

## **Chapter 209 - Invasion of Kanezawa ①**

One hour after the declaration of war against Kanezawa's humans.

27 humans have surrendered. We received them courteously, and showed them live videos of the current lifestyle of my residents. Under the surveillance of my subordinates, we urged them to recommend a surrender to their friends as well.

Three hours after the declaration of war against Kanezawa's humans.

Our steady information manipulation has borne fruit. The number of humans with a wish to surrender has swelled up to 1,087 in total.

"Now then, it's time."

——Color, Honey, Hotet! Begin the invasion!

I order my subordinates at the front line. My smartphone shows how my subordinates begin to advance, accompanied by groans of joy by the ghouls.

My task in this is to ascertain the combat power of Kanezawa's humans. In preparation for the real deal following this diversionary tactic, I must pinpoint the individual strengths, and their skill in group combat. If there's any human among them strong enough that I could pass them a sacred treasure, it'll be a good idea to add them to my list of objectives.

The Sword God of Suzu — Sayama Kotetsu was a formidable enemy, but I wonder how much strength do the heroes of Kanezawa possess?

I concentrate on the live stream of the front line displayed on my smartphone.



Four hours after the declaration of war against Kanezawa's humans.

The sounds audible from the smartphone are eerie groans and the shuffling of the ghouls as they trudge onwards. And the clamoring of the humans which is washed over by the wind. I can see on my phone's display how a group of probably more than 10,000 armed humans has lined up in front of Ishikawa University's main gate.

"What do you think? How many humans are there?"

"Let's see... The number of Aster Empire's residents amounts to approximately 120,000. Since everyone participated in the ceremony the other day...I'd say a fourth, something around 30,000, at a glance?"

"Since it's also possible for humans to be inside the university...around 50,000 then, huh?"

"Hmm...I wonder. Kanezawa had a population of 300,000 people. Hakusan had 100,000 people. It's said that the number of humans, who died at the 『Cataclysm』 and thereafter, totals to approximately 30%. In that case, Kanezawa and Hakusan should have around 280,000 people left. However, I think there's also a big number of humans staying there after having run away from Komatsu and Kaga. The combined population of Komatsu, Nomi, Nonoichi, Kawakita, and Kaga adds up to 200,000. Assuming half of them escaped...it'd be +100,000. Since people likely escaped from the prefecture's north too... If you add them in with 20,000, the total number would reach up to 400,000." Kanon smoothly answers my question, just like a staff officer would.

Me calling Kanon Google-chan is not just because of her high Knowledge stat. It also originates from her deep knowledge due to her exclusive special ability, 《Instant Memory》.

Kanon continues speaking without getting as cocky as usual, "This is a statistic concerning the whole nation, but...the humans with combat experience amount to 50% of the whole population."

50% have experience in combat, including all people from the young to the old. This is an astounding number. Up until three years ago, most of the people led lives unrelated to battle. Originally it'd be impossible for 50% — every second person to have combat experience.

How did it come to this?

Fighting for the sake of survival, or to protect those dear to you — those can become a reason, but not the primary factor. In that case, what would the primary factor be...?

—— It's the 【World Salvation Project】.

Humans obtained a means to fight, even without aiming for it, through the powers granted by an unidentified being called various names such as god, goddess, mastermind, or rather powers that should be shunned as curse. And just as the Mastermind wished for, the world broke with battles being a daily occurrence.

As I give random confirmations, Kanon continues, "In that case, 200,000 people are capable of fighting among the humans left in Kanezawa and Hakusan. However, the proportion of humans actively volunteering to fight should be around 30% according to statistics. In short, it'll be 120,000 people. Ishikawa University is an important front line base for Kanezawa's humans. Moreover, it's their first time to directly battle against our Aster Empire. Going by all these facts, I assume that the humans might throw the bigger part of their forces at us, like 100,000? But what's your take?" At the end Kanon smiles and looks at me with sparkling eyes.

"It's not bad as a guess."

"Fufu...is there anything missing?" Kanon asks me with such a triumphant expression that it makes me wonder where her dignified expression from moments ago has gone.

