



두부두부 판타지 장편소설

판타지 세상에서
작가로
살아가는 법

Information

Table of Contents URL: <https://novelbin.com/b/how-to-live-as-a-writer-in-a-fantasy-world#tab-chapters-title>

Reincarnated in a fantasy world. All of the novels worth reading here appear to be SAT English problems. So I began writing my own fantasy novels as a hobby to augment my previous job.

However, the novel I wrote had an odd ripple effect. That's fantastic as well.

Chapter 301: Trial (3)

The verdict was delivered. Regardless of me being Xenon, this incident was triggered by me slapping Hiriya.

However, after revealing my identity, the cause was also attributed to Hiriya. The remaining judgment was left for the Minerva Empire to handle.

It seems Friedrich realized he couldn't go too far due to Adelia's birth and my not-so-subtle spoilers. The seed of doubt planted in his heart will gradually grow and start to bind him. The moment Xenon's Biography Volume 22 is published, that tendrils will begin to tighten around his neck.

Until then, I probably won't be able to leisurely attend the academy. Even though it's still in the suspicion phase, revealing my identity means rumors will gradually spread outside.

Once a newspaper with connections to the nobility picks up on the rumor, the real game begins. This trial was just the prelude or a teaser.

As tense as I am, the royal family of Ters will also be on edge. They might think it was just a bluff during the trial, but in the future, I will solidify it with a stamp.

For now, I will wait until the rumor starts to spread and my name is mentioned in the newspapers.

“Isaac.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you. Really.”

After the trial ended and before returning to the Minerva Empire, Adelia thanked me as I lay on the bed for a brief rest in the guest room.

I lifted my head slightly, seeing Adelia looking at me with a warm smile.

A mixture of emotions—affection, gratitude, and apology. However, her affection for me was unmistakable.

Despite being denied once again during the trial, she remained steadfast without breaking down like before.

I smiled at her growth, seeing that she had shaken off her trauma even though there might still be lingering regrets.

“Noona, could you come here for a moment?”

When I motioned for her to come closer, Adelia slowly walked over, her face still adorned with a loving smile.

When she finally came close enough, I pulled her arm, bringing her into my embrace. Adelia, perhaps expecting this, didn’t let out a shrill scream and instead nestled gently.

“I told you, didn’t I? I will always be on your side until the end.”

“Still, thank you. Meeting Nicole and then you was the greatest fortune of my life. It feels like all my past misfortunes were meant to lead me to you.”

“And I found the knight who will dedicate their life to me.”

We shared each other’s warmth for a long time, exchanging emotional connection.

The atmosphere was not suggestive but purely healing as we hugged.

“Haah...”

Adelia let out a satisfied, drowsy sigh, and I smiled contentedly, patting her back as if to comfort a child.

The trial is over, but it’s not truly the end. As the culture flourishes with Xenon’s Biography, the Kingdom of Ters is gradually heading into a dark age.

A kingdom that is attacked from the outside can rebuild, but a kingdom that crumbles from within cannot recover.

In the process, they might lash out at Adelia or me in their desperation.

Additionally, the benefits gained from hiding my identity so far will disappear, and troublesome matters, especially direct threats like devil worshipers, may arise.

But it's okay. I have strong allies like Adelia. They will never breach my defenses.

Knock knock knock

I'm not sure how long we held each other, but as soon as we heard the knock, we separated instinctively.

Although I'd love to go further, we are in the Kingdom of Ters. No matter how strong the desire, there are times when you must hold back.

Adelia reluctantly pulled away from me and moved to open the door.

Knock knock knock!!

Someone is impatient. Who could it be? Could it be Lara?

Even though I only met her once, she genuinely liked Adelia, so it's quite possible.

Regardless of the other royals, as the last conscience of the Ters royal family, I planned to treat her kindly.

“Who is it?”

“Ah, Adelia...?”

“Huh?”

But the voice that came from outside was not Lara. Even though the voice was a bit choked, it was unmistakably Hiriya.

Why did she come to my guest room while I was resting? While Adelia looked at me with a perplexed expression, I got up from the bed and walked towards the door.

I opened the door wide, revealing Hiriya standing there. Unlike when I saw her at the academy, she was now as withdrawn as a frightened squirrel.

Her slender build made her appear tall, almost as tall as Adelia, so she didn't seem small, but not now.

The confident and arrogant demeanor was gone, leaving only a trembling small animal.

I saw her during the trial, but seeing her up close made it hard to believe she was the same person.

“...Princess Hiriya?”

“I, I...”

When I called her, she stuttered. Realizing that leaving her there might attract unwanted attention, I decided to bring her inside.

As Hiriya entered, Adelia watched her with an indifferent gaze.

Hiriya, on the other hand, couldn't meet Adelia's eyes and actively avoided her gaze.

The situation was reversed in many ways. What could Hiriya want to say to me?

I was more than a little curious.

“Please, have a seat...”

“I-I'm sorry.”

“Excuse me... what?”

Before I could even offer her a seat at the table, Hiriya apologized. I turned to see her bowing her head deeply.

Her sky-blue hair fell like a curtain, obscuring her expression, but her trembling body made it clear.

Hiriya was terrified. And she fully believed that I was Xenon.

I stared at the back of her head for a moment, then looked over at Adelia.

Adelia seemed equally surprised by Hiriya's sudden apology. Her expression showed how unexpected this was.

“Princess Hiriya.”

“Y-yes.”

“First, please lift your head.”

At my words, Hiriya slowly lifted her head. As she did, I could clearly see her expression.

Her trembling lips and sky-blue eyes quivered as if an earthquake had struck them, with cold sweat running down her cheeks.

She was exhibiting extreme anxiety, much like Adelia had when she first met the Ters royal family at the exhibition a year ago.

In contrast, Adelia appeared completely calm, with an expression that seemed devoid of any particular thoughts—just a sense of curiosity.

I looked at the pitifully trembling Hiriya and, smiling slyly, spoke nonchalantly.

“Why are you shaking so much? Anyone would think I’m going to eat you.”

“I-I’m sorry. I dared to presume...”

