

Chapter 193 - Working Outside ③

Ten minutes have passed since the beginning of the battle. I think we've killed quite a lot of enemies by now, but their numbers don't seem to dwindle at all.

And to be honest here, the pixie magic is a damn pain...

I check the situation of my subordinates. Watching them once more...Kotetsu and Rina are truly strong. Kotetsu wards off the ax of a goblin by dexterously swinging his katana, slaying the goblin in the next moment. Rina repels an ax swung down at her, and cuts down the attacking goblin fluently.

Putting aside his visual impact...Hibiki's evasion abilities are top notch as always. He dodges the enemy's attacks with the least amount of movements. And whenever he's too late in dodging, he fends off the attacks by skilfully blocking them with his gloves, blows the enemies away with his pointlessly long legs so as to not fall in a predicament, or drives in a counter if he spots an opportunity to do so.

Takaharu and Setanta are battle maniacs. Both mow down their enemies with Takaharu having a ferocious smile on his lips that would make anyone flinch, and Setanta smiling in pure bliss over the fun he's having.

If things continue in such a manner, this should work.

"Hibiki, draw the enemies' hate towards you!"

"I shall accept all of your attacks —— All living beings, become intoxicated by my body ~pyoon —— 《Perfect Body》!" Hibiki adopts a pose that emphasizes his triceps by turning sideways and crossing his arms in the back — going for a Side-Triceps posture to draw the enemy aggro to himself.

"Takaharu! Setanta! Circle around to the enemy's back, and slaughter those pesky bugs!"

"Sure thing!"

"Okaaay!"

"C-Calling them p-pesky bugs is awful."

Takaharu and Setanta, both who possess high levels of agility, gleefully rush to the front, launching attacks against the pixies.

"Cain! Fill Setanta's position!"

"As you command!"

I have Cain close the gap in our formation, and move myself to fill in for Takaharu.

The weapons used by the goblins here are all axes. Probably because they've been overwhelming the invaders with numbers so far, their individual abilities are rather low. I capitalize on the advantage of my spear, the reach, and deliver thrusts at the approaching goblins, thwarting them from getting close.

Just when several goblins approach me at the same time, probably by coincidence,

——《Early-Summer Rain Thrust》

I consign all of them to oblivion with a flurry of high-speed thrusts.

——!

"Shion-cchi, be careful, oki?"

A fire lance fired by Sarah stabs the head of a goblin who has leaped upon me after discovering a small gap in my defense right after unleashing 《Early-Summer Rain Thrust》.

"Thanks, you were a big help."

"No prob." Sarah smiles happily in response to my thanks.

A Fairy Demon King requires 3 CP to create a goblin. If you add equipment to that, one unit costs around 30 CP, I think. The Demon King of this Domain is level 12, and rules over 13 sectors. Since their maximum CP will be 2400 with that, they're recovering 40 CP per minute. The enemy forces are definitely decreasing, but I think the enemy still has a lots of leeway. I chuckle as I watch the infinite spawn-like event taking place in front of me.



One hour after the battle started.

Since we're regularly cleaning up the pixies in the rear, the only enemies approaching us are goblins. Our side's condition is perfect as we're also drinking potions with an effect to recover from exhaustion every 30 minutes.

The question is which is going to run out first, the enemy's reinforcements or our supply on potions. But whatever it might be, at this point you can already call this whole expedition a success when it comes to leveling.

A defense relying only on low-cost goblins...is unreasonable, I'd say. Sure, the impact of numbers is amazing. And humans invading this place without knowing anything might get overwhelmed when confronted with a carpet of enemies spreading out in front of their eyes. However, if you know about this in advance, it turns the place into nothing but a simple farm.

As I snicker to myself while feeling how much experience actually grows...

——?

A single arrow gleaming in silver comes flying at me.

A Silver Arrow? Until now, the enemy has used a strategy of ax-wielding goblins dominating the front line with their numbers while pixies provided cover fire with offensive magic from behind,...but has the enemy's lineup changed?

A group of high goblins — a superior goblin species with a glossier skin than ordinary goblins — appears from deeper down the floor. At the end of their line, I can also spot a goblin general — a goblin so huge that it can be mistaken for an ogre.

"You bastards! To which Demon King do you belong!?" The goblin general roars with a threateningly low voice.

I wonder about this every time, but...is Blue's tone of voice going to change as well if he evolves into a goblin general? Or is he going to tell me that he's hungry with that figure...?

As I ponder about silly stuff, the eyes of my subordinates gather on me. If Chloe and the others were here, they'd likely blurt out my name full of pride. But, this time my party consists mostly of former humans and Demon Kings. Such stupid members aren——

"I'm Shi——"

——Shut up, Setanta!

I close Setanta's mouth forcibly as he was about to truthfully answer the question during the brief moment of me feeling relieved.

A name, huh...? What should I do...?

