

## Chapter 235 - End of the Strife over Ishikawa University

"Shion-san?"

"What's up?"

Kanon calls out to me as I watch my leaders departing to pursue the fleeing humans.

"I do understand that it's important to chase down the humans to decrease their military forces, but...aren't you going to take defensive measures against Kaoru's invasion? We'd still be in time if we did it now, wouldn't we?"

Kaoru's invasion team is currently in the middle of attacking the southernmost sector of the Aster Empire in Hakusan. So far they're on the second floor of that sector. Right now I'm level 19, so the **【True Core】** is enshrined on the 19th floor. If I dispatched my leaders to defend that sector, it wouldn't be all that difficult to repel the invaders.

"The number of invaders is 24, isn't it?"

"Yes. 24 kin who can be considered to be Kaoru's main force."

"Who should I send out to make the defense succeed with absolute certainty?"

"Let's see... Two of the invaders are former humans. I'd like to believe that they aren't as powerful as Rina and Kotetsu, but...we can't be careless. In addition, the invasion group contains five kin who seem to be unique subordinates equal to Izayoi...and two kin who appear to be former Demon Kings... If it comes to making the defense succeed without a hitch...I think you should dispatch all the leaders!" Kanon answers my question after analyzing the invaders' combat force.

"If we were to defeat all of Kaoru's main force at this point...it'd merit a defense, but do you think we'll be able to do that?"

"Hmm...the invaders have been killing all the subordinates on their way, probably to secure a path of retreat. Therefore, it's going to be impossible to fall into their back through **【Transfer】**... If it's about definitely killing them...it could prove to be somewhat difficult."

Defeating someone who's completely focused on escaping is fairly hard.

"I think so as well. Assuming we'd opt for attacking Kaoru's invasion team, it'd become necessary to assign all our forces — Aster Empire's leaders, to defense. Moreover, the invaders are formidable enemies. And now a question for you, Kanon. Assuming I dispatch the leaders to defend the sector, and let's on top of that adopt the positive hypothesis that they were to succeed in the defense, do you believe that the same leaders could attack Nonoichi's City Hall right afterwards?"

"——Ah!"

"Moreover...the **《Reign》** just now succeeded in three hours, but how much time do you think would the annihilation of the Kanezawa Liberation Army — a **《Reign》** on Nonoichi's City Hall —

require?"

One of the conditions for a successful «Reign» is to expel all hostile forces within the 3 km radius three hours after the start of a «Reign». Is the theft of human land going to be a decisive battle over those three hours then? —The answer is no.

«Reign» is something you carry out when you're convinced that you can actually meet the conditions for its success. Thus it's necessary to have a large-scale battle against the humans aka lower the number of enemies within the range of the planned «Reign» in advance in order to make the «Reign» ultimately work. In other words, you only launch a «Reign» after careful preparations, when you're certain that you can clear all hostile entities within its range.

In such a case, how much time will be needed to get everything ready and carry out a «Reign» on Nonoichi's City Hall?

The enemy numbers approximately 300,000, if you also include the non-combatants. As a result of their continuous skirmishes with Kaoru, not only the quantity but also the quality of the humans is rather high up there. Moreover, a sturdy wall surrounds Nonoichi's City Hall and its surrounding facilities, which gives the humans a perfect, locational advantage.

If you add these elements together...it'll be impossible to get everything done within a week to begin with. Half a month...might be a tough call as well. I'd love to wrap up this whole operation within a month, but...I wonder if it'll all go as I wish.

"...At the shortest one month. If it drags out, even three months could be required." Kanon voices the conclusion she has reached on her own as I'm simulating scenarios in my mind.

"It's slightly on the too careful side, but...I'd say you haven't miscalculated. And as for the answer towards your first question — why am I having our forces pursue the humans while ignoring Kaoru's invasion? — it's for the sake of keeping the time needed to execute a «Reign» on Nonoichi's City Hall as short as possible."

Kaoru's invasion team started its attack into my sector three hours ago. Even if we were to head over to defense from now on and succeed in it, it'd earn us three hours. Moreover, the forces necessary to definitely succeed with the defense would be all leaders.