“Don’t tremble. Please look at me directly, Princess Hiriya.”

“... ..”

At my ‘kind’ request, Hiriya stopped mid-sentence and looked directly at me. Although her gaze wavered occasionally, she tried to follow my request.

Her usual confidence had completely vanished, making her seem like a different person.

Hiriya wasn’t ignorant of her position. It was because she understood it all too well that her demeanor had changed so drastically.

“Princess.”

“Y-yes.”

“Did you dislike Adelia that much?”

“... ..”

At my question, Hiriya’s gaze shifted to Adelia. Adelia, upon meeting her eyes, had a complex expression.

She had longed for her family but was rejected and ended up forming a new family with me.

Now, one of those family members had thrown away all pride and was apologizing. It was a mix of new emotions and inevitable complexity.

“What Adelia needed wasn’t a throne, power, or wealth. She only needed familial affection. But you, Princess Hiriya, and the royal family gave her nothing but abuse and insults. Do you understand what that means?”

“I-I will do anything! From now on, I will call her sister... no, sister Adelia! Please forgive me...!”

My words weren’t finished yet, but Hiriya, kneeling, began to beg desperately.

But I have no intention of forgiving her. If Adelia hadn’t become my woman, if I wasn’t Xenon, Hiriya wouldn’t have changed.

I knelt down to meet Hiriya’s eyes as she knelt and begged pathetically.

“Lady Hiriya. If I weren’t Xenon, would you still be begging like this?”

“*Hic... sob...*”

“If you had treated Adelia even slightly as family, would this have happened?”

“Please...”

Hiriya didn’t answer my question, only sobbing. In some ways, she could be seen as an incredibly unlucky case.

But that doesn’t mean I can forgive her. Even if the kind Adelia were to forgive her...

‘...That won’t happen.’

I glanced at Adelia, just in case. She was looking down at Hiriya with a disgusted expression.

The term “sister” was something she had longed to hear. But it meant nothing now because if this situation hadn’t arisen, Hiriya would have never recognized Adelia as family.

It’s only natural that any remaining feelings would fall away. Moreover, given that her existence was blatantly denied in the trial just moments ago, she must feel disgusted.

To be honest, I have no intention of forgiving Hiriya. More accurately, I simply have no thoughts about it.

My frustration eased the moment I slapped her and revealed my identity, and the Kingdom of Ters will face a period of stagnation.

“You must pay the price for touching my family, Princess Hiriya. Because of the ball you started rolling, I had to reveal my identity, which has resulted in significant loss. Just the Kingdom of Ters going into a dark age isn’t enough.”

“No, please! Please, just let me live!”

Maybe it’s because of the Jairos Revolution a few decades ago, where the pillars of the nation were shaken. Hiriya, recalling the revolution, shouted urgently in fear.

Frankly, it’s not strange if a revolution were to occur. The Kingdom of Ters has strong cohesion. This is a great strength as a nation but can also be a poison.

When the people of Ters encounter my letters and the upcoming Xenon’s Biography Volume 22, how will they react?

What path will the Kingdom of Ters take if I publicly reveal my identity to everyone?

In the worst-case scenario, as Hiriya fears, the kingdom could crumble from within and walk the path of destruction. Nobles who have been keeping the royal family in check could rise to power, and another royal family might emerge.

Change of the royal authority. Or a revolution.

This is the future Hiriya fears the most, as her own safety is at stake.

“I-I’ll become a slave if you want! I don’t mind being a plaything! If you don’t believe me, I-I’ll do it right now...!”

Hiriya, gripped by severe anxiety, began to hastily undress with trembling hands. Since she was wearing a uniform rather than a dress, it was easy for her to remove it on her own.

As I moved to stop her in my panic, Adelia, who couldn’t watch any longer, intervened first.

“Stop it, Princess Hiriya.”

“S-sister... no, Adelia...”

“I am not your sister. I am merely Isaac’s loyal personal maid. I have no further ties to the royal family of Ters.”

“Ugh...”

Realizing instinctively that there was no way out, tears began to form in Hiriya’s eyes. She should have behaved better from the start.

I looked at Hiriya, who was trying everything she could to earn forgiveness, with a disdainful gaze and spoke in a gentle voice.

“Princess Hiriya, I don’t need your body. I’m not someone who chases after women, and besides, I already have a far superior woman by my side.”

Sure, Hiriya is objectively a beautiful woman. But the goodwill she had built up was completely shattered, and I have no plans to accept her.

There is one condition, though: if she were to become Adelia’s slave instead of mine, I wouldn’t mind. She would then endure the same abuse and insults Adelia suffered in her childhood.

And even if Hiriya doesn’t want it, it’s inevitable that the Ters royal family will send someone in the future. Whether it’s Hiriya or Lara, it will be one of them.

In that case, it’s better to accept Lara. She is the last remaining conscience of the Ters royal family, and it would be troubling if that conscience disappeared without knowing anything.

More importantly, Lara is the only person who treated Adelia as family. Seeing that they still maintain a good relationship, Lara must be protected at least.

“So, Princess, I don’t need you. Even if you force your way in, it will be very difficult for you.”

“I-I can endure it.”

“Really?”

“Yes!”

“Just like Adelia endured?”

“Yes!”

“... ..”

Hiriya, saying things she doesn't mean to desperately cling to any lifeline. Her lack of hesitation only makes it more repulsive.

Hiriya should never have given such a positive answer. If she understood even a fraction of the pain Adelia went through, she wouldn't have said such things.

You can't change people. Even though she's clinging to me, her deep-seated selfishness remains unchanged.

She is a potential threat, likely to betray me if it means securing her own safety.

Swish

Suppressing my inner thoughts, I smiled and placed my hand on Hiriya's cheek.

Thinking she had received approval, her expression began to soften.

Her lips were still trembling, but her relief was evident.

“...Princess Hiriya.”

“Y-yes!”

“That's not it.”

“What...?”

“That's not it.”

Perhaps she hadn't expected a negative response. Hiriya looked at me with a bewildered expression.

Even so, my hand continued to gently stroke her cheek. As if telling her to wake up from this dream, to be satisfied with this moment.

