

## Chapter 195 - Creation and Alchemy ②

"The choice troubling me is — whether I should raise either stat right now."

"Eh!?"

Hearing about my worry, Kanon freezes in midair with her mouth gaping open.

I believe my current choice can be labeled as a fairly huge crossroad. Should I raise **【Creation】** in rank now, I'll need to wait for another ten levels to raise **【Alchemy】** to A. It's been roughly two years since I've become a Demon King. My level has now reached 19. But, how long did it take me to reach level 10? It was right after I killed Alyssa - in other words, last year around this time. So, how long would I need to reach level 29? One more year? No, my leveling speed has been dropping with each new level. Even if I were to level at a good pace, level 29 would require more than a year. In short, my current decision is going to influence my future strategies for over a year.

Therefore it's indispensable to tread very carefully.

"Kanon, what's your current level?"

"Huh? Me? Umm...it's 48. Ehehe. If I gain two more levels——"

"How much BP did you save?"

Interrupting Kanon as she happily informs me of her level, I keep asking her what I need to know.

"Let's see...33 BP."

"33, huh...? How many levels did you gain in our last expedition?"

"Umm, I got 3 levels!" Kanon replies gleefully.

"That sounds harsh..."

"Eh?"

Kanon has gained 3 levels during our last expedition. But, the number of Domains that can serve as farms like the last one is very limited. Moreover, once a Demon King grows beyond level 10, and once a human grows beyond level 50, their leveling speed drops significantly. In other words, the road to Kanon's **【Knowledge】** ranking up to A — her reaching level 65, is a very long one.

The choice I have to make this time is extremely monumental. It's going to influence my strategies for more than a year from now on. Thus I want to carefully scrutinize the information after gathering as much as possible to avoid making a wrong choice.

If it's information about a stat's rank B, I can expect a certain level of information if I probe Kanon with her **【Knowledge】** B, and I can also gather some information, if I check the information on

『Laplace』, or read up on the information available online. But, a stat's rank A is uncharted territory.

I'm sure that some Demon Kings have already reached rank A in a stat. Possibly, some might even exist among the members of the 『Upper Class Demon King Lounge』. But, that kind of information is kept hidden. And even if I asked them about it, I wouldn't get any answer. I mean, if I were to be asked, I definitely wouldn't tell anyone either.

Therefore I've been looking forward to Kanon's **【Knowledge】** reaching A, but...

"Shion-san, what do you think would be the best evolution path for me once I hit level 50...? The options available to me will be...the Body-specialized 『Goblin Lord』, the superior species 『Titania』, the Mana-specialized 『Oberon』, 『Dullahan』 as undead, or the specialization on nature magic, 『Fairy』." Kanon asks me while cheerfully floating about without even understanding what I'm worried about right now.

"『Goblin Lord』."

"——Wh-!?" Kanon is shocked by my reply which I've randomly thrown at her since she's pissed me off.

"Currently our forces are lacking tanks the most. That's why I think it'd be great for you to go with 『Goblin Lord』 to fill that gap, but what's your take on this as strategist?"

Since Kanon's shocked expression looks so funny, I continue teasing her.

"B-But...my **【Body】** is D, you see..."

"Then maybe 『Dullahan』? It sounds like your durability will be quite high...if you become an undead. Come to think of it, a 『Dullahan』 can carry their head around, can't they? Will it be possible for just your body to go on expeditions while your head remains behind?"

"——Huh!? T-That's scary... A-Are you serious?"

"What would you do if I told you that I'm serious about this?" I look straight into Kanon's eyes with a serious expression.

"U-Umm...t-that's..."

"I'm just joking. Isn't 『Fairy』 going to work fine?"

Messing around with Kanon any further will be a waste of time, and thus I stop teasing her.

"Hoe... I'm happy to hear that... 『Fairy』, you say? Could you tell me your reasoning?"

"It sounds like the most convenient species when considering portable size."

