

## **Chapter 237 - Invasion of Nonoichi City ②**

"Saburou's corps is to stay on standby until a formidable enemy appears!"

"As you command!"

"Rina and Kotetsu's corps are to stay on standby until I tell you otherwise!"

"Roger!"

"Count on it!"

"Kanon, you join up with Sarah's corps to earn experience points!"

"Okaaay."

"I'll head out to the front for a bit!"

After giving instructions to my subordinates who have been on standby with me in the rear, I rush over to the front line by myself. The humans have already clashed with the subordinates of Hibiki and Iron over there. Fierce sounds of weapons clashing, angry roars and screams fill the air.

"Takaharu! Red! The table is set! Beat them up to your hearts' content!"

"No need to tell me!"

"Gahahaha, Noire, Rouge, we're going to kick some ass!"

After arriving at the forefront, I thrust Brionac at a human in front of me while instigating the two battle maniacs.

"Guhaa!?"

"N-No way...this guy is Demon King Shion!?"

As my target falls to the ground after one attack from Brionac, one of the nearby humans looks shocked.

"This guy...? How about picking your words more carefully? ——《Crescent Moon Slash》!"

I swing down Brionac to the utmost limit of my power, bisecting the human who blurted out that cheeky comment.

"It's Shiooooooon!"

"Demon King Shion has shown uuuuuuuup!"

"Kill him! As long as we bring this guy down——"

I shoot the mouth of a human, who's kicking up a fuss, with my Growth Gun, and stab him with Brionac while he staggers.

""Uuuooooohh! Kill hiiiiimm! Kill Demon King Shioooooon!""

Having perceived my location, the humans immediately start to push my way.

Hey, hey...I don't remember having used any aggro skills. I sure am one popular guy.

"Hibiki! What's the point in me standing out more than you? What's your role?"

"E-Excuse me, Master! I shall obediently listen to your reprimand later on! Humans! It's not Shion-sama who should burn himself into your eyes, but...me! ——《Perfect Body》!"

Hearing my scolding, Hibiki is clad in a golden light and —— undresses. His 《Perfect Body》 is terrifying. The humans don't want to get close to him, and yet they're being drawn towards Hibiki who's posing with his T-Back-only outfit and the bunny ears on his head.

"Iron! The same applies to you as well! Make noise! Be loud! Clunk your shields!"

The corps of Iron — the other tank team — begins to fiercely clang their shields in response to my encouragement.

"Hah! Nice! Really nice! A fuckin' brawl festival! My blood's pumpin'!"

With his excitement going through the roof amidst all the shield noise, Takaharu turns into a beast. He rampages left and right with a ferocious smile exposing his sharp fangs.

"Festivals need, like, fireworks, right!? It's fever time! ——《Fire Blast》!"

Triggered by Takaharu, Sarah launches a flame bombing from behind.

"I shall deliver judgment to those inferior worms swarming towards master!"

"I won't allow you to lay a finger on Shion-sama!"

In addition, Chloe and Layla's corps also join the battle at the front line. My surroundings immediately turn into a melee. I estimate the enemy's level while fighting a human. Their level is around 10~40 with the average being around 20, huh?

If I express my subordinate's levels in human levels, the average would be 25, but if I take the quality of our equipment into the equation, there's probably an even wider spread between the individual differences. Above all, I haven't been able to confirm a single human beyond level 50, like a part of my leaders are.

Although this is a large-scale battle where quality matters more than quantity...the individual strength of my rampaging leaders is a reliable pillar of confidence, once I've actually joined the front line myself. I feel like they have a major impact on their allies' morale and the decline of their

enemies' morale.

Now then, it's a rare opportunity, so I'll have the humans let me earn lots of experience off them. Having been inspired by the efforts of my leaders, who are freely reigning on the battlefield as mighty warriors, I brandish Brionac, taking one human after the other down.



Three hours after we've begun our invasion of Nonoichi's City Hall.

Quite a big number of humans should have gone back to the mud by now, but as far as I can see...the carpet of humans spreading out in front of me doesn't give me the impression that they lost many at all.

Tsk! As usual, the losses in Red's corps are truly extreme...

I check the situation around me while fighting. At the same time I hurl out orders as supreme commander.

——Red's corpse, you are to retreat for the moment!

——Saburou, you're up! Close the hole left behind by Red and his men!

——Takaharu, leaving you personally aside, your subordinates are quite exhausted. Fall back behind Iron's corps for the time being!

