

## Chapter 206: War

Zanoba has run off somewhere.

Apparently he's gone to take the head of the enemy's commander.

I have no idea why.

I don't understand, but I can not afford to leave my post either.

However Zanoba had made arrangement with his commanding officers in advance.

I can't just recklessly take off and leave Roxy to take care of the magical offensive alone.

I need to think carefully.

Even if I left now, Zanoba who is in the forest, won't be found easily.

He's not alone. Since he took 100 people then it's a military maneuver.

It's obvious that I should just do what I was told.

"... Phew~"

I need to calm down.

Zanoba will have done all this as part of a military strategy.

Therefore, I also need to move as planned.

"Whew... haa...."

Okay, calmed down.

Now that I'm calm I take a look at the enemy.

While my thoughts were in disorder the enemy has set up an encampment in the area before our traps.

Just as planned.

From that position the opponent's magic should not hit us.

Well, for us it doesn't just barely reach.

When it becomes a full battle, at that point half of the enemy should enter the pitfall zone.

"As expected, there are a lot."

"It looks like there is about 3000."

"All that is missing is their rear guard."

That is what the men are talking about.

In order to count the number of soldiers all you have to do is look at the number of banners.

"Rudy! Please resist this!"

"eeh?"

Roxy suddenly cried out.

I look towards the enemy.

From around the center of the enemy formation, something like a tornado is rising into the sky.

"They are trying to fill the traps you made with earth magic all at once!"

Ah, they are using earth saint ranked magic [Sandstorm].

I see.

The presence of our pitfall traps must have been confirmed by enemy scouts.

In that case they are trying to fill the traps up with a large amount of earth.

However we prepared for that as well.

"I understand. I'll resist with hurricane [Violent Storm]."

As I said that I raised my hand up towards the forming cloud of dust.

I use wind magic.

Wind Saint magic, [Hurricane(violent storm)]

The name attached to this magic is a little overboard, simply speaking it's a magic to create a strong wind.

However I don't possess the title of a saint ranked magician just for show.

Water Saint magic, [Cumulonimbus]

Earth Saint magic, [Sand Storm]

Both of them are similar kinds of blended magic, 'a wind with additional attributes'.

It is just that this wind magic only causes wind.

Even though they both use similar amounts of magic power, the power is put completely into the wind.

Its power is tremendous enough that the effects of an Earth Saint rank spell are blown away.

It's also very effective against demons flying in the sky.

Nevertheless the power of the spell is felt much more by those in the air than those on the ground.

The reason for this is that things like trees will dampen the power of the wind as it races across the ground.

According to one source it was created in order to counter weather changing magic in the event that they were used for war.

Although that is just one theory.

Even with its power dampened, if I pour enough magical power into it, it becomes strong enough to pull trees out of the ground.

Generally there isn't as much power felt on the ground, but in the air it rages unobstructed.

It is a thing that seems like it could have been developed to knock a flying dragon out of the sky.

Though if you consider that they can fly in the air with such huge bodies, dragon's must be using air magic and fighting spirit.

According to another theory I'll go bald if I use it too much.

The reason seems to be that the strong wind will even uproot hair.

They say the principal of the magic university lost his hair like this, but there is no credibility to that rumor.

Okay okay, I'm calm now.

"YEAH!"

The soldiers around us break out in cheer.

However, because of the great distance, there was no damage to the ground.

The wind that blew away a sandstorm would normally leave some kind of trace on the ground but...

Perhaps it did not because it was highly directional;

or because it was directed at the sky above;

or because magic was somehow involved;

or did I make a mistake with my magic again?

Oh well.

That's just how it is...

"Rudy, they are trying again!"

"Eh? Again?"

Although I think it's useless no matter how many times they try.

Ah, no, it's useless.

Normally, someone's magic power would run out.

It's possible the enemy is using a magic formation in the same way we are.

In other words, multiple people are pouring magic into magic circles, it doesn't have to be a lone saint class magician.

Because they have a force ten times the size of ours, they should have ten times the number of magicians.

It's not unreasonable for them to believe that if they continue to spam magic, we will become depleted first.

Wait a minute?

If I think about it, doesn't that mean there is not one of Hitogami's apostles over there.

Having an apostle among them, they would be aware of me and won't show this kind of behavior.

It's a waste of magicians.

"For now I'll just resist them until they give up. That'll be good, right?"

"Ah, yes. With that kind of magic... will you be alright?"

"I'll be fine."

