

Chapter 191 - Working Outside ①

Eight days after the foundation of the Aster Empire.

Within my Domain, which has now become a country, things have been changing drastically. With the addition of human technology and knowledge to 《Domain Creation》 and 《Item Creation》, the establishment of the infrastructure has been proceeding rapidly.

Moreover - probably an effect of the daily announcements of the nation's foundation - humans wishing to surrender to us have started to show up, although it's limited to a small number of less than a hundred.

Inspecting the residential areas, I can see the residents plowing the fields with expressions teeming with fulfillment. Inspecting the school, I observe how the children are studying at their desks while smiling all over their faces. As a result of the drastic improvement in the food situation, even my subordinates look somehow happy.

The enemies of humanity ——— Demon Kings. The 『Thirteen Evil Stars』 who have plunged Japan into the abyss of fear. The evaluations by society might vary, but if the humans were to see the circumstances here, they might stop the pointless fighting. If that happens, even my goal — survival would be easy to achieve.

But, the humans continue invading my Domain. And even if we drive the humans away, Demon Kings aiming to expand their Domains come attacking. In the end, I won't be able to reach a peaceful future...unless I keep growing.

Now then, I guess I'll do my best for the sake of survival.

I return to my room where Rina's team and Kanon are waiting for me.

"Sorry for the wait." I apologize, and sit down on my chair. "This time I've summoned you all for the sake of an expedition."

"Expedition? Not Himi?"

"We'll skip Kanazawa and go for Komatsu, right!?"

"An expedition together with Master...? Please use me as a meat shield without any reservations."

The first to react upon my announcement are Takaharu, Sarah, and Hibiki.

"Rina, sorry for having put you through all this trouble."

"Don't mind it."

""What's that supposed to mean!?"""

Once I thank Rina for her efforts as leader, Takaharu and Sarah protest with their voices matching

perfectly.

"Umm...why have I been called in as well?" Kanon timidly asks me.

"Hmm? I didn't tell you?"

"No, you didn't say anything."

"Kanon, you'll come with us on the expedition."

"...Eh?" Kanon is dumbstruck after hearing my reply.

"The objective of the upcoming expedition is — leveling. The goal is for me to level up. Following that, your leveling, Kanon."

"Whaa-!? M-Me? L-Level!?"

"The destination of the expedition will be a Domain located in the Toyama Prefecture's Tonami City." Ignoring the shocked Kanon, I inform everyone of our destination.

"Tonami? Land ruled by the humans, and the Domains of other Demon Kings should be situated along the way though?" Rina asks while knitting her eyebrows

"We'll ignore all of these."

"Ignore, ya say, but it ain't like the other side'll ignore us, right?" Takaharu follows up with another question.

"It depends on the route. When I asked Kaede to investigate, it became clear that we'll be able to arrive at our destination without drawing any attention, if we follow the Kurikara Mountain Pass."

"A mountain pass? Seriously? Please, anything but that!" Sarah jumps up from her chair and starts to complain.

"Don't worry. We'll go there by car."

"You mean a bus, right? Still, won't moving with a bus stand out?" Kotetsu asks.

Ever since the Cataclysm, transportation has become limited to cars. However, moving around in something big like a bus will easily draw attention, and depending on the location, we might get caught in an inspection.

"No bus. It'll be a Hiace."

"A Hiace? But then, our numbers are..."

The Hiace is a small freight car for private use that's been used in Japan for a long time. Depending on the model, it can carry six to ten people. Although ten people can get in the car at maximum, the standard number for an invasion is 24. Even if we try to squeeze in as many as possible, getting 24

people, including living mails, to board the car is impossible.

"Therefore, we'll go on the expedition with eight people, including me, and Kanon."

"""" ____!?""""

All of them are surprised by my announcement.

Ten people can get in the car, but if you consider the space for loading our equipment and food, eight people will be the limit. Since Kanon is tiny, she doesn't count.

"Is that going to be alright?" Rina asks me, representing the others.

"The Demon King of the Domain we'll be heading for has **【Creation B】** and **【Alchemy C】**. The number of sectors under their rule is 13. The depth of the sectors — the Demon King's level is 12. Going by the fact that no one has seen the Demon King yet, I assume that their rank in **【Body】** and **【Mana】** is rather low."