——Hibiki, order your orcs to pick up the equipment dropped by Iron's corps! Have 200 of them return to the Domain, and bring the reserve living mails over!

Looking at the whole, only Iron's corps, the living mails, don't get exhausted...though I'm not sure whether they even know the concept of stamina.

The humans also have those who fail to get the job done retreat. New personnel from Nonoichi's City Hall arrives over and over again as replacements. When people get cornered, they become really strong... The humans of the Ishikawa prefecture have nowhere left to run. All of the humans are desperately struggling to defend this place.

I didn't expect that we'd be able to make this place fall today. It'd be a serious blow if I lost my leaders because I forced the unreasonable. It's necessary for me to spot the perfect moment to stop, and repeat this invasion many times over.

Our enemies can't revive their dead, and they can't replenish their fighters either. On the other hand, I have to manage the limited resource called CP, but I can replenish my combat forces.

Once Hibiki's orcs bring along new living mails and orcs, they might temporarily move back to the rear guard.

As I'm planning my next strategies while thrusting Brionac at an enemy in front——

"Everyone, please do your best! Let's protect Ishikawa prefecture...our home with our strength!"

"Please listen, all of you! It's the kin! You have to target the kin! No matter how many of the small-fries you defeat, they'll be replaced anyway! Please focus on slaying kin — the talking monsters!"

『Kanezawa's Saintess』 and 『Kanezawa's Sage』 — two main components that heavily influence the progress of the war — have appeared on the battlefield.

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"The opponent is our sworn enemy — Demon King Shion! On that day, by those guys...we cannot afford to allow the same tragedy, where we lost our heroes, to repeat itself!"

"I...I...my best friend Rina...no, our hero...I won't forgive Demon King Shion for stealing her from me! Everyone, please lend us your strength!"

""""Uuooooohhh!""""

The morale of the humans visibly goes up with the two leaders of the 『Kanezawa Liberation Army』 joining the fray.

"Let's first work together and get rid of that eyesore of a pervert! Magic unit, set! ——Fireeeee!"

Once 『Kanezawa's Sage』 swings his sword down, the humans behind him all launch spells at the pervert — Hibiki.

——Sarah! Protect Hibiki!

"OK! ——《Magic Shield》!"

""""《Magic Shield》!""""

In response to my order, Sarah deploys a magic shield together with her subordinates in front of Hibiki.

"How cheeky... Everyone, focus on the kin! Concentrate your attacks on the kin! ——《Physical Boost》!"

『Kanezawa's Sage』 casts a buff on the humans close to him.

"All those who are wounded, come to me! We'll defeat Demon King Shion with our...humanity's bonds! ——《Group Heal》!"

『Kanezawa's Saintess』 heals the humans around her.

『Kanezawa's Sage』 is a buffer, and 『Kanezawa's Saintess』 is a healer?

I retreat into the swarm of my subordinates. As I withdraw from the front line, I analyze their abilities. They're both young. Neither is the type who would throw themselves at the front line like Kotetsu, and it's not like they've originally possessed some kind of authority like the mayor of Suzu, but...I guess they do have the ability to unify people.

It don't feel any threat in regards to individual strength from 『Kanezawa's Saintess』 or 『Kanezawa's Sage』, but...it's not amusing for the humans to get all spirited either...

After blending into the crowd of my subordinates, I move to my original position.



"As said, the survivors of the former hero party have shown up, but...are you ready, Ms. Lost Hero — 『Hero of the Black Sword』?"

"Whoa...what an evil face you're showing there, Shion-san." Kanon teases me gleefully when she spots me after retreating herself at some point.

"Ms. Lost Hero, huh...? It's not wrong to say that 『Sayama Rina』 died on that day. My current name is Rina Shion. For the sake of my friends...for the sake of the Aster Empire...I'll simply do what must be done." Rina declares with a serious expression after hearing my light joking.

"Okay, I guess we'll move to the front line then...to do what must be done. Kotetsu, you'll also come with us as highly acclaimed 『Sword King』."

"Bringing up old stories...but, as you wish." Kotetsu lightly lowers his head while smiling in embarrassment.

"Shion-sama! Shion-sama! Say, say, is it ok for me to come along as well? I'd hate to be the only one left behind here in the back, you know?"

As I'm about to head out to the front with Rina and Kotetsu, Setanta, whom I had ordered to remain on standby with Kotetsu, begs to come along while hopping up and down.

"Sure. Rina and Kotetsu's corps are going to move forward together with me!"

"Eh? That means me as well ~ssu?"

