasions while slowly annihilating our enemies. If you encounter humans inside a Domain, make sure to slaughter them. The fact of us invading Himi will progress in absolute secrecy. The subordinates accompanying you

will be no less than four living mails, and no less than two subordinates capable of healing magic. You can decide on the rest by talking it over among yourself."

With me informing them of the future course of action, the topic of invasions comes to a close at this point.