"OK, so who's gonna be those 8 people?"

"Me, Rina, Kotetsu, Takaharu, Sarah, Hibiki, Cain, Setanta...and Kanon."

"W-What about me...!?" The sole person, whose name I haven't called, Abel, cries out in sadness.

"I'd like you to stay in the Domain, Abel. You'll follow Yataro's orders, and assist him in a new experiment."

"...Yes, milord."

This expedition won't have the usurpation of sectors as a goal. Therefore, there will likely be few opportunities to fight formidable enemies. In that case, the strategy will be search & destroy. We'll earn experience points by slaughtering small fries with overwhelming firepower. The underlying theory is unclear, but the experience gained per person goes up the fewer people fight together with you. Above all...one of the biggest reasons is that Abel's huge frame is slightly too big for a Hiace.

"Kanon, you'll devote yourself to healing."

"O-Okay!"

"Sarah, you'll also prioritize healing over attacking."

"Ay."

"Just in case, we'll take a somewhat bigger amount of healing potions with us, but...all of you, don't try the impossible!"

"Sure thing!" "Please leave it to me!" "Roger!" "Uh-huh." "Okaaay." "Certainly!"

After listening to the replies of my subordinates we start moving to the Domain facing the Kurikara

Mountain Pass.

Chapter 192 - Working Outside ②

The one driving the Hiace is Hibiki. The BGM in the car is an a capella by my subordinates. With Sarah suddenly starting to sing, Hibiki, Takaharu, and Kanon have enthusiastically joined in.

Sarah's singing is nice, but...according to Takaharu it's an annoying way of singing, and to be honest, I've got to agree with him on this.

On the other hand, the songs sung by Takaharu are all punk. He's not bad, but it's loud and tiresome. I thought that Sarah would tease him for it, but since she's unexpectedly going along with it by swinging her body, the nature of the relationship between these two remains shrouded in mystery as usual.

Kanon is - to put it simply - tone-deaf. She sings happily, but she keeps messing up the melody.

And the biggest surprise is Hibiki. What he sings are ballads I remember having heard somewhere. With the quality of his voice being pointlessly nice, everyone silently listens to his emotional singing.

Rina and Kotetsu firmly refuse to participate whenever asked, whereas Setanta happily joins in on the singing with mysterious interludes.

Me? There's no way for me to be brave enough to sing after Hibiki's performance, and thus I've completely rejected any participation.

After two hours of being shaken around in the car so harmoniously that you'd never expect us to be headed for a Domain, we arrive at our destination.



"Wai-!? Isn't that, like, way too fast!? I still haven't had my fill of singing!"

"As if anyone gives a shit."

Sarah pouts unhappily once we get out of the car, but Takaharu deals with her easily.

"What about the strategy?" Rina asks me.

"According to Kaede's information, this Domain is the type that overwhelms invaders with numbers. First, Sarah and I will launch our spells. Then we'll meet the enemy rushing at us while forming a semicircular formation."

"Eehh!? Meeting the enemy means..."

"Seta, don't rush out. Kill the enemies without breaking formation."

Setanta voices his dissatisfaction over my strategy, but seemingly used to it, Rina quickly chides him.

"Seta-boy, want to have a contest who's going to kill more enemies with me? If you go out too far, you'll get minus points."

"Oh!? Nice idea! I'm gonna join dat contest 's well!"

"Taking on ji-chan and Takaharu-ani, eh...? I won't lose!"

I'm not sure what kind of points they're talking about, but Kotetsu motivates Setanta as he's familiar with his wiles, and Takaharu joins in as well.

"Cain, you focus on protecting Sarah."

"As you command! I shall protect her with my life!"

"Kyaa! I'm totally bein' cherished here?" Sarah kicks up a fuss with a shrill voice.

"Kanon, you stay at the end of the line...devote yourself to healing behind Sarah."

"O-Okay!"

Afterwards I instruct everyone on the strategy as if getting a final review. Expressing our strategy this time with an illustration, it'd be something like this:

□□□□□□ Hibiki
□□□□ Kotetsu Rina
□□□□□□ Shion
Setanta Takaharu
□□□□□□ Sarah Cain
□□□□□□ Kanon
□□□□□□ Exit

My role is to stay in the center. While ascertaining the overall situation, I'll assist with my spear or magic.