"Let's see... If you had kept up a dignified expression to the end, you might have qualified as a staff officer."

"——Wha-!?"

I shrug my shoulders and start focusing on my phone's display again.

If the humans field 100,000 people, 2,000 ghouls will be an ill match for them. Have we succeeded in the diversion up until here...? Are they going to hold out until Kaoru starts his 《Reign》?

I order the reinforcements to prepare for the sortie.

『A message to our sworn enemy — Demon King Shion: our Kanezawa Liberation Army won't yield to a bastard like you!』

Suddenly the voice of a young man echoes out of my smarthpone's speakers. The group of humans ruling over Hakusan and the south of Kanezawa — the Kanezawa Liberation Army. Its leaders were 『Kanezawa's Sage』 and 『Kanezawa's Saint』, I think? The voice doesn't sound like that of a woman. That means this is 『Kanezawa's Sage』?

『Yeah! We definitely won't surrender! We're different from back then...!』

Next, the voice of a young woman can be heard from the speakers. Is this the 『Kanezawa's Saint』? Or rather, what does she mean with 『We're different from back then』? Is she one of the humans who ran away after having invaded my Domain?

If it's the sectors I've set up as farms...the survival rate has been adjusted to 70% to lure the humans into coming back. None of my sectors have been liberated by humans, but the number of humans, who came back from my Domain alive, is rather big.

『This time we'll bring you down for sure!』

『It's our dearest wish!』

『Our precious friend——』

『My dearest friend——』

『『——Rina. We'll get revenge for her!!』』

——Haah?

I end up dumbfounded after hearing my subordinate's name out of our enemies' mouths.

## **Chapter 210 - Invasion of Kanezawa ②**

——Rina, come to me!

I summon Rina who's been on standby in preparation for the main battle.

"What's wrong? Did some problem pop up?"

Soon Rina appears with a nervous look.

"Are you acquainted with 『Kanezawa's Sage』 and 『Kanezawa's Saint』?"

"『Kanezawa's Sage』... 『Kanezawa's Saint』...? Who's that?" Rina tilts her head in confusion.

"They're are the leaders of the humans ruling over Kanezawa and Hakusan — the Kanezawa Liberation Army."

"I don't know anyone like that... Why are you asking whether I'm acquainted with them?"

Seemingly having no interest in what's going on outside the Domain, Rina's knowledge is naturally limited. As long as I don't order her to gather information, she doesn't even take a glimpse at online news articles. Her disinterest is so profound that Blue, who loves modern devices, probably has a better understanding of the situation outside the Domain.

"It's because they screamed your name, Rina."

"——!?! Human leaders scream my name...?"

"Yep. They call me their sworn enemy, and dearly wish to avenge you."

"Avenge me...? What's the names of those leaders?"

Once Rina looks at me dubiously, Kanon answers in my stead.

"Umm... 『Kanezawa's Sage』 is Andou Hideya, and 『Kanezawa's Saint』 is Kayama Saori."

"——!?" Shock dyes Rina's face after hearing Kanon's answer.

"So they're acquainted with you after all?"

"Yeah, they're acquaintances..."

"Don't tell me this is going to have a punchline along the lines of them being your mother and father or some such?"

Rina's grandfather played a major role in Suzu as 『Sword King』. Rina herself also was one of the central people in Kanezawa as 『Hero』. In that case, her parents also... Huh? I recall having heard that Rina's parents met an unfortunate end in Suzu...?

"No, you're wrong!" Rina fiercely declines my words.

"Okay, so who are they?"

"I'm not the only one here who knows Andou Hideya and Kayama Saori! Shion! And also Kanon! You two know them as well!"

"Huh?"

"Eh?"

Kanon and I become dumbstruck upon Rina telling us this while laying her emotions of rage bare.

"Andou Hideya and Kayama Saori are the people who invaded your Domain together with me on that day, Shion."

"Huh? That means 『Kanezawa's Sage』 and 『Kanezawa's Saint』 are members of the former hero party?"