“If you had understood even a little of the pain Adelia endured, if you had even a little empathy, you wouldn't have given such an answer. Adelia endured it all, not just as a knight but as a woman. When you used sparring as an excuse to beat her, when you insulted her parents in front of her, when you almost took the man she loved right before her eyes, and even when I slapped you and came to the Kingdom of Ters!”

“... ..”

When I shouted, Hiriya flinched violently. Fear and terror were etched in her trembling eyes, and her complexion grew increasingly pale.

“She blamed herself, saying it was her fault, and apologized sincerely. Even though it wasn’t her fault, she punished herself. But what about you, Princess? It’s different, isn’t it? Despite making a mistake, you answered only to save yourself without an ounce of empathy.”

The Ters Royal Family is endlessly kind to ‘their people,’ acting as parents, siblings, and family. However, they ignore those who fall out of favor, like Adelia.

They only think of their satisfaction and benefits, capable of becoming more malicious because they aren’t without skill. How did Adelia manage to hold on in such a household? How did a conscience like Lara’s come to be born in such a place?

I wonder if Olivia, the first princess who married into the Bellua Republic, has a similar personality. Even if it’s not because of me, the future of the Ters Kingdom looks incredibly bleak.

“You said you wanted forgiveness, right? Then continue living. Live quietly, enduring all kinds of contempt, just like Adelia did. The Ters Kingdom, known as a cultural nation, won’t collapse over something like this. King Friedrich is a capable and wise ruler. But people won’t look at you kindly.”

“Uh...uh...”

Perhaps imagining a bleak future, tears formed at the corners of Hiriya’s eyes, running down her cheeks, revealing her regret.

Will Hiriya be able to endure it, or will she run away like Adelia did? I hope the day comes when she can genuinely apologize to Adelia. By now, Hiriya must have deep-seated trauma like Adelia.

“I’m...sorry...”

“... ”

“I’m really...sorry...”

Hiriya bowed her head deeply, even kneeling as she pleaded once more. A princess of a nation, beyond just kneeling, was now prostrated.

To that princess, I responded with a smile that could be seen as cruel.

“No.”

Endure it with all your might.

“Just endure it.”

It’s the small ball you started rolling.

Translators note:

It seems our softboy Isaac CAN go cruel when he wants to huh...

Chapter 302: Rice Cake (1)

Returning to the Minerva Empire went smoothly, almost too smoothly to believe. It felt so easy that I wondered if it was really happening.

In some novels, you often see the cliché of an unidentified assassin launching a surprise attack before the protagonist can return home. Considering I revealed my identity as Xenon and insulted the king, I thought something might happen along the way, but maybe I've just read too many novels.

Besides, there is a teleportation device at our disposal, and if I were attacked, the Minerva Empire would have protested strongly. Moreover, I wasn't alone, I had Rina with me, so the Ters Kingdom couldn't act recklessly.

Anyway, after returning to the Minerva Empire and Halo Academy, I waited for the disciplinary actions I would face.

'But will Hiriya come to the academy?'

The rumor that I slapped Hiriya had already spread throughout the academy. It would be more surprising if it hadn't, given how many people witnessed it.

Normally, rumors get exaggerated, but public opinion is surprisingly favorable. While slapping her can't be justified, there's a general sentiment that Hiriya was also at fault.

Among the professors, my image is quite decent, and among the students, it's not bad either. I'm just the redhead who stands out. However, since not many people know me well, I'm slightly worried about the various rumors that might be circulating.

Rina said she'd handle things well, but rumors tend to get distorted in strange ways. Besides, it's uncertain whether Hiriya will return to the academy. Before we left, Hiriya's mental state was already shattered. Would she come back to the academy?

Hiriya originally transferred to Halo Academy to improve relations with the Minerva Empire, but that reason is now completely gone. It doesn't matter whether she comes back or not; I have other things to focus on now.

“You really stirred things up. It’s going to complicate things on our side as well.”

“It had to be done sooner or later. And from the Empire’s standpoint, it worked out well without you having to lift a finger, right?”

“Maybe. It’s good that the Ters Kingdom is collapsing on its own, but we also need to think about the aftermath. I don’t think Ters will fall immediately. Being a cultural powerhouse, they’ll somehow manage to survive.”

As Rina said, what I need to worry about most are the upcoming events. Though I’ve revealed my identity, that only concerns the Ters Kingdom, and for now, it’s still at the stage of suspicion.

However, with the release of Xenon’s Biography Volume 22 just a day away, it won’t take long for suspicions to turn into certainty. I’ve already indirectly spoiled the contents of Volume 22, so the nobles present at the trial are likely half-convinced that I am Xenon.

Of course, if the nobles band together or if Friedrich exerts pressure, they might be able to prevent the rumors from spreading outside. There’s a slim possibility since power can only be wielded if the country remains stable, and the situation could destabilize the nation.

But will not a single person out of all those people say a word? I highly doubt that. Until then, I can just wait quietly or continue my studies. Meanwhile, I’ll also be working on Volume 23 of Xenon’s Biography.

For reference, Volume 23 will continue the battle between Xenon and Envy, and from then on, the grand storyline about ‘Pride’ will gradually unfold.

‘Should I make some adaptations?’

By the time I reveal the plotline about Pride, my identity might also be disclosed. I’m not sure if I should write it, especially since it’s closely linked to ‘mythology.’

Elves, in particular, might react sensitively. It won’t be unpleasant but rather a boost to their pride, commonly known as a “hype” moment.

‘The ancestors of the Elves were angels who served beside God. However, after committing a grave sin, they lost their wings and fell to the earthly realm.’

This is a legend passed down through mythology. The ancestor of the Elves, an angel, rebelled in the ‘Celestial Realm,’ the world of the gods, lost their wings, and fell. However, this myth contradicts many aspects of the Elves. When Elves introduce themselves, they always mention that they are a race chosen by God.

Many scholars say that even though they rebelled against God, they were still the most beloved angels, which is why they were blessed.

However, I have a slightly different idea. Specifically, I plan to add a deep, hidden backstory to it.