The sub commander will look at me with eyes filled with fear now.

Only my total aggregate magical power is large.

Even if I stop ten of those saint rank attacks I would still have power to spare.

They used sandstorm five more times, all of which I resisted.

If I used Ran ma then I could limit my power consumption but...

It would absolutely fail at this distance.

" .... "

For now, the movement of the enemy has been stopped.

Did they no longer have magicians which could power saint ranked magic?

Or perhaps all of the magic circle they had prepared were used up.

Maybe they just realized it was a waste...

"I wonder if they attack."

"They will."

Looking towards the enemy sub commander Billy spoke with a stern look.

If I was the enemy's commander I would not just charge recklessly into a battlefield that is littered with traps.

I would pull back.

You can misread the power of your opponent in the opening stages so it's best to pull back and re-examine their forces.

If it was me that is what I would do.

"Oh... it seems that they are coming."

When I look I see that the enemy encampment has started moving.

They drug themselves along and moved towards us, slowly leaving a trail behind them.

Well, anyway.

They probably carefully held a strategy meeting and then came after forming a variety of plans.

Pulling back would use up food and supplies and could also harm the morale of the troops.

It may not be necessary to withdraw just because you were shamed in the opening maneuvers.

In normal exchanges our magicians would have used up magical power as well.

In that case they would be able to pass through the pitfall zone unmolested.

That is probably what they are thinking.

"Archers at your ready!"

In response to the orders from the sub commander, bowmen came to the front.

Any enemy attempting to cross the pitfall zone will be targeted by arrows.

"Fire!"

In response to the sub commander's orders arrows fly.

We have 50 bowmen at the most.

The enemy number 5000.

Their effect on the charge will be meager.

The enemy commanders probably think the same way.

After a brief pause a horn sounded.

The enemies advance hastened at the same time.

One group of enemies slowly pick their way through, another constructs a bridge, others occasionally falling into a pit or detouring around one. In this way they advance a tiny bit at a time.

Having seen the archers attack they now advance boldly without fear of a magic attack.

Well, that should be enough.



"Magic troop prepare."

The sub commander issues his order and magic soldiers holding wands step forward.

We have 20 magic soldiers in total.

From that number, eight move to the edge of the roof.

The other eight stand ready in the back.

The remaining four come out to use the magic circle that Roxy drew.

The magic soldiers on the roof ready their wands.

Also Roxy, who I hadn't been watching, was out holding her wand.

I should join in as well.

Okay.

And so I make a tight fist while psyching my myself up.

Most of the enemy have entered the pitfall zone.

"Commence chanting!"

The eight people in the front begin to chant fire magic in unison.

When they had gotten half way through their chant, the eight soldiers in the back began to chant as well.

" ~ Fireball Bullet [Fireball] ! "

From the eight members of the vanguard, fireball was cast.

The fireballs flew in an arc and landed in the center of the enemy formation.

Several people transformed into something charred black.

The ones who had fired immediately retreated and began chanting again.

" ~ Fireball Bullet [Fireball] ! "

The eight people in the back then released their delayed fireballs.

While maintaining a time difference of half a chant, they continued to rain down fireballs.

However countless balls of water started to fly from the enemy in groups of four.

They can't reach us at the fort, but if they hit a fireball then it is undone.

I'll resist them.

In the previous skirmish, it was not the case that the enemy used all of its magic power.

Of course they didn't.

"Roxy-dono, there is a banner with a scorpion on the right side of the battlefield."

"Yes, I see it."

The words of the sub commander cause Roxy to turn this way.

The banner with a scorpion on it is raised on the enemy's right side.

Around that point is where the water bullets are flying from.

In that area the magician corps of the enemy should be huddled.

In other words, if I can smash that group the possibility that the enemy can resist our magic will be lowered.

"Um, Rudy... should I do it?"

"No, I can."

"Alright then."

Roxy made a thin smile before she began chanting.

I also made ready and poured magic into both of my hands.

And then...

I killed them.

---

After that it became one sided.

They were no longer able to resist any of our magic.

Most of the remaining enemy had no method to defend themselves from the saint ranked fire magic our soldiers shot out.

The defeated enemy could not even easily withdrawal because of the pitfalls.

Over the course of their retreat their chain of command dissolved and their movements became erratic.

To be sure, Roxy and I then attacked with Saint ranked magic.

They became like ants trapped in a heavy storm.

They panicked and ran about wildly.

Inside the pandemonium they fell into pitfalls and were struck by lightning.

