



"What you scum have seen just now was an illusion."

Saburou uses not only 《Fast Thrust》 to attack, but also to evade, leading the enemy around by the nose. His combat abilities sure have developed remarkably... Though I think it'd be better if he used the openings to stab the enemy instead of spouting worthless blathering.

"Why...why...is a hero attacking us...!?"

"I am no hero! My name is Rina Shion!"

Rina heartlessly cuts down the agitated humans. Compared to the time when she first squared off against humans in Demon King Alyssa's Domain...her mental fortitude has visibly grown.

"Chan~ssu!"

Blue bustles around the crowded battlefield, precisely delivering finishing blows to weakened enemies. He might be the one finishing off the most enemies among my created leaders.

"Y-You...aren't you on our side——"

Kotetsu silently puts the enemy in front of him to the sword.

Takaharu and Setanta are freely rampaging as usual, and Sarah backs them up as they charge. Just as always, Red's corps is devoted to becoming flesh bullets completely relying on their physical prowess. Chloe and Layla's corps calmly assist by attacking the gaps in the humans' defenses opened up by Red's subordinates.

Things are proceeding at a good pace. Difference in individual strength or difference in morale...various factors might be in play here, but no matter where I look on the battlefield, my subordinates are overpowering the enemy.

"Izayoi, let's go."

"As you command, Master."

I joined the front line once more, accompanied by Izayoi.



Three hours after the start of the battle.

I think now's a good time.

——Sarah, unleash an extensive AoE attack!

"Ay! ——《Thunder Storm》!"

A wind pregnant with raging, purple lightning strikes wraps up the humans.

——Izayoi, Saburou! Match your timing with me!

""""——《Dark Night Tempest》!""""

The tripled storm of darkness violently sweeps across the human crowd.

——Hibiki, Iron, have your corps advance! Everyone else, retreat!

Hibiki and Iron's forces push onto the front line, using the chaos among the humans thanks to the AoE attacks.

I'd say everything's in place now. I take out my **【Megaphone】**, and slowly bring it up to my lips.

"Quiet down!" I roar. "Just moments ago, I received an appeal by your comrade who has joined our Aster Empire! The name of the petitioner is Mr. Hasebe. Mr. Hasebe pleaded to give you another chance in favor of avoiding unnecessary bloodshed! Originally, we'd have slaughtered you people with military might just as promised...but, only this once I'll heed to Mr. Hasebe's strong feelings of wanting to save his friends!" I announce slowly while putting as many emotions as I can into my words.

"Mr. Hasabe...the city councilor Hasabe-sensei!?"

"It seems Mr. Hasabe surrendered yesterday..."

"Hasabe-sensei of the moderates, huh...?"

It sounds like Mr. Hasabe is a fairly well-known man. Many of the humans clearly look shaken after having heard his name mentioned here.

"His petition contains his wish for me to give you people another chance to surrender. You're free to believe my words or not. The smart ones among you might have realized the difference between our and your combat forces through the battle just now. It's a trifling matter for us to kill you. However, I want to respond to Mr. Hasabe's strong feelings about his comrades while at the same time honoring his will to surrender!"

The humans have lowered their weapons, hanging on my lips.

"I shall give you this one chance! As ruler of the Aster Empire I shall tell you once more: We will show mercy and welcome everyone, who wishes to surrender, with open arms. And we will answer with death and military might to all those resisting us. Listen, humans. Are you going to fight on or surrender? Decide the path you're going to take out of your own free will! I shall grant you another 24 hours to make up your mind! Those wishing to surrender are to discard their weapons, and visit my Domain!"

I recommend surrender to the humans for a second time.

Chapter 245 - Invasion of Nonoichi City ⑩

"We shall withdraw to our Domain from now on. There might be some among you who wish to launch detestable attacks against us. However, bear in mind, any attack against us will result in return fire that will involve everyone around you. The choices I gave you are to either disregard my recommendation or to answer Mr. Hasabe's passionate feelings of comradeship — my benevolence! Consider the meaning behind this. I hope that as many of you as possible pick the smart choice." I advise the humans, and leave the battlefield with my troops.

Pheew...they're not going to attack us from behind, are they?

This time we've continued to fight at full force without sparing any thought to pacing. During the battle I felt no exhaustion, probably because of the adrenaline, but...now that it's come to a temporary break, my fatigue immediately catches up. However, we cannot afford to show the humans how exhausted we are.

——All hands, hold your heads high and retreat with firm strides!

I force my subordinates, whose backs are bent with them panting heavily, to straighten their posture by order.

Now then, I wonder how many humans are going to surrender this time around?

We withdraw while experiencing the pleasant feeling of having invested all your power into a just cause.



