

Chapter 211 - Invasion of Kanezawa ③

Half of those standing in front of the gate — approximately 15,000 humans, charge while raising war cries to encourage themselves.

The ones at the forefront are high-leveled humans? Many of them are uniformly wearing equipment of the Mithril series, so it'll be difficult to gain an advantage through gear like in past battles.

The Mithril series can be created at Alchemy B. It might be impossible for the humans to make those items by themselves, but many of the Domains are equipping their monster subordinates with them. The fact of the humans wearing many of those items allows for the estimation that they've been looted from such Domains. Compared to the humans of Suzu, their equipment is definitely of a higher quality...

——Stop the enemy attack while holding the position!

I order my frontline subordinates to focus on defense. 2,000 ghouls certainly have a visual impact, but...when faced with 15,000 charging humans, it's doubtlessly going to be a tough ride.

——All bloodkin except for Color, Honey, and Hohet, withdraw to the first sector!

——Yataro, send out 100 bloodkin with 1,000 ghouls as reinforcements!

——Tusk, keep spreading the news of our clash with the Kanezawa Liberation Army on the Internet! Also make it sound like both sides are even so as to flush out Kaoru!

I hurl out orders to my subordinates in rapid succession.

The worst possible outcome would be Kaoru not responding to the diversion, with our side merely losing bloodkin and many subordinates.

The field is set, now hurry and get moving, Kaoru...

I did what I could do. All that's left now is for me to watch everything play out on the screen of my smartphone, and analyze the combat power of the humans.

The humans and my forces led by my three bloodkin have finally clashed. The humans are probably adopting a platoon system. Several humans are ordering the people around them. Teams of around ten humans are slaying the ghouls in succession while skilfully cooperating with each other.

Is their level of teamwork higher than that of the humans in Suzu...?

If pushed to say, I'd say the humans of Suzu under Kotetsu's command fought individually with Kotetsu leading the charge. But, the humans of Kanezawa are deploying battle formations that rely on group combat.

Have they grown accustomed to group combat?

The humans of Suzu fought our forces for the first time, but the humans of Kanezawa...

"Kanon, did Kaoru launch 《Reigns》 in Hakusan in the past?"

"Yes! He did so three times in the past, each time failing though... But, before that he steadily advanced all the way up to Nomi, I read."

"I see. So that's why they're used to group combat, huh?"

The difference between having experienced something once and not having experienced it at all is absurdly big. All the more so if it's actually been experienced at least three times. Considering the 《Reigns》 of Nomi, they must have experienced it over there several more times. Not to mention the close combats unfolding between the Kanezawa Liberation Army and Kaoru. That doesn't mean that they were worthy rivals, but fighting enemies of similar strength grants one even more experience.

If it comes to 《Reigns》, I've experienced them myself many times, too. However, I've only experienced normal army-scaled battles during the invasion into Suzu's City Hall. It's quite possible that the Kanezawa Liberation Army and Kaoru are one step ahead of me when it comes to group battles.

I raise the danger level of both parties in my head.

Have I underestimated the humans way too much by only deploying ghouls? Ghouls have the flaw of being dumb and bad at teamwork. In contrast, the humans capitalize on their numerical superiority and keep killing the ghouls with advanced teamwork.

Seeing the steady advance of the humans on my smartphone, I regret my own assessment's naivety.

Are they going to hold out for an hour?

My subordinates in a one-sided defensive battle. Even while getting cut, hit, or burned, the ghouls keep heading for the humans, but they're outnumbered. With them losing out in individual and numerical strength, their defeat is set in stone. The frontline as it's shown through the eyes of Color, Honey, and Hohet, who've fallen back to the rear, is a painting of hell and pandemonium.

If I had at least deployed a unit capable of ranged attacks...they could have restrained the humans... I didn't expect that our forces would be able to win, but for them to get slaughtered in such a one-sided manner has gone beyond my imagination.

Should I send in my main force...? No, that would be like putting the cart before the horse in sight of my original objective.

I use my smartphone to continuously create huge amounts of ghouls, as if doing piston training, immediately sending them to the frontline.



Three hours since the clash with the Kanezawa Liberation Army.

My bloodkin Color and Honey lost their fleeting lives. Including the initial 2,000 ghouls, my losses have reached 5,000 ghouls in total. The number of ghouls I created as defense for my Domain has hit rock bottom, and my CP has run out as well. The number of ghouls left at the frontline amounts to 1,000. Moreover, 500 giant bats which I've sent in to add some confusion to the enemy line. The losses on the human side might not even have reached a hundred, let alone a thousand. Injured humans immediately retire from the frontline, getting replaced by the humans standing by in the rear.

The result up to this point: a disaster.

At this rate, my subordinates might get completely annihilated in less than an hour.

What should I do? Send in goblins as reinforcements? No, dispatching goblins, who are weaker than ghouls, is bound to fail. If I hand out relatively high-ranking items to them...they could keep up the frontline to some extent? But, what if it results in all those items being lost? ——It'll make things tough on the main force later on.

I picture various situations in my head.

Should I start over? If I can get the Kanezawa Liberation Army to underestimate the Aster Empire due to a crushing defeat here...it might make the next encounter a bit easier. But, in that case, it'd turn today's disaster into a wretched loss with the sole benefit of making the Kanezawa Liberation Army underestimate us.