‘The ancestors of the Elves were not banished to the earthly realm for their sins, but instead, they tore off their own wings and willingly became mortals. They did this to make the earthly realm a warmer place.’

This reinterpretation not only changes the origin of the Elves but also alters the flow of mythology significantly. It could be considered a hidden history, much like the dark elves.

As someone who has delved deeply into the history and mythology of this world, this is one of the hypotheses I can present, and it’s a cliché I’ve encountered often in my past life.

An immortal who abandoned their powers and authority to become mortal in order to protect the world. Such cases usually feature characters who become allies to the protagonist.

‘It’s a good idea, but...’

I scribbled on my notebook with a magical pen, organizing the plot. This revelation is planned for Volume 24, not 23. Volume 23 is entirely filled with the battle against Envy, so there’s not much to worry about except highlighting Envy’s miserable life.

The battle Xenon faces against Envy will be depicted as one of the most desperate, second only to the final boss, Jin.

‘Is it okay to touch mythology?’

So far, I’ve created several significant twists, but I haven’t dared to touch the realm of mythology. In a world where gods like Luminous, Mora, and Harte exist, mythology is not something to be tampered with lightly.

However, nothing makes ‘Pride’ more compelling than this setting. Pride, according to the setup, despises their ancestors for becoming mortals and believes they were foolish. Pride harbors ambitions to regain wings and bring down the celestial realm to rule the world, oblivious to the destruction it will bring.

Moreover, instead of the white wings of an angel, Pride will possess black wings like a demon.

‘The gods haven’t said anything...’

At least it should be okay. If there were any issues, they would have warned me directly.

With that thought, I felt more at ease crafting the plot. What if it causes another upheaval? Well, I’ll just have to accept it. Honestly, I gave up after Cecily’s devilization.

Besides, the idea of ancestors tearing off their wings to become mortals could bring a profound realization to the normally arrogant Elves.

If it’s a good idea, then there won’t be any negative impact. That’s my judgment.

‘By the way, should I give Elena and Cindy a heads-up?’

Elena and Cindy are the closest to me in the academy, next to my close acquaintances. The knowledge they’ve shared with me has been valuable material for Xenon’s Biography. The news that I might be Xenon will soon start spreading, and it wouldn’t be polite not to tell them.

Since I plan to make an announcement in front of everyone anyway, telling just them beforehand isn’t a bad choice. I made up my mind, and now all that was left was to act. I put away the notebook with the organized plot and took out the draft.

This draft is the proof that I am Xenon. Although they didn’t believe me during the trial, Elena would likely believe me right away. Feeling a bit nervous, I made my way to Elena’s lab. Since I hadn’t received any disciplinary action yet, it was okay to move around.

When I revealed my identity to Elena and Cindy, who were busy researching in the lab...

“Actually, we kind of expected it.”

“What?”

“We suspected it ever since that pink-haired girl came to you. And your reactions whenever I asked questions were always suspicious. But I didn’t think it was really true.”

Their reaction was incredibly anticlimactic. Cindy didn’t even react properly and just flopped around. When I asked if they weren’t surprised, Elena gave an answer that was very typical of her.

“It would be a lie to say we’re not surprised. But, how should I put it...”

“We’ve spent so much time together... it’s just kind of fascinating...”

“Cindy’s right. If I hadn’t known you at all, it would be different. It’s like finding out that a colleague you’ve been working with is actually a royal or something.”

I think I understand what they mean. Their ordinary reactions made me chuckle despite myself.

“Can you tell me what’s going to happen in the future?”

“To write a paper?”

“Yeah.”

“No.”

“Aw, you can’t do that for us?”

“I’m not a prophet.”

“Tsk, some friend you are.”

I felt a bit deflated for hiding it, but I also felt more at ease.

A few days later, when Xenon’s Biography Volume 22 was released to the world:

[Shocking! Count Camar of the Terse Kingdom: I know who Xenon is!]

[Xenon’s true identity is none other than a noble from the Minerva Empire, from a family known for their red hair...]

[Is his claim true? As everyone's attention focuses, the Minerva Empire...]

The seed I had planted began to sprout.

Translators note:

Chapter 303: Rice Cake (2)

Rumors began to spread from the Kingdom of Ters, rumors about Xenon's identity that spread like wildfire.

A nobleman, not anonymously but one of high rank, that of a count of great influence in that country, risked his name to provide this information. It was a gamble that could severely damage his reputation or cause him to be vilified for deceit.

Yet, Count Kamar had ample reason to make such revelations. He maintained neutrality during the trial, and although he was cautious, he did not disparage me. Compared to other nobles, he holds a minimal degree of favor, and he has an escape route: he can shift the blame onto me.

The idea that the kingdom might be shaken? Perhaps he has plans to secretly replace the royal power or commit acts of similar magnitude based on that instability.

Of course, this is akin to a coup d'état, so it's purely speculative and not something I need to ponder. Frankly, whether it's a coup or not, if the state is on the brink of turmoil, any wise leader should address that first.

In any case, the news that Count Kamar revealed through the newspaper is roughly as follows:

[Xenon is from the Minerva Empire.]

[Xenon is not a sage, but possesses wisdom comparable to a sage.]

[Xenon is a man with red hair and golden eyes.]

Although these three clues seem scant, there are very few people in this world with red hair. Moreover, mentioning golden eyes and his origin narrows it down significantly. However, I don't know where the claim about wisdom comparable to a sage came from. Perhaps it's to imply that he has met me in person.

Nevertheless, it's not a complete lie, so I just need to wait until the bait fully takes hold.

“Hmm...”

“... ..”

“Hmmmmm...”

“...Why?”

Three days have passed since the rumors spread to the Minerva Empire and Halo Academy.

I had gotten used to others staring at me, but it was still unsettling when Leona stared at me intensely. Leona and I were scheduled to work together as assistants, which meant we met more frequently than before.

Today was no different. I had met her to treat her to her favorite steak and have a chat, but she just kept staring at me like now.

She would look at me while taking a bite of steak, chew on the bones while looking at me, and lick the remaining sauce with her tongue while looking at me.

“Red hair... golden eyes... hmm...”

“... ..”