"Everyone, you fought for a great cause." I make a speech of appreciation to my subordinates as they line up in front of me. "We'll move next in three days! I anticipate that the next battle will become violent and drawn-out. Rest up properly and get all your preparations done!

——Dismissed!"

After ordering my subordinates to break up, I return to my own room.

"Shion-san, you said three days...and not 24 hours?" Kanon throws that question at me after entering my room as if it's only natural for her to do so.

"Recently we had a series of battles. Exhaustion has built up among everyone...and the maintenance of the equipment can't keep up either. Ideally I'd want to give them a break of around one week, but...unfortunately that's not an option. After consulting with Akira...I judged three days to be the maximum."

Maintaining the equipment is mostly the job of Akira and her dwarves. The unique items and sacred treasures my leaders and I use possess a high durability, but...the same can't be said about the generic items. The quality of our equipment is one of the major advantages in interpersonal combat.

"I see...but won't it allow the humans, who are even weaker than us, to recover as well?"

"Very likely, yes."

"Wouldn't it be better to finish them off in one go then?"

Kanon's view is justified. However, I also have another objective with this.

"Kanon, do you think that the other side is going to attack us?"

"If you mean in the sense of the Kanezawa Liberation Army invading our Domain...I believe the possibility to be next to zero."

"In that case, the three days of rest will apply to both camps, ours and theirs."

"Certainly, that's how it's going to...ah! Since our side excels in recovery speed...umm, are you aiming for us to recover twice as much as the humans?"

What plays a role for the quality of a recovery?

- Recovery medicine that somewhat forces a stamina regeneration. A part of the humans can apparently contort this medicine as well, but our stocks are far superior in quantity.
- 『Healing Magic』, which is peculiar to this broken world, exists.
- And what settles it...the possibility for us to replenish our combat forces with 《Subordinate Creation》.

If you define these three as key aspects influencing the quality of recovery, the Aster Empire clearly surpasses the Kanezawa Liberation Army.

"Well, I guess you're close to the correct answer."

"That means...?"

"Our side will use these three days meaningfully to get rid of our exhaustion, heal our wounds, and repair our items."

"Right."

"Do you believe that anyone within the Aster Empire holds any reservations towards fighting after three days?"

"——! Oh, I got it!"

After hearing my hint that she was close to the correct answer, Kanon seems to have reached the proper answer by herself.

"Hooh...then be my guest and explain it."

"In contrast to us, the Kanezawa Liberation Army will be tormented by anxiety. On top of that, there's the suspicions towards the saintess and sage you've sown before, and humans who surrender in droves. Even though both our camps are going to get a three day break, the Kanezawa Liberation Army's mental state — their morale, is going to plummet while our side will rest their body and mind! This is your aim!"

"Correct."

Once we wrap up the battle against the Kanezawa Liberation Army, the battle against Kaoru's forces is going to start. I've checked the state of Kaoru's invasion teams many times over, but...they are strong. Kaoru might become the most formidable enemy ever since Alyssa, who had driven me into such a corner that I had to spend my saved BP.

At present, Kaoru's side has suffered no damage. If I were Kaoru...I'd challenge myself to battle immediately after the war with the humans concludes. Therefore, the upcoming battle is going to become a drawn-out fight where we'll be forced into a series of engagements.

"Kanon, if you aim to become a strategist...predict the future developments. Put together plans for our future movements after analyzing various components such as duration, troop contingents, and timing."

"Eh? Ah, yes."

"Well whatever...I'll go take a rest now."

I've ended up spouting such a corny line after getting exhausted from commanding a huge number of subordinates.

Tsk...I guess I've got infected with a strange feeling of elation by the chain of large-scaled battles.

I become embarrassed over the words I told Kanon as they don't fit my character at all, and chase her out of my room after clicking my tongue.

Three hours after our retreat.

A huge number of humans wishing to surrender has amassed in front of my Domain. Their numbers easily exceed yesterday's 70,000. Even just confirming their disarmament will be quite the chore.

The civilian residents spearheaded by Mrs. Tamura volunteer to take care of the surrenderers, but considering the worst-case scenarios, I turn their offer down. Having said that, only bloodkin can understand human language. I don't really want to disturb the precious rest of my subordinates either.

Hmm...what should I do...?

I've come up with a solution, but...it'll be harsh on my CP. Then again, looking at the long term...I

think this method is going to be the best.

Calling Akira with my phone, I check the state of affairs.

『...What?』

"Akira, how's the stock of materials to repair the equipment of the subordinates?"

『Since we've picked up the equipment dropped by the humans on the earlier battlefield...we're okay』

"How shrewd."

『I'm superb』

"Okay, I'll leave the repairs to you then."

It looks like it's been unnecessary for me to worry about the materials for the repairs. I get everything ready to implement the plan I thought of a little while ago.