"We are...t-the subordinates of Demon King Saburo who's come to invade this land from the distant m-mirage city Uozu!" [efn_note]The mirage comes from Uozu (a city in Toyama) having been known since the Edo period as a famous place of a natural phenomenon where you can see a fata morgana. It only appears under the proper climatic conditions, though[/efn_note]

After pondering it over, I use the alias I've grown accustomed to from Laplace while adding mirage to it for the sake of playing down Setanta's word. [efn_note]Mirage = Shinkirou (蜃気楼) [/efn_note]

"...Saburou? Like no way!"

"It's Saburo, not Saburou."

"Seriously, totally confusing."

I stress the proper pronunciation to Sarah who complains from behind.

"A Demon King of Uozu...Saburo, you say?"

"You don't know our master's name!?"

I rebuke the goblin general who looks confused.

"My chief is saying that they don't know any such Demon King either! Well, whatever. ——Die!"

With the goblin general swinging down his silver battle ax as a signal, the enemy launches its attack.

"Cain! Deploy a wind barrier to block the arrows!"

"At your command! ——《Windshield》!"

The wind barrier blows the downpour of arrows away in all kinds of directions.

"Hibiki!"

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

The enemy's aggro is drawn towards the glowing Hibiki.

"Sarah!"

"Ay! ——《Firestorm》!"

——《Dark Night Tempest》!

The raging storm of fire and darkness infringes upon the group of goblins. Kotetsu slays a goblin who has reached our location while having become all tattered. The axes held by the enemies waiting in the rear are all Silver Axes. After having joined the battle by stabbing with my spear, I now shift to attacking with magic from behind.

"Teach them the dread of Demon King Saburo, and slaughter all of them!"

"Sure." "Affirmative!" "Roger!" "I don't quite get what's the deal, but sure, why not."

My subordinates defending our front line brandish their weapons at the swarming enemies in response to my instruction. I continue firing my spells while regularly drinking some 【Mana Water】.



Three hours later.

At long last, the supply of fresh enemy reinforcements has ceased, and the number of enemies has

obviously decreased. While Takaharu and Setanta have kept the goblin general, the last enemy remaining, busy, Kotetsu slays it after joining their battle upon my order.

I check the countless corpses of pixies and goblins strewn all over the ground, and the path leading further into the floor.

"What are we going to do?" Rina requests further instructions from me.

New enemies will show up, if we proceed deeper into the sector, I guess. But, after brooding about it for a short while, I prioritize our safety, choosing to retreat.

"We've finished our business here. Retreat."

"Ah! Please wait a moment!" Kanon raises her voice just when I'm about to turn on my heels.

"What's wrong?"

"Akira-chan has asked us to gather crafting materials."

"Crafting materials?"

"Yes. It looks like some monster parts can be used in smithing."

"Which ones in specific?"

"The horns of the goblins, and the wings of the pixies."

So they did have some usable materials, huh...?

"The number of goblin corpses is too big...we'll retreat after just gathering the wings of the pixies, and the horns of the high goblins and the goblin general."

Afterwards, we dismantle the corpses. While feeling a much bigger mental strain than during battle, we wrap up the looting, and then leave the Domain.

Chapter 194 - Creation and Alchemy

After withdrawing from the Domain, we take a break inside the Hiace for a while.

"You're still good to keep going, right?"

"Ehhh? We're not going back!?"

When I check back with my subordinates, everyone except for one person nods. Takaharu, Setanta, and Sarah are pure battle maniacs. Rina and Kotetsu aren't assertive about it, but going by how they look during combat, they don't seem to dislike battle. Hibiki...doesn't matter, or rather, he's the kind of guy who will gleefully wallow in thorny thickets in the nude. And Cain is a created subordinate,

so he's basically a yes-man.

Some among them complain about their living environment, but when it comes to battle, their feelings match to a tee. They're very reliable in this regard.

"We'll head for the next sector."

"Eh? Wai-...Shion-san? You're nodding while looking very satisfied, but my existence..."

We travel to the next sector with the complaints of Kanon as background music.

In the end, we invade another three sectors of the Domain belonging to the same Demon King as the first sector. The number of enemies waiting for us decreases each time we repeat this procedure.

Around the time when I felt that it should happen anytime soon now, my level went up from 18 to 19.



"Pheeew...I'm completely wasted... My belly feels all flabby with the potions filling it." The only one not used to combat, Kanon, whines around in the car on the way back to our Domain.

"Kaaah! Dat was some good fun! But, for da next one, pick a place with slightly tougher enemies."

"Like, quality & numbers!"

Contrary to Kanon, Takaharu and Sarah look satisfied.

"Ugh...it was fun, but I'm mortified!"

"The result is what counts in a contest, Seta. ...Put more effort into your training."

"Anyway, ya serious callin' him da winner!?"

"Aye, for real! I also agree!"

Rina remonstrates the disappointed Setanta, whereas Sarah happily picks a fight with the sullen Takaharu.

I've been entrusted to declare the winner in the contest over the number of slain enemies between Setanta, Takaharu, Kotetsu, and Rina. Following my intuition, I've decided their ranks to be Kotetsu in first place, Takaharu in second, Rina in third, and Setanta in fourth.