One after another they died.

Now I understand what that person meant.

People are garbage.

However not everyone was in a panic.

Some of them escaped the pitfall zone, some were outside the range of our saint ranked magic.

There were not many, but some got within ranged and attacked with magic.

Almost all of them were resisted, but a few hits landed on the fort killing some of our men.

Enemy archers took up swords and possessed the fort.

Only 300 defenders were left to meet them.

Of course from the roof we cast magic on them like a rain of stones.

Finally, we had worn the enemy combatants down to only a few.

Some had lost the will to fight, others were still struggling.

Some of them were taken prisoner and some of them were killed.

I do not know the statistics involved.

Our losses number relatively few.

This was something that might be called a historic victory; the enemy withdrew.

When the battle ended commander Garrick raised a shout of victory.

The magic soldiers, archers, and I also broke out cheer, our faces beaming.

I also cried.

I did not know whether I was pleased or not.

My awareness of having killed people was lacking, but so was the sense that we had won.

It was that my surroundings at become filled with cheer and excitement.

Those soldiers that previously had feared and avoided me ran up and clapped me on the back.

Some where patting shoulders, others embracing.

One of those was a young female archer.

It's thanks to you, you did it, thank you.

When told this delight overflowed from me.

Finally there was Roxy.

Roxy leapt into my arms.

She was so exited that I got an uncommon Roxy initiated kiss.

The men around us whistled and raised cheers and jeers at us.

I'm happy, just happy.

The source of my happiness isn't that I'm being embraced by a woman.

It might be the effect of what they call group psychology.

The wild enthusiasm has certainly paralyzed my heart.

It's not bad.

I couldn't think about the people I had killed with my own hand or anything else.

I am good.

Anyway we won with almost no damage on our side.

I should be happy about it.

So to say that I don't have to think about it is fine.

I'm fine.

I did it for the first time; surprisingly it may not have been that big of a deal.

This is how it is living in this world.

It isn't necessary to forever be bound by the ethics of my previous life or to the rules I'd established in my youth.

There is a time for the spear and a time to hold back.

I should no longer hesitate if I need to kill a person.

I am in control.

"Prince Zanoba has returned!"

This was said by a messenger who had come from the lower floor.

During the chaos of the battle I had forgotten completely about Zanoba.

I ran downstairs in the blink of an eye.

But the scene at the bottom of the stairs was frightening.

A group of people with clearly different hair color is surrounded by ten of our soldiers.

They were filthy with leaves, dirt, soil, soot, sweat and blood.

One of our men, a ferociousness man in splendid armor raised his voice to greet me.

"Ah, Shishou!"

Who was this?

I thought I knew who it was.

Who was this with his victim's blood in his hair?

There was damage all over his armor.

Even his glasses were smeared with blood.

"Zanoba?"

Zanoba is Zanoba.

He looked like a different person who looks exactly like Zanoba.

It was so much so that I wanted to complain.

I just couldn't make the connection between this man and Zanoba in my head.

"You are..."

When I approached the crowd split in two.

So I swallowed my words.

At Zanoba's feet was a kneeling figure.

This guy tied up in a net was also covered in mud.

It is a net that I recognize.

It is the magical item that I had lent to Zanoba.

"Thanks to Shishou, the surprise attack was a success, we caught the enemy's commander."

"Ah, ummm..."

The soldiers around the fort are praising the dozen or so muddy warriors.

The eyes they turn towards Zanoba are different then when we first came to the fort.

They are different from those eyes fill with suspicion.

They are eyes filled with respect.

I mean, only ten men.

Why are there so few?

When they left there should have been almost 100.

"Um... were are the others?"

"They were killed. They died honorably in battle."

Oh, I see.



If you raid that huge army with 100 people it becomes like this.

But isn't it strange?

Wouldn't have we won this battle even without making this raid?

They shouldn't have had to make a desperate raid like that.

"Just what... did you win something from the raid that would be worth the lives of 90 men?"

"Of course we did. This person is a member of the enemy's royal family. If we negotiate with him as a hostage the war should end."

Oh, I see...

I get it.

Yeah.

I understand now.

If that's the case then the raid was necessary.

This put everything in perspective, this battle was a complete victory.

Zanabo created a victory with a desperate charge.

If you think about it, this may have been a worthy way to sacrifice 90 men.

It's a rather small sacrifice for ending a war.

No wait, I shouldn't be deceived.

This time we delivered a crippling blow to the enemy.

1000 or 2000.