“Wisdom comparable to a sage... that seems to fit too...”

If you're that curious, why don't you just ask directly? I realized what Leona was suspicious about and let out a dry laugh. She is known as a studious person who only focuses on her studies, but in reality, she is quite interested in worldly affairs.

I heard that she reads the same newspaper I subscribe to. Even though she is the third wife's daughter, it would be odd if she had no interest in politics.

Despite Leona's suspicious gaze, I leisurely opened my mouth to speak.

“Why? Are you curious if I'm Xenon?”

“Yeah. The description in the newspaper fits you perfectly.”

Leona answered while chewing on her steak. With her animal ears and tail fully visible, she looked truly adorable. I couldn't help but smile weakly at Leona, who looked just like a pet. As I rested my chin on my hand, Leona swallowed her steak and spoke.

“Why are you looking at me like that? You should finish your steak too.”

“You look so cute eating so heartily.”

“... ..”

Everyone knows that Leona is particularly weak to compliments about her appearance. Even now, as I complimented her cuteness, her face turned red, and her ears perked up and twitched. Her tail wagged back and forth, openly expressing her happiness.

‘Come to think of it, she is really bad at hiding her emotions.’

Although Leona presents a cynical personality on the outside, she becomes very honest the moment her ears and tail are visible.

Perhaps the pressure to hide her true identity has made her personality harsher. Unlike me, Leona has to suppress her actual personality, so in a way, she has it worse than I do.

People need to express their desires or show their true selves to maintain mental health. For Leona, eating steak with me is her way of relieving stress.

“By the way, what would you do if I were Xenon?”

“Huh?”

“I asked, what would you do if I were Xenon?”

“I haven’t really thought about it.”

Judging by her blank expression, she seemed to be sincere. After all, unlike others, Leona is connected to me due to that custom. The real issue isn’t her but her mother. I can’t predict what stance her mother would take.

Even though she’s the third wife, it doesn’t mean she lacks political insight. Although I’ve never met her, I remember Leona proudly mentioning her mother’s wisdom.

I don’t know how that wisdom will manifest, but it’s highly likely she will try to separate Leona from me. Leona herself told me that her mother isn’t happy about her becoming my wife.

“Doesn’t your mother disapprove of our relationship?”

“She does. But I like you.”

“In what way?”

“Everything except your face.”

“What...?”

I was about to accept it until I heard “everything except your face” and couldn’t help but be taken aback. It’s embarrassing to say this about myself, but objectively speaking, I’m quite handsome.

Even by the standards of the elves, who are considered the epitome of beauty, I am considered attractive. Not to mention my rare red hair and golden eyes.

Leona seemed puzzled by my reaction but then understood and explained.

“To be precise, it’s from a beastfolk’s perspective. From our perspective, you look like a female, which isn’t considered an attractive look for males. Besides, you don’t look like my brother or Jinai, right?”

“... ..”

“But don’t worry, I like your red hair and eyes. It’s just that I’m still more accustomed to beastfolk culture than human culture.”

Surely, beauty standards differ across cultures, so I can understand Leona’s reaction. Nevertheless, I’m still a bit stunned.

“Uh... Isaac?”

“Huh?”

“You don’t dislike me, right?”

While I was still trying to recover from the shock, Leona asked in a cautious voice. As soon as I heard that question, I snapped back to reality. She had asked me the same question before. Back then, I had told her that it was quite the opposite. However, it seemed she still couldn’t shake off her doubts.

“Of course not. Like I said before, what man would refuse a beautiful woman like you?”

“Then when will we mate?”

“Uh... mate?”

“Yes.”

The word “mate” made my mind reel. Just like humans, beastfolk place a lot of significance on mating, or in other words, sexual relations. It’s an act where the male marks the female as his own, a form of branding.

In the somewhat primitive culture of the beastfolk, this is seen as the most effective way to assert dominance over a female. In other words, Leona wants me to assert my dominance over her. This brought up a lot of thoughts.

“See? You hesitate to answer because you don’t want to dominate me.”

“Loving someone doesn’t mean dominating them. That’s not love, that’s possessiveness.”

“Then what do I have to do for you to take me?”

“What?”

“What do I have to do for you to like me and, further, for us to mate? I’ll do whatever it takes.”

Leona spoke seriously, without a hint of joking. She had calmly set down the knife and fork she had been using to voraciously eat her steak.

I met her endlessly serious gaze with a wry smile. How could I persuade her? While I was deep in thought, Leona’s ears perked up. This reaction only happened when she had a good idea. Seeing her tail stand up too, it seemed she had thought of a clever solution.

“Yeah! This method will work!”

“What method?”

Given that Leona’s way of thinking was entirely different from mine, I felt uneasy. Her golden eyes sparkled with excitement as she explained her idea.

“If owning me feels awkward, why not make it so you want to own me?”

“Huh?”

“Make you feel possessive about me. What do you think? Isn’t it a good idea?”

Typical of beastfolk, her simple and direct solution left me feeling dizzy. At the same time, I was puzzled. Why did she choose me over any other man?

Despite the cultural differences, I had indirectly signaled my struggles multiple times, yet she never gave up. Even her mother disapproved, making it all the more perplexing.

“Does it really have to be me? There are other better men...”

“You’re Xenon, right? Is there anyone better than you, man or person?”

“... ..”

“I knew you would say that. Just watch. I’ll follow you to the end, even if I have to bite your balls.”

Leona declared boldly, grinning so widely that her fangs showed. Why did I suddenly picture a lioness biting a lion’s testicles? I let out a dry laugh and shook my head. It seemed she was not one to give up easily.

“So, what will you do to make me feel possessive? I’m curious.”

“I’ll think about that slowly.”

“Um... Can I ask one favor?”

“What is it?”

I wanted to see it at least once. I hesitated a little, then cautiously asked Leona.

“Stand up for a moment.”

With a puzzled expression, Leona obediently stood up, her tail swaying, reflecting her emotions. I looked at her unique and beautiful features and then cleared my throat.

It was embarrassing to say it out loud, but since Leona had already declared her intentions, it should be fine. After a moment of hesitation, I stood up as well. Facing her directly, I voiced my request.