Blue, who has absolutely no motivation in contrast to Setanta, feels dejected, but without minding him, I point my feet towards the front line. With each step of me getting closer to the front, my five senses get thrilled by the stench and noise of the battlefield.

But, you really can't underestimate the mental state — morale of troops. With just 『Kanezawa's Saintess』 and 『Kanezawa's Sage』 having appeared on the battlefield...the vigor of the humans has clearly risen by their encouragements. I don't know how much of an effect it has towards my

created subordinates, but it might be necessary to act in a way that takes my subordinates' morale into consideration in the future.

Thinking about it like this, Saburou's actions, which totally look like him messing around when watching from a distance, might actually make some sense.

Well, I don't have the confidence that I could escalate things to such an extent, nor do I see any necessity, but...

Oops, we're almost there.

A fierce clash between my subordinates and the humans is unfolding around ten meters in front of me. While the typical noise of a battlefield — metallic screeching, screams, roars — fills the air, I take a **【Megaphone】** into my hands.

"Long time no see, 『Kanezawa's Saintess』 Kayama Saori and 『Kanezawa's Sage』 Andou Hideya. I'm Demon King Shion. Do you still remember me?" My voice, filled to the limit with spite, reverberates across the surroundings after getting boosted by the **【Megaphone】**.

"——Wh-!? A-As if we'd ever forget you! You piece of shot stole the lives of our precious friends——"

"You're saying that you remember me? Isn't this rather close to a first meeting right now?"

Without listening to the clamoring of 『Kanezawa's Saintess』 Kayama Saori, who shouts in response to my voice, I keep going with my speech.

"D-Don't fuuuuuuucckk with uuuuuussss! We...We never forgot, not for a single moment, the tragedy of that day!"

"The tragedy of that day...?"

"Correct! The tragic day when you bastard stole the life of our precious friend...the 『Hero of the Black Sword』...Sayama Rina!"

"Hmm? That's not how I remember it though?"

"Screw you! It's not only 『Hero of the Black Sword』 whose life you stole! The 『Silver Hero』 Miyamoto Masakado, the 『Archer Hero』 Emori Hajime, the 『Witch of Fire Conquest』 Saitou Ruriko, and the 『Guardian』 Makino Yuuya. You asshole...my precious friends...mankind's hope..."

"Aahh, I remember! With tragic day you mean the day when Kanezawa's prided Sage and Saintess insulted the 『Hero of the Black Sword』 and deserted her to run away with your Guardian buddy, whom you later on sacrificed as well to safely escape by yourself, right?" Contrary to Andou Hideya's emotional speech, I merely recount the truth with a calm voice. "You're right. That was definitely a tragedy. Abandoning your friends and running away by yourself; what a tragedy. Sage was written as a clever man, wasn't it? No doubt, it was a clever decision to save your own skin. Also, back when you ran away, saintess, you hurled quite the nasty insults at the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, didn't you? Best friend...? You must be joking, right?"

"Lies! Everyone, don't get deceived by that fiend! We never abandoned anyone to run away! Rina...allowed us to get away by sacrificing herself! Rina is my best friend! I...I...I didn't want to leave her alone back there! But, Rina's...Rina's...my best friend's final wish was for us to retreat!"

『Kanezawa's Saintess』 Kayama Saori's emotional voice harpies across the battlefield.

"Rina's wish...? As far as I remember, Rina said 『Wait』 back then. You verbally abused her, the 『Hero of the Black Sword』, and ran away yourself...or did you not?"

I don't remember the details of that day anymore either. But, Kanon has memorized everything — as owner of 【Instant Memory】.

"Lies...all of it are lies! Stop it! Do you intend to even defile Rina's noble death!? Unforgivable...I won't ever forgive you!" Kayama Saori screams hysterically like a fury.

"Lies, eh...? I'm a Demon King and at the same time the ruler of the Aster Empire. As you might be able to imagine, it's somewhat upsetting to be insulted as a liar in front of such a big audience."

"Shut up, you devil! I won't forgive you! Never ever!"

"At this rate, we'll never reach a conclusion, no matter how much you and I talk it out. So...how about I introduce a witness to prove the rightfulness of my words?"

"Stop with the bullshit! What witness!? Who would believe your friends — the likes of lowly monsters!?"

"Ha ha ha, now, now. Calm down a bit, Saintess. The witness is right next to me."

The witness — Rina has shown up with me at the front line where the fighting has come to a halt because of the sudden exchange of words.