My leaders have been growing reliably these days, but they finished a «Reign» just a little while ago. If I'm going to make them fight Kaoru's main force on top of that, they'll need several days of rest afterwards. Therefore I've reached the conclusion that we should clearly prioritize which enemy to defeat while presenting several sectors to Kaoru just as initially planned.

"I see... My understanding as a strategist is still lacking... But, my experience points as a strategist have gone up!" Kanon looks a bit down, but immediately recovers her spirit and smiles happily.

"Experience points as a strategist is what exactly...? Well, whatever. Kanon, we're going to join the pursuit as well!"

"Eh!? Huh? M-Me too?"

"Let's go earn some proper experience points rather than some incomprehensible, imaginary ones."

Thus I headed out to hunt down the fleeing humans with Kanon.



Three hours later.

The pursuit battle was a success. The target were the 10,000 people in the vicinity of the new sector. We succeeded in mopping up 30% of the humans who were trying to get away while unorganized. Because 50% of the humans surrendered, we confined them in a sector located in Noto after turning it into a simple prison.

"All of you, great work. Tomorrow at 6 p.m. we're going to begin the invasion of Nonoichi's City Hall." I inform everyone belonging to the Aster Empire of tomorrow's schedule. "Your exhaustion must have piled up because of all the battles today. But, the same can be said about the enemy. Now is the crucial moment. I'm expecting everyone to put forth great efforts tomorrow too. It's nothing exaggerated, but we prepared a lavish meal for those who participated in the battle. All hands, it might be only a short break, but please use the time to rest up as much as you can."

I finish my thanks and announcement with these words.

Everyone besides Demon Kings like me requires food and sleep. It's an annoying problem. Since I don't need it myself, I have difficulty judging when to give my subordinates time to eat and sleep. People capable of fighting without these two don't exist, except for Demon Kings. Three meals per day and eight hours of sleep...are impossible during times of war, but as ruler of the Aster Empire, it's something I need to keep in mind in order to maintain a high morale.

It'd be easy if I were to plan on exploiting my subordinates like I did in the past, but...nowadays such a logic won't work. My initial Domain of 6 km<sup>2</sup> has now grown to a size covering more than 70% of the Ishikawa prefecture, and my subordinates have also increased with former Demon Kings and humans joining my ranks...even the number of people I have to protect, my residents, has grown. It's a fact that my own values have also changed from back then, but I can only smile bitterly at that since I feel like my freedom nowadays has decreased when compared to the past.

## **Chapter 236 - Invasion of Nonoichi City ①**

The next day after finishing the strife over Ishikawa University. The current time is 4 p.m. Two hours left until our invasion towards Nonoichi's City Hall.

The city hall and its surroundings are protected by a sturdy wall. The only places where you can enter the compound are the northern and southern gates. If it's pixie and devil species who can fly, they could scale the wall, but...they'd obviously be showered by large quantities of arrows and spells before they even reached the top of the wall.

This makes siege weapons a strategic key element.

Man-made devices and buildings possess a property you could describe as 'object' in game terms. It's impossible to destroy them with the abilities brought about by this broken world.

In other words, you need man-made weapons to destroy man-made structures.

During the battle over Suzu's City Hall, a goblin destroyed the gate by attacking it with a truck, paying with his life. This time I'd love to adopt a similar strategy, but...the gates of the current wall are so sturdy that a destruction with a truck seems to be impossible. The humans of Nonoichi's City Hall pretty obviously know about the limitation that Chaos can't destroy man-made structures with their granted abilities.

Did they learn it through the repeated battles against Kaoru? But, if the enemy continues to evolve by learning from us, we just need to evolve faster than them.

Predicting that such a day would come sooner or later, I had ordered Akira and my residents with plenty of construction knowledge to build siege weapons. The unscientific abilities obtained through this broken world and the wisdom based on the experience of mankind's long history; fusing these two together has led to the completion of several siege weapon prototypes. The bombs — refined without relying on abilities while using ores mined in created mines — have already been confirmed to have an effect against man-made structures. In addition, our engineers have built battering rams and catapults grounded on the premise that they'll be handled by ogres and dwarves who excel in physical strength.