Kanon is an essential subordinate with the one and only trait of having a high level of **【Knowledge】**. In that case, her current size — a portable size is important so that I can always keep

her by my side. I've got no idea how she'd look after evolving into a 『Goblin Lord』 or 『Dullahan』, but...if I'm going to use her as Google-chan, then her current size feels perfect.

"P-Portable size, you say...? ——! I see...! In other words, you want to always keep me by your side, right Shion-san!?"

"Explaining it is a pain, so let's just go with that." I give a suitable confirmation to Kanon's remark, who has interpreted my response rather positively for some reason. "Kanon, how long will you need to reach level 65?"

"Let's see...I'll try to crunch the numbers a bit." With those words, Kanon uses her own smartphone to start calculating something.

"The strive-hard-course or the relaxed-course, which one sho——"

"Assume that the Aster Empire will perish before long if your Knowledge doesn't reach A."

"So the ultra-strive-hard-course..." Kanon restarts her calculations while drenched in cold sweat.

"Assuming I take no days off, and go on expeditions with the members we had with us this time...it'll take me 40 days at the least."

"Eh? Isn't that, like, us not getting any break for 40 days either? That's super exploitative! Like, no way!" Sarah wedges herself into Kanon's and my conversation.

"F-For the time being, I've included food and sleeping time into my calculations."

"A cycle of eating, sleeping and fighting!?! Gimme a break!"

"I don't really mind~" Setanta happily joins the conversation, whereas Sarah files her protest to Kanon who's trying her best to make it sound better than it is.

"Even if you use such a leveling method, it still requires 40 day, huh...?"

"Moreover, it also has the precondition that I'll be the one to deliver the killing blow against three Demon Kings."

"That means, it's possible for it to take more than 40 days, too?"

"Unfortunately...the lowest time required is 40 days."

40 days at the very least, eh...?

As I'm looking at the depressed Kanon, I'm likewise at my wits' end.

## **Chapter 196 - Creation and Alchemy ③**

Kanon's 【Knowledge】 needs at the very least 40 days to reach rank A. My choice whether to rank up 【Creation】 or 【Alchemy】 —— is a major crossroad that will heavily influence my future strategies. Therefore I've considered waiting for Kanon's 【Knowledge】 to reach A as a viable option to make doubly sure, but...

40 days is simply too long.

It's very possible that the war situation between the humans of Kanezawa City and Demon King Kaoru will go through some drastic changes during that time. Even as our side stagnates, the humans of Kanezawa City and Demon King Kaoru...and moreover, the Demon Kings all over the country, will continue to grow.

If Demon King Kaoru wins the war against the humans of Kanezawa City...it's antipicitable that Kaoru will turn a part of the humans called heroes into subordinates, just as I had done with Kotetsu and Rina. It's also thinkable that Kaoru's level will exceed mine thanks to all the fierce battles.

On the other hand, if the humans of Kanezawa liberate all of Kaoru's sectors...how many humans will have reached level 50 by then? It's possible that it'll generate a huge number of humans at the level of Rina and Kotetsu.

Before either happens, it's necessary for me to confront Kaoru in a perfect condition and run 《Reigns》 in Kanezawa...during the chances when both sides are exhausted.

If I challenge them to an all-out war with my current forces, I might be able to gain Kanezawa City and Hakusan City through 《Reigns》. However, that'll be the end of the line. If I get challenged by Kaoru after tiring our forces out...it's quite possible that we'll get defeated. And even if we persist and win...I don't know whether we'll be able to compete against the humans and Demon Kings of Toyama and Fukui next.

Everyone is my enemy. All Demon Kings and humans are hostile towards me. For the sake of survival, I must continue to win. For the sake of survival, I must continue to grow.

While regretting that I've waited too long with Kanon's leveling, I dive into the sea of my thoughts once more.



I spin countless stories inside my head.

——Who do I want to be in the future?

——How am I going to fight my enemies?

——How should I develop the Aster Empire?

...Enemy? Who's my enemy? ——All humans and Demon Kings.

Which of them is formidable? Which of them is more difficult to fight?