“First, raise your hands...”

“Raise my hands.”

“And act like you’re showing your claws.”

“Like this?”

Leona followed my words, making a threatening gesture like a beast showing its claws. I added the final touch.

“And roar like ‘Raaawr!’ showing your fangs.”

“Raaawr!”

The impact of her actions couldn't be ignored. She took it seriously, but to me, it looked like a big cat trying to be cute. If she was this adorable and lovable ‘pet,’ maybe it was acceptable.

She already viewed herself as my possession. I suppressed the growing possessiveness inside me and cleared my throat again. Any more and I might start making strange requests.

“...That's enough. This will do.”

“Really? Do you feel possessive?”

“A little.”

“Raaawr!!”

Pleased with my honest answer, Leona repeated the same action without me asking.

Seeing my reluctant expression, Leona also seemed a bit embarrassed. She stuck out her tongue and scratched her head.

“Hehe, maybe that wasn't the best idea?”

“... ..”

I suppressed the urge to pull on her protruding tongue. After revealing my identity to Leona, a few days passed.

[Isaac. Return to the estate immediately upon seeing this letter.]

A message came from my father.

[Everyone is mistaking me for Xenon. Forget about your studies and come back quickly.]

I couldn't help but laugh at the contents of the letter.

Translators note:

Chapter 304: Rice Cake (3)

Isaac's father, Hawk Ducker Michelle, has led a life full of ups and downs compared to others.

Born as the child of ordinary peasants, he displayed remarkable prowess from a young age and caught the eye of a noble, becoming a knight.

While it is relatively common for commoners to become knights in the Minerva Empire, the martial feats he accumulated were far from ordinary.

He was the central figure in the dragon subjugation known as the Ascanal Incident and defended the border region against frequent incursions by barbarian beastfolk and elven scouts for over a decade.

Each of Hawk's achievements significantly impacted the Minerva Empire, particularly his defense of the border region, which was acknowledged even by the royal family.

Before his assignment, the border was frequently overrun by barbarian invasions, causing substantial damage.

Moreover, the fact that he withstood a massive offensive by the barbarian beastfolk alone warranted his ennoblement. However, perhaps due to living a life of constant battle, his active duty period was significantly shorter than that of other knights.

Knights typically do not retire unless they sustain severe injuries. In fact, as long as they deem themselves fit, they can serve until their death.

Unlike Earth, where aging inevitably affects physical capabilities, this world is a fantasy realm where "mana" exists.

Mana not only prevents aging but also enhances physical abilities, making it a valuable asset for professions like knighthood. Even if the body ages, decades of rigorous mana training can compensate. This is why there are many so-called "elderly warriors," and the Minerva Empire holds its military personnel in high regard.

Despite this unique culture, Hawk retired at an early age due to none other than his 'heart'.

Think about it. Comrades who laughed and talked excitedly turned into cold corpses overnight, and even if they are barbarian beastfolk, you still have to kill people. If this repeats every day, can a sane person endure it?

This was the state of the border region where Hawk served. The reason he became a knight commander at a young age was because all his comrades and superiors had died.

Even after becoming a knight commander, this tragedy continued. Only an extraordinary person could endure such an extreme environment without going mad.

Fortunately, Hawk silently endured this environment and continued fighting. He met a lovely woman, married her, and continued his duty, eventually repelling the barbarian's all-out assault and training successors to take over.

Finally, he was awarded the title of count by the Imperial Family but declined it, accepting only a barony because he didn't want any more mental torment.

Hawk's life was nothing short of remarkable, worthy of a place in history. However, he refused to have his name widely known for the sake of a peaceful life.

The Empire, eager to use his fame, respected his wishes due to their high regard for military personnel. Thus, Hawk ended his illustrious and brutal military career and lived a peaceful life.

His eldest son, Dave, and eldest daughter, Nicole, followed in his footsteps and joined the Navy Knights, while his youngest daughter, Lily, was undeniably adorable. His second son, Isaac, was both his greatest pride and, paradoxically, his biggest headache.

Why would he call his son a troublemaker despite being proud of him? Especially when his son is Xenon? Hawk even told Isaac he could use him as a shield, and he meant it literally.

The problem arose when Isaac's fame grew too much. At the time, he was only considered a great writer worthy of historical note. This alone was impressive, but now? Now he is treated like a living scripture.

The impact of being a renowned author versus a prophet or a reincarnator writing a biography is vastly different. The shield would not only be pierced by the spear but shattered.

While having a successful son is wonderful, Isaac's fame has grown so immense that it's beyond what can be contained.

Isaac's fame far surpasses the accomplishments Hawk achieved during his active duty. Instead of Hawk being the shield, it's Isaac who must become the shield to protect the family. So what happens if Hawk suddenly becomes the shield in such a situation?

"Lord! Are you really Xenon?!"

"Just tell us once! If it's not true, say so! If it is, just say yes!"

"Baron! Why did you kill Kair?!"

It's chaos, of course.

Currently, the front gate of the Michelle estate was swarmed with a massive crowd. Men and women of all ages, mostly commoners who read the news, have gathered.

Most of them are residents of the Michelle territory. A few people began gathering at the gate after reading the newspaper, and within days, the crowd became uncountable.

Fortunately, the guards at the gate are barely managing to control the situation, but it's just that—control. If the crowd decided to force their way in, they could easily break through.

Given the situation outside, can the interior of the estate be peaceful?

"Are you really going to deny it? All the evidence points to Baron Michelle."

"Currently, the Michelle estate is evolving from a sanctuary to a holy site. Do you plan to lie in a place protected by the gods?"

"If not you, then who is Xenon?"

Not at all. Hawk was busy dealing with nobles who have come from who knows where. While the protesting commoners outside might be somewhat manageable, visits from nobles cannot be ignored. Refusing to see them would only confirm their suspicions, which must be avoided at all costs.

Seated at a table for receiving guests, Hawk looked at the assembled nobles, cleared his throat, and began to speak.

"...What makes you think I am Xenon?"

“Red hair and golden eyes.”

“Your rich experience as a knight, which you must have used to describe the battle scenes in Xenon’s Biography.”