"Are you guys ready?"

After confirming that all my subordinates have nodded, we invade the Domain.



As soon as we step into the Domain——

"Whoa..." Takaharu mutters.

Yep, yep, they're here...hordes of goblins and pixies.

"Sarah!"

"Ay!"

——《Dark Night Tempest》!

"——《Firestorm》!"

The raging gale of darkness swallows heaps of goblins and pixies, followed by a devastating storm of fire.

"Get into formation!"

Responding to my instruction, my subordinates start to move to the place we've decided on in advance.

"I shall accept all of your attacks —— All living beings——"

"Wait." I restrain Hibiki who's about to undress. "We'll wait until the enemy moves. Until then, we'll launch ranged attacks from here."

——《Dark Night Tempest》!

As the second storm of darkness swallows up a horde of enemies...

"——《Thunderstorm》!"

...the enemies get numbed by Sarah's storm of purple lightning...

"——《Sky Blade》!"

...the pixies get chopped up by the invisible blades unleashed by Kotetsu...

"Goooooo! ——《Windstorm》!"

...the enemies get wrapped up in a furious gale sent forth by Setanta...

"My turn! ——《Earth Javelin》!"

...the enemies get skewered by earthen spears thrusting out of the ground upon Kanon swinging her wand...

"Ha ha ha! Take a good look! It's a debut in our country! ——《Spirit Ball》!"

...and pixies get shot by a cluster of Ki released out of Takaharu's fists alongside a loud laughter.

"Pupupupu...like totally shabby for such a big talk!"

"Shut yer trap! My strength lies in close combat!"

As Sarah ridicules the effect of the 《Spirit Ball》...

"What...what...should I do!?"

...Hibiki undresses for some reason.

""""Why!?""""

Everyone's feelings take form as words, assailing Hibiki.

"Oops, the enemy is coming. ——Hibiki! Cain!"

"I shall accept all of your attacks —— All living beings, become intoxicated by my body ~pyoon —— 《Perfect Body》!"

"——《Fire Shield》!"

Cain blocks the spells fired by pixies at Hibiki, who's shining in his getup of only wearing pants and bunny ears, with a magic barrier.

"Haha! It's an all-you-can slay! Kotetsu! Seta! Da game's on!"

"Gladly!"

"I won't lose!"

"Would you allow me to join as well?"

Kotetsu and Setanta respond to Takaharu who cracks his knuckles with a ferocious smile. Having no means to attack from a distance like Hibiki, Rina has a silent flame of fury burn within her after having stood around all the time.

Takaharu mows down an approaching group of goblins with his fists. Kotetsu chops them up with his katana, Rina with her sword, and Setanta's spear stabs them to death. Spotting a chance as I stand in the back, I thrust my spear at a goblin advancing on Hibiki. Overlooking the whole, Sarah unleashes various offensive spells while also keeping healing in mind. Depending on the situation, Cain deploys his magic barrier, assisting Hibiki. Kanon is all flustered, but she still manages to cast healing on her allies.

It's going well. Originally this is a Domain repelling human invaders with overwhelming numbers, but for me, who intends to level, it's the perfect farm. If I should mention one thing that bothers

me——

It'd be Hibiki's firm ass that keeps entering my sight, even though I hate it, because of our formation. For some odd reason, the round tail attached to Hibiki's ass, which is now covered by a deep crimson T-Back, shakes around in tune with Hibiki's movements. Moreover, while skilfully dodging the enemy attacks, he looks my way when he finds a chance to do so, and immediately after I wonder whether his face is blushing somewhat, he adopts a triumphant pose. But, is that pose some kind of hate skill?

As Hibiki takes his pose as if ridiculing the goblins, one of them goes into a fit of anger and swings down its ax at Hibiki. However, as if having predicted its move, Hibiki splendidly evades the ax by swaying, and looks at me once more. It was already tough on my mind when looking at him through the smartphone, but the impact...no, the discomfort when watching him live is boosted severalfold.

No good...focus! I need to concentrate! The pants-only pervert bunny in front of me isn't the enemy!

I single-mindedly thrust my spear, enhancing my concentration ability so that I only focus on the goblins.