"I have a question for all of you: Which is more difficult to fight, humans or Demon Kings?"

"Can't tell, there's all sorts of Demon King n' humans, aight?"

"Demon King means Kaoru, and humans is about those living in Kanezawa, right?"

Takaharu bluntly answers my question while Kanon specifies who's meant by it.

"Let me go with Kanon's words: Demon King Kaoru or the humans of Kanezawa, which side would be tougher as enemy?"

"Wouldn't it be the Demon King? High-leveled Demon Kings got lots of troops after all."

"Demon King, for sure! Though it'd be a different story if the humans had like 100 Kote-chans."

"I think it's the Demon King. It's possible for a Demon King to have humans as subordinates, but the other way around doesn't work."

"Yep, Demon King. The sole being who defeated me — was Demon King Shion-sama."

"It's got to be the Demon King. A 《Reign》 might be troublesome, but usurping the sector of a high-leveled Demon King...isn't just troublesome, but can also be next to impossible."

"I think it's the Demon King...? The 《Reign》 of Suzu's City Hall was difficult, but I feel like the battle against Demon King Alyssa was the hardest fight so far."

Takaharu, Sarah, Rina, Saburou, Hibiki, and Kanon all answer with Demon King.

"It should be the Demon King. There exist many humans who can't fight, but monsters incapable of fighting don't exist." Lastly, Kotetsu also opts for Demon King.

"So it's the Demon Kings after all, huh?" I agree after listening to everyone's opinion.

Though, it's not set in stone. If the majority of humans reaches level 50 in the future, the answer might change. But, at present — Demon Kings are one step ahead.

Considering anti-human combat...it's **【Creation】** I should rank up. The majority of the anti-human battles are going to consist of large-scale battles after launching 《Reign》. **【Creation】** probably fits the bill when it comes to the ability to deploy powerful subordinates over a vast range.

What if it comes to anti-Demon King battles then?

"One more question: If you could raise any stat as you like, which would you choose?"

"Body!"

"Mana!"

Two morons answer immediately.

"I'll change the question: If the choice were to be between **【Creation】** and **【Alchemy】**, which would you take? Or, which do you think would the other Demon Kings raise first?"

"Shouldn't it be **【Creation】**? Most of da tough Domains're specialized on **【Creation】**."

"Gotta be **【Creation】**! **【Creation】** is kinda, like, a Demon King's special privilege."

"I think I'd go with **【Creation】**. Creating even stronger subordinates is a shortcut towards victory."

"**【Creation】**. Once you learn the difference in ability between subordinates created with **【Creation】** C and **【Creation】** B...it'd be commonplace to choose **【Creation】**, I think."

"I've also mentioned it before, but **【Creation】** is a Demon King's special ability! The rank-up of **【Creation】** directly influences the growth of the Domain! It's predictable that the upcoming battle will have such large scales that it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call them wars. What secures victory in war is the quality of soldiers — or in our case, subordinates! Therefore I suggest you to rank up **【Creation】** as your strategist, for the sake of creating subordinates with even higher ranks!"

All five former Demon Kings agree on **【Creation】**. I had also planned to increase the rank of **【Creation】**. Most of the Demon Kings who have survived so far...will likely choose the path of a specialization in **【Creation】**, except for those who have specialized on **【Body】** and **【Mana】**.

Thus — it's more fun to rank up **【Alchemy】**? At least that's the conclusion I've reached.

If you analyze the surviving Demon Kings beyond level 10, the great majority consists of Demon Kings with **【Creation】** at rank B. Some among them are muscle-heads who have specialized on **【Body】** or **【Mana】**, but those belong to a very small minority.

Around two years after the start of the **【World Salvation Project】**, the structure of this new world, which had been shrouded in mysteries, has gradually become clear. As a result of that clarification — many Demon Kings have noticed the superiority of **【Creation】**. I mean, I had originally planned to rank up **【Creation】** to A as well, once I amassed 50 BP.

And at this point, I reached one possible future in my simulations.