I have formed a new unit — a combat engineer squad for the sake of operating these siege weapons. The captain of that unit is the dwarf lord Maisen, a recommendation by Akira. The resident Kichi, who helped in the development of those weapons, was selected as his vice-captain and turned into a bloodkin. The combat engineer squad's combat prowess is low, making it essential to choose the proper occasion and location to dispatch them to the front.

I check the Nonoichi City Hall invasion force, which includes the combat engineers, once more. Except for residents such as Mrs. Tamura, the logistic support Akira, and Yataro as well as Izayoi, who will stay back to fend off invasions from the Toyama prefecture, all leaders will participate in this operation.

Some of my subordinates are still exhausted, but...we cannot afford to let this chance pass unused. After confirming the invasion troops, the reserve forces, and the reserve materials, I leave my room, heading outside my Domain.



6 p.m.

"We're going to start the invasion towards Nonoichi's City Hall from now on." I announce to the 12,000 subordinates lined up in front of me. "We can expect a fervent resistance, but—— everyone, show them the power of the Aster Empire! Let all enemies standing in our way realize their own

foolishness!"

""""Yeeaaahhh!""""

We begin our march after my subordinates roar so loudly that the atmosphere trembles.

Two hours after advancing at a relaxed pace, we reached a location 500 m away from the wall protecting Nonoichi's City Hall.

This time we aren't acting stealthily, and thus the enemy should have been able to notice our invasion if they paid the slightest amount of attention. As a result, a huge mass of humans has taken up formation in front of the wall.

"Kanon, how much is the enemy fielding? What do you think?"

"Let's see...seeing how we've got 12,000...around 36,000? Or maybe 48,000?"

Kanon judges that it's around three to four times more than we have. It aligns with my own estimation. To be precise, they probably have combat forces hidden behind that wall too, and since we've prepared plenty of reserve forces as well...the actual difference in combat manpower can't be determined.

"The enemy has more than three times as many troops as we have! Anyone got cold feet?" I provoke my subordinates.

——Bang! Bang! Bang!

My subordinates stomp on the ground and make noise with their weapons to deny my words.

"Who's going to win——?"

""""The Aster Empire!"""" """"Shion-sama!"""" """"Our Aster Empire!"""" """"Us!""""

My subordinates reply with angry roars. Their answers vary, huh...? Would it have been better to practice this like Saburou did with his corps?

"We'll show them our power!"

""""Yeeaaahhh!""""

The morale skyrockets in response to my yell. Because of the sense of unity with my subordinates who regard themselves as invincible, my feelings peak out.

"Hibiki corps! Iron corps! Ready your shields and advance!"

"By your order, Master!"

""""Buhiiii!""""

Hibiki and his orcs answer my order with bellows. Iron's living mails loudly clang their shields as they can't speak.

"Takaharu corps! Red corps! Advance behind them!"

"Sure thing!"

""""Ahh-woooooooo!""""

"Let's goooooo!"

""""#\$#%&!""""

"Chloe corps! Layla corps! Advance!"

""Certainly!""

""""Yes, Master!""""

"Sarah corps! Flora corps! Advance!"

"Ay."

""""#\$&#!""""

""""Okaaay!""""

After Sarah and Flora's corps advance, Saburou's corps and I follow, with Rina and Kotetsu's corps forming the rear.

Hibiki and Iron's corps advance one step at a time while being welcomed into the battle by a downpour of arrows and spells. Once they advance to a stance of around 50 m from the enemy...

"We're going to defend this place to the bitter end...for the sake of humanity's survival!"

"Everyone...let's goooooooo!"

A part of the human charges at us with their weapons held up.

——Hibiki and Iron corps! Stop there!

——Chloe corps! Layla corps! Sarah corps! Flora corps! Start attacking!

I have the two tank corps stop at the frontline, and then get the rear corps to launch ranged attacks. Spells and arrows fly about between both camps. The sounds of arrows and spells flying, the explosions of magic, and the noise of metal hitting metal fill the vicinity.

——This spelled the beginning of the final battle against the humans of Ishikawa prefecture.