“Transforming a barren city into a cultural hub shows wisdom akin to a sage.”

The nobles answered Hawk’s question in unison, much to his dismay.

Both Dave and Isaac share the red hair and golden eyes, not just Hawk. Let’s exclude Lily since she’s still a newborn.

As for the rich experiences of a knight reflected in Xenon’s Biography, that’s because Hawk shared those experiences with Isaac. There are even battle tactics in the biography that Hawk himself didn’t know.

While Hawk experienced significant events during his active duty, many incidents in the biography were beyond his experiences. Most of the content was Isaac’s creation, with Hawk merely advising on accuracy.

Lastly, transforming a barren land into a cultural city is a misconception. The Imperial Family did most of the work, while Hawk merely signed off on the paperwork. These factors created a perfect storm leading everyone to mistake Hawk for Xenon.

“Huuu... Contrary to your beliefs, I am not Xenon. So please, go home for today.”

“Very well. But we hope for a better answer next time.”

“We don’t want to upset Xenon, so we’ll take our leave.”

“But can I ask one thing before we go? Why did Kair have to die...”

The noble who asked the last question was dragged out by another noble. Despite being dragged away, he desperately wanted an answer. Hawk sighed deeply, looking up at the ceiling, feeling like a storm had just passed. It felt like a bolt from the blue. Life was going on as usual, and then this happened.

‘Isaac is not a thoughtless kid...’

Hawk already knew about the incident where Isaac slapped Hiriya. Rina had informed him, just in case. This current situation seems to stem from that incident, but without knowing the details, Hawk felt frustrated.

'There are definitely things I don't know.'

For now, Hawk is dutifully playing the role of the shield as Isaac requested. His priority is to calm the estate until Isaac arrives.

Hawk hurriedly rose from his seat, hoping for Isaac's swift arrival.

While he had managed to send the nobles away, his duties were far from over. There was still a mountain of work to be done, and he couldn't afford to delay it just because he was tired.

Moreover, the townspeople were still gathered outside, shouting in groups, and he needed to calm them down first.

'What on earth are you thinking, my son?'

Just as Hawk was dealing with the nobles, someone else in the Michelle estate was facing a similar situation. That person was none other than Musk Grid, the publisher of Xenon's Biography.

Enjoying his previously peaceful life, he suddenly found himself in a difficult position due to the revelation of Xenon's identity.

"Is it true that Xenon has red hair and golden eyes?"

"If you just tell us, I'll give you all this money!"

"There's no point in hiding it anymore now that it's out!"

Musk found himself surrounded by nobles and wealthy individuals trying to tempt him with sweet words and bribes. Deep down, he wanted to take the money and be done with it.

This situation was vastly different from before. Previously, there had been no solid information about Xenon's identity, so he could firmly refuse, maintaining his integrity.

However, the current circumstances were more delicate. Unlike Hawk and Isaac's other acquaintances, Musk had no clue what had triggered this situation.

Technically, he had seen the newspaper, but he was unaware of the events leading to its spread. For him, it was truly a bolt from the blue.

'Should I say it or not?'

Musk scanned the faces of the nobles who had barged into his office, feeling a nervous smile creeping onto his face. According to the newspaper, Xenon's identity was almost revealed, but not conclusively.

Most people now believed Hawk to be Xenon. If Musk confirmed this, it might improve the situation immediately, but he had no idea how Isaac's side would react. He felt trapped and close to tears.

"Sorry, but could you wait a bit longer? Xenon's letter will arrive soon, and this is making things difficult."

"When exactly is this letter coming?"

"Can't you just say yes or no?"

"Can't you just confirm or deny it now that it's almost revealed?"

These guys can't even wait. It's only been a few days since the news broke.

Suppressing the urge to vent his frustration, Musk responded with a forced smile.

As the saying goes, no one spits in a smiling face. The people pressuring Musk reluctantly started to back off. Or at least, they were about to.

Bang!

"Sir! A letter from Xenon has arrived!"

Musk's loyal subordinate and secretary, Matthew, arrived holding Xenon's letter. All eyes, including Musk's, turned towards him.

"Quickly, hand it over!"

Matthew, realizing the gravity of his sudden announcement, looked momentarily regretful but quickly recovered thanks to Musk's quick decision. Matthew handed the letter to Musk, enduring the intense stares.

Musk, in turn, slowly opened the letter. The short time between the news breaking and the letter arriving didn't matter now.

Tear—

“What does it say?”

“Tell us quickly!”

Hold on, you impatient fools. I just started reading.

Musk frowned at their impatience but was relieved that they didn't forcibly snatch the letter. He began to read the letter slowly, starting with the usual brief introduction. Then came the unexpected content...

“...What?”

“What's wrong?”

“Don't tell me Count Kamar was wrong?”

Musk's startled reaction piqued everyone's interest. Some were so tense that they stayed silent with their lips tightly sealed. Musk blinked at the letter, then looked up, meeting their gazes.

“...He's coming.”

“He's coming?”

“Who? Xenon?”

“Yes.”

The small spark lit by Hiriya had grown into a giant meteor.

“Exactly one week from now, based on the current time.”

It was now headed straight for the Michelle estate.

“He will reveal himself at the theater.”

The announcement landed like a meteor, shaking the Michelle estate to its core.

Meanwhile, at around the same time in Alvenheim.

“Do you think the rumors are true? If they are, it really narrows things down.”

“It’s not certain yet. But I hope it’s true. We need to present the queen to Xenon soon.”

“Me too. We can’t lose to those demonkin.”

As rumors about Xenon’s identity spread, the elves began to stir. Most were curious about Xenon’s true identity, but there was also a significant interest in Arwen.

The entire population had agreed that once Xenon’s identity was revealed, they would offer Arwen as a gift. Having been overshadowed by the demonkin until now, the elves were determined this time.

No matter how great a gift they presented, it couldn’t compare to offering their queen, who was virtually synonymous with Alvenheim.

While the public opinion in Alvenheim was united with one heart and mind, Arwen was...

‘What should I do? What should I do? What should I do?’

...surprisingly, very flustered.