Or even 3000.

Any commander with his head straight on isn't going to attack us anymore.

"I can't keep Shishou stuck in this fort too long. This was a fine success."

Smiling, Zanoba laughed.

It was that kind of thing.

I guess it isn't necessary that the enemy would be stopped by just this defeat.

There is the possibility that the enemies commander doesn't have a good head on his shoulders.

Even though we severely wounded them today, our enemy has the advantage in numbers.

Meanwhile, without Roxy or I, the fort could easily fall.

Neither of us can afford to stay here one or two years.

But with the capture of an enemy royal, once a cease fire agreement is signed, the war is over.

Having gotten a hold of someone from the leadership, we can finish this surely.

Without that guy's methods, this wouldn't have been possible.

For example, if I was in the enemy's fort...

No, even if Roxy hadn't helped me get over my hesitation and fear of killing, wouldn't things have still taken their course?

"Iya. However just as expected.

That saint ranked magic of Shishou and Roxy-dono...

In addition, this [casting net of overfishing].

I thought that I would be able to capture the enemy's commander eventually, but I did not expect it to go so well."

Anyway, under the cover of the mess created by Cumulonimbus, Zanoba successfully captured the enemy's head.

Like picking up a chestnut from the fire.

If you make a bet, you have to win it.

He created a method using Roxy and myself, while just barely scraping by, got the best results from this single large battle.

"Iya-haha, but there sure is a large difference between being inside that saint rank magic and seeing it from a distance!"

"Ah, uuuh, Yeah, that it is."

Suddenly a chill ran down my spine.

The range of Cumulonimbus is wide.

It's the kind of attack that will strike the enemy in a large scope.

That would mean...

"Ah, that is, Zanoba... did I hit your group with lightning?"

"Hmmm....."

Zanoba placed his hand on his chin and made a pose like he was thinking.

He said with a straight face, "Shishou... there are always sacrifices in war."

I was right.

Roxy and my lightning struck them.

We were safe in the fort.

Alternatively, they could have also been blown by the strong winds into our own pitfalls.

It might have been a guy I was eating my rice next to.

It might have been a guy Roxy had taught magic to.

Even though I didn't get very involved with the men, I notice that faces I had gotten used to seeing over the last several days were missing.

"And, those men's fate are the sole responsibility of the commander. Shishou, you shouldn't worry about it."

Even if you say that, I feel like I've done something irreparable.

"Shishou, you must be tired. Please rest well for the remainder of the day."

While saying that, Zanoba hit me lightly with a pop, and then gently patted my shoulder.

Then he took the prisoners and disappeared into the fort, while saying one thing or another to soldiers he passed.

I just stood there stunned.

Words would not come out anymore.

" .... "

Ah, I see.

We must prepare for an attack by the Death God.

There is no time to be stunned.

I don't have the time to be resting.

I should be near the MK-I.

Then let the enemy come.

---

That evening an assailant came.

However, he was not the Death God.

Neither was I his target.

He came to rescue the royal family member we had taken hostage early today.

I did not have to kill him.

He was weak.

I stunned him and handed him over to a soldier of the fort.

I don't know what happened to him after that.

My restraint is functioning at least.

I'm alright. I'm going to be okay.

I am unstable, but I'm in control.

I am able to control my power.

So I'm okay.

I continue to tell myself this all night.

The Death God did not come.

I was not attacked.

---

The next morning I joined in questioning the hostage with Zanoba.

He's part of the royal family of the aforementioned North Country.

Whether or not they know the existence of Hitogami: No.

Whether or not there was a guy in their country who made a remark or claimed to foresee the future: No.

Then how did they perform the invasion collecting 5000 soldiers in such a short period of time?

They had been eying the Shirone kingdom for some time, working towards an invasion slowly.

So then, the north country is clean.

There was no relationship with Hitogami.

Or, it could be that the general idea to invade Shirone came from Hitogami... but this guy is not an apostle, certainly.

This guy who became our hostage, he is just a moronic commander like you could see anywhere.

Still no attack from the Death God.

The North Country is clean.

My expectations are defeated.

It's been a long time since I felt like I was just earnestly spinning my wheels.

It seems that I have misunderstood something fundamental here.

For example, perhaps in this particular case, there was no trap from the beginning.

Far from a trap, maybe Hitogami has nothing to do with these events.

Even while I think this, I remain vigilant.

Partly, I may have misunderstood some meaningless thing, it's better to be prepared.

Then on the tenth day, the situation changed.