"It's my first time to hear it being called like that, but...yeah, that's how it is." Rina consents with my surprised question.

"Kanon, you possess 《Instant Memory》, don't you!? Why don't you know about this!?"

"Eh? You're venting your anger on me!? That's...back then only Rina-san and Miyamoto were in the spotlight...so I didn't go as far as looking up the other members. The easiest way to obtain the information is Miyamoto's blog; isn't that what you said Shion-san!?"

"...Miyamoto?"

"Ah! It's Yay lol-kun."

"Aahhh...Yay lol, huh?"

I rummage through my memories that feel to be part of a very distant past.

"Come to think of it, there was a glass boy and...a healer who were the first to abandon Rina and run away."

"That healer was Kayama Saori, and the bespectacled man was Andou Hideya."

"I see." I've finally grasped the enemy's true identity.

Nowadays it's common knowledge that Demon Kings gather information online. Some among those who make a living from invasions such as adventurers consider the exposure to the media a good thing, but many key figures of political powers such as the Kanezawa Liberation Army increasingly tend towards avoiding exposing any information to the Internet.

Wait...

"Those guys have yapped away about dearest wishes, sworn enemies and getting revenge, but...wouldn't it take an interesting turn if we confronted them with having abandoned you and run away instead?"

I regret not being at the front line to answer their vocal message.

"Even if you were to say so, Shion-san, the humans probably won't believe you, but...if it comes from Rina, it might develop into a fantastic direction." Kanon answers me while revealing a smile full of malice.

"Our goal this time is a diversion. I guess we'll have to put this entertainment on hold for next time."

"Okay!"

As I'm smiling with Kanon in a way appropriate for a Demon King...

『What's wrong!? Shion, are you a chicken!? Us of the Kanezawa Liberation Army won't yield to any Demon King! Come at us if you want!』

Because there's not a single reply from me, 『Kanezawa's Sage』 grows tired of waiting and starts to provoke me. Sage also means wise man, no? Is that guy an idiot...? I'm not over there. The objective of the troops is diversion, and buying time until Kaoru starts his 《Reign》.

Color, Honey, Hohet, and the 2,000 ghouls won't move from the spot until I order them to attack, and I don't plan to give that order.

Oh? A person looking like 『Kanezawa's Sage』 raises a hand, and shouts something. The distance between both armies is roughly 300 meter. 『Kanezawa's Sage』, who seems like a speck at this distance, begins some kind of movement.

Ten seconds later countless arrows are fired accompanied by wind being cut in succession. The range of archers is around 100 meter. Even a high-level archer caps out at 200 meter when firing from an elevated place.

The arrows don't reach our forces, stabbing into the ground between both armies. The humans make noise with their weapons while loudly roaring.

A threat?

It looks like the enemy wants us to attack. In that case...

——Trample on the ground, and roar loudly!

The 2,000 ghouls use hands and feet to hit the ground while raising eerie groans.

I'm answering threats with threats. Fights that have expanded to such a scope aren't battles anymore,

but wars. The main component widely separating winners from losers is strategy. Especially in this case, where we can't force our way through with sheer strength, the importance of strategy becomes even more essential.

Having said that neither I nor my self-alleged, matchless strategist Kanon possess strategic ingenuity like it appears in military history. Accordingly, the strategy I came up with is to thoroughly piss off the enemy by doing what they hate.

Our plan this time is not to eliminate the enemy forces, but a diversion to stall for time.

Besides, what about this battle of threats? Even if the humans frantically make noise with their weapons and scream, it won't have any effect on the empty-headed ghouls. What about the other way around then? It's probably different with humans who are accustomed to invasions, but...inexperienced people will very likely get scared from the shouts of 2,000 ghouls. If Kaoru starts his 《Reign》 while this staring contest continues, it'd be awesome, but...

While watching the two armies threatening each other on the display, I unscrupulously recall that a movie about war chronicles also featured such a scene. I think I'm going to prepare gongs for the next time.

I continue staring at the display which shows no change as the roars and clatters keep resounding for three hours. Then the humans, who had amassed in front of Ishikawa University, finally started to move.