To be honest, I can't really tell much difference between Takaharu and Rina, but Kotetsu being first and Setanta being last is pretty much set. I was worried about how to rank the two, but...since Kotetsu told me in a whisper that Takaharu was second, I went with that.

Kotetsu has no wasteful movements. He kills his enemies with the minimum amount of required strength and movement. Or to give a figurative example...if an enemy has 100 HP, Takaharu will hit it with 1000 DMG, whereas Kotetsu will use precisely 100 DMG. I think that describes it pretty well?

This world possesses messed up parameters like stats and levels, but it's not a game. One striking difference with a game world is the missing existence of HP. Therefore, it's ultimately just an example.

Either way, it has allowed me to experience Kotetsu's amazing skills once more. I think I've been really lucky to obtain him as a subordinate. If Rina hadn't become my subordinate, Kotetsu likely wouldn't have either. It's a coincidence that Rina's first Domain invasion took place in my Domain. That's where she obtained her **【Black Iron Sword】**. Coupling the weapon's performance with the original talent in swordsmanship, she became a hero. Then, because she challenged my Domain, she became my subordinate. And Rina became the key for Kotetsu becoming my subordinate.

As a result of this line of intermittent events, we've arrived at the present situation. While feeling how quirky fate can be, I entrust my body to the swaying car.



"Shion-san, you've become so quiet. Are you exhausted?"

Halfway through the Kurikara Mountain Pass, while I've immersed myself in thoughts, Kanon calls out to me.

"I've been thinking about some things."

"On how to spend your BP?"

"That too."

I've been pondering how to use my 52 CP inside the shaking car. I can raise the three stats: **【Body】**, **【Creation】**, and **【Alchemy】** to A.

Considering my own style and the future strategic developments...I can immediately remove **【Body】** from the list. That leaves me with a choice between **【Creation】** and **【Alchemy】**.

【Creation】 is a special right granted to a Demon King. If I rank up **【Creation】**, it'll increase the quality of the subordinates I can create, resulting in a plain boost of the Aster Empire's combat forces. Since the quality of **《Domain Creation》** will also rise, I can hope for a strengthening of the infrastructure, too. Even my gathering of information of Demon Kings I'm considering to become formidable enemies has told me that most of them ranked up **【Creation】** to B as first stat. In other words, **【Creation】** would be the standard choice. And there's also a reason for it to be the standard choice. It has the highest efficiency and gives one the most support.

On the other hand, speaking of **【Alchemy】**...it'll boost the quality of the items I can give to my subordinates if I rank it up, resulting in a simple augmentation of the Aster Empire's combat forces. At the same time, it'll possibly reinforce the infrastructure, if the various types available in **《Item Creation》** grow in number. Up to this point, its merits are the same as with **【Creation】**.

But the biggest difference would be that **【Alchemy】** can be substituted with dwarf subordinates, even if they aren't Demon Kings. Of course you can't call it as easy as tapping stuff on the smartphone while depending on CP, but the quality of the Akira's items is exceedingly high, despite consuming time and materials.

Thinking up to here...overlaps with what I've considered up until yesterday. As a matter of fact, until yesterday I had planned to increase **【Creation】** to A once my level went up.

"So, which are you going to rank up, **【Creation】** and **【Alchemy】**?" Kanon calls out to me while I'm brooding.

"I could also rank up **【Body】** to A, you know?"

"Eh? That's not really a choice...is it?" Kanon is shocked by my silly reply.

"Yes, it's not."

"Thought so." Kanon is visibly relieved when I readily confirm her question. "So, which are you going to rank up then?"

"Which would you choose as a strategist?" I throw a cynical question back at her.

"——A-As strategist!? Let's see, as a strategist..."

"Knowledge is no choice, just so you know."

"I-I know that!"

I warn Kanon whose face has slackened into a foolish grin.

"As a strategist...I'd recommend **【Creation】**!"

"Hoh... Why?"

"Simple is best! **【Creation】** is a special Demon King-only skill! A rank up of **【Creation】** will directly lead to a growth of the Domain! From now on battles will very likely become so big that it won't be an exaggeration to call them wars. What decides a war are soldiers, or in short, the quality of your subordinates! Therefore I recommend you to rank up **【Creation】**, which will allow you to create even higher-ranking subordinates, as your strategist!"

I applaud Kanon who passionately argues for her view as a strategist.

"Thank you! ...Eh? Huh? This turn of events means...?"

I congratulate Kanon by clapping my hands without restraint. And Kanon, who's working with me for close to two years now, seems to have grasped the meaning behind it.

"Hmm? What's wrong?"

"No, it's just...when you applaud while revealing such a nasty smile...it usually means I'm wrong."

"That's a strategist for you. You're completely right."

"As expeeeeected! That means, you're going to rank up 【Alchemy】?" Kanon asks me.

"Actually I haven't completely decided yet. There are two choices, right?"

"You mean ranking up 【Creation】 or 【Alchemy】, right?"

"No. The choice troubling me is——"

I frankly inform the strategist — Kanon of my worries.