Would that be okay? Am I not trying to forcibly glorify today's defeat?

Would the liberation army believe that our side has no means of launching ranged attacks because of today's battle? No, if it's humans who've experienced invading Domains...they know about dark elf archery, and the magic of lilims and dhampirs. I suppose it's impossible to make such an easygoing forecast.

Without me noticing, my thinking has shifted from the diversion to means of how to connect this battle to the upcoming ones. I guess I should at least have Hohet pull back...

Just when I decided on my next course of action——

——～♪

The melodic sound informing me of a call plays from my smartphone. The caller is Kaede.

Spotting a ray of hope, I answer the call.

Chapter 212 - Invasion of Kanezawa ④

『Master, they moved』Kaede — the caller — concisely reports.

"What's their scale?"

『...Lots』

"You can see Kaoru's forces from where you are?"

『I can』

Hearing Kaede's response, I cut the call. Operating my smartphone, I switch the stream to Kaede's point of view. What I can see on the screen through Kaede's eyes is a group of arc demons holding big shields and halberds while wearing profound armors in front, and a mass of lesser demons — red devils — flying in the rear. Their numbers as they surge forth exceed 5,000.

After confirming the situation on the display, I call the smartphone I gave Kaede.

『...Nn』

"Did they start a 《Reign》?"

『Not yet...I think』

Once a 《Reign》 is launched, an emergency alarm will be sent to the smartphones of all hostile forces within range. But, Kaede's smartphone isn't hers, but one we stole from a human. Apparently a warning will be directly issued into the minds of beings like Kaede, who don't possess a smartphone, whenever they're in the range of a 《Reign》.

The condition for a 《Reign》 to succeed is to completely eliminate or subdue all hostile forces within a radius of 3 km within three hours. However, it's no easy feat to meet this condition. Therefore, before starting a 《Reign》...it's become an ironclad rule to recommend surrender or clear the area of hostile forces in advance.

Are they going to recommend surrender — declare war?

——No. From Kaoru's point of view, he'd want to wrap the 《Reign》 up as quickly as possible in the shape of a surprise attack.

In that case, what about the possibility of an advance clearing? He might do so to some degree, but he shouldn't invest overly much time into this.

For Kaoru, the key to succeed in this 《Reign》 would be speed.

"Kaede, inform me as soon as the 《Reign》 starts."

『Got it』

After finishing the call with Kaede, I keep alternately checking the situation in front of Ishikawa University and the marching army of Kaoru.

If we withdraw the second Kaoru launches his 《Reign》, it might expose our side's aim. It'd be best to flee after the battle on Kaoru's side has proceeded to some extent.

Having said that, the problem would be...whether our forces are going to last that long.

On the other side of my screen, my ghouls are being slaughtered at a rate that could very well be described as genocide. Numbers are a strength of sorts. It's overwhelmingly easier to kill 100 people from among 500 than killing 100 people from among 2,000. The more your numbers drop, the faster the enemy exterminates your forces.

——Defend! Hold fast! Cover each other's backs and weather through the enemy onslaught!

I cruelly order my subordinates to head for their death.

Around the time when the ghouls' numbers have fallen below 500...

——～♪

The melodic sound informing me of a call plays from my smartphone.

『Started』

Kaede's words are plain but momentous.

"Good work. Please keep monitoring the situation."

『Got it』

Are these news going to reach the humans as well? After ending the call with her, I reconfirm the situation over at Ishikawa University.

The information about Kaoru's invasion in Hakusan has apparently reached the humans as well. They're obviously in unrest. I can even see some humans asking for instructions.

——Hohet, it's your chance! Shift to an offensive! Kill as many humans as possible!

"Inferior humans, what are you panicking for? We are your enemies! Go! This is the perfect chance! Push them back! Hohet Shion of the Aster Empire, here I come!" Hohet begins to advance along the ghouls after his fervent speech.

"Tsk! The shitty monsters have made a comeback!"

"Defeat! Kill them all! The enemy is at death's door!"

"Let's quickly kill them and head over to Hakusan!"

The preliminary encounter between the Aster Empire and the Kanezawa Liberation Army headed for its climax.



30 minutes after Kaoru started his 《Reign》.

"Shion-sama...please forgive...this worthless...me..." After continuing to resist to the bitter end, Hohet collapses to the ground, cut apart by a human blade.

"Color, Honey, Hohet...sorry." I offer a silent prayer to the three bloodkin who I've used as disposable pawns.

Created subordinates are consumable goods... Precisely because of this way of thinking, which could also be considered cool-headed, I've survived up until now with the Aster Empire having grown as big as it is today.

...I'm not wrong.

I felt something for Hohet and the other two who obediently accomplished my orders to the last, but I highly doubt that it's going to change my way of thinking in the future.

——All for the sake of survival.

Demon Kings, huh...? At first, when I turned into one, I wondered what kind of joke it was supposed to be, but...considering it now, I might really possess the aptitude for being a Demon King.

——Kaede, contact me as soon as the battle between Kaoru and the humans starts!

——Rina, Chloe, the time for battle is nigh. Have all forces make their final preparations!

I shake off my pointless sentimentality, and proceed to prepare the next strategic move.