‘What should I wear then? This is my first time. I’ve never done this before. There’s nothing about this in the books. Wait, did Kair and Elisha have a relationship? There were no descriptions of that.’

Drinking her kimchi soup, figuratively speaking.

‘Isaac won’t dislike me, right? He won’t compare me to that fat girl, will he? I’m confident about my lower body... Ugh. No, there’s nothing for me to worry about.’

She was worrying about a very advanced ‘future’ all by herself.

Translators note:

Back home from a little trip. Uploads resume.

3 Chapters now

Chapter 305: Rice Cake (4)

Up until now, I could never get used to the world going into an uproar over a single letter from me. It was burdensome and the reactions often far exceeded what I thought my value warranted.

Though I constantly reminded myself to get used to it, the weight on my shoulders remained heavy. Apart from specific situations, I didn't have a particularly high tolerance for stress.

Moreover, being in the eye of the storm, my life remained peacefully busy while chaos swirled around me. I would check the newspapers to see if there were any interesting reactions or wonder if another absurd situation had arisen. Even if it did, my response was usually just one of disbelief.

But this time was different. I had to step out of the eye of the storm and walk directly into it. The worth I had cultivated through my serial, "Xenon's Biography," had transcended that of a mere great writer—it had reached a near-divine level.

Slightly exaggerating, one could say that a single word from me could turn an entire nation upside down.

The sacrifice of Sakran and the demonization incident had Helium.

The world tree's corruption and the mixed-blood issue had Alvenheim.

Lastly, the fallen cardinal incident had Xavier.

These accomplishments, achieved through "Xenon's Biography," were enough to influence entire nations. With a single statement from me, people would march without questioning the context. The Kingdom of Ters could very well face such a fate.

Walking into such a storm was terrifying, yet ironically, I felt as if I were merely going for a stroll. I should be nervous, but instead, I felt an odd sense of calm. Perhaps it was because my identity had already been revealed in the Kingdom of Ters. It was a truth

that had to come out eventually, and hiding it any longer could lead to even more ridiculous misconceptions.

With the stakes already piled high, if it were to come out that this was all a bubble, the backlash would be severe. Moreover, given the events in the Kingdom of Ters, it's only a matter of time before my identity is fully exposed.

Count Kamar had tested the waters by informing the newspaper, and it was already half true, placing my father in a very awkward position.

To manage the situation, I sent a letter. Not through Siris, who acted as a messenger between Arwen and me, but through Gartz.

Siris was not a true errand runner, whereas Gartz would gladly help with any request I made, allowing me some peace of mind.

In the midst of the uproar, the most notable news was the gathering of world leaders in the Myshal estate:

[Xenon, who remained hidden amidst the turmoil, is finally revealing his true identity?]

[In less than two years, a figure who changed the course of the era. Revealing his identity at the Michelle estate...]

[World leaders begin to gather at the Michelle estate.]

The official announcements included leaders from Helium, Alvenheim, Belua, and some smaller nations. The Minerva Empire, the Kingdom of Ters, and Machina, along with Animers, sent representatives instead of their leaders.

This was significant because sending a representative indicated that the person would likely be the next ruler, so it couldn't be taken lightly.

Predictably, conspiracy theories started to emerge:

[Why is Xenon, who has been silent until now, revealing his identity?]

[Is it a collaboration between the Minerva Empire and the Kingdom of Ters?]

[Could it be a plan by devil worshippers?]

These theories were not surprising. For a third party, the situation unfolding was ripe for speculation. It wasn't just a partial reveal but something that seemed to fall out of

the sky, naturally inciting suspicion.

The absence of some world leaders and the presence of their representatives also contributed to these theories. Despite the security in the Michelle estate, a large-scale attack by devil worshippers could still throw the world into chaos.

As I contemplated the swirling rumors and the impending storm, I steeled myself for what was to come. Whether I liked it or not, I was at the center of this maelstrom, and it was time to face it head-on.

Of course, not only is there Luminous, but also Mora's temple, making the probability close to zero, but there is always an 'if' in the world. The gathering of such notable figures in a developing territory like this started to make me feel a creeping fear.

[Xavier Papal State. 'Evil', not darkness, will never be allowed to enter.]

[Many clergy, including Cardinal Kate, began to gather in the Michelle territory...]

[Not only the Luminous Church but also the Mora Church joined in. We know the dark places better...]

And shortly after, I received news that completely dispelled such conspiracy theories.

The Luminous and Mora Churches promised to join forces to prevent any incidents.

Unlike the other two orders, the Harte Church has no hierarchy and is not standardized, so there was no news from them, but it was widely believed that they wouldn't just stand by.

Thus, with just my announcement, a large-scale event worthy of history books was accomplished. Strangely enough, it didn't feel burdensome.

Instead, I felt relieved at the thought of being able to clear up my emotional knots. The only thing that made me a bit nervous was how I would reveal it.

This feeling persisted even when I returned to the mansion. Outside, it was hectic with welcoming distinguished guests, but inside, it was quiet...

"How about this outfit? Won't this do?"

"Wouldn't a simple white t-shirt and dress pants be enough?"

“How could you say such a reckless thing! Do you know how many people will be looking at you from now on!”

...No, they were very busy choosing my outfit. I smiled bitterly as I watched my mother and the other women eagerly picking out my clothes.

Not only Marie and Adelia, but even Cecily, who had rushed to the mansion upon hearing the news, was choosing clothes.

Originally, I planned to dress simply, but my mother insisted that this would leave a bad impression. She said that wearing simple clothes to an official event would be seen as disrespectful.

Although I've met people as equals until now, even these small details carry significant meaning.

“If you had known, you should have told us in advance! And you should have planned at least a month ahead. Are you even thinking?”

My mother scolded me as she chose my clothes. Not only my mother but also the other women, including Adelia, nodded in agreement.

Feeling embarrassed by their reactions, I scratched my head. I had thought that a week's notice would be enough, but it turned out to be insufficient.

The reason I chose the venue to be a theater hall was because I planned to simply reveal my identity and then say what I wanted, rather than giving a formal speech.

“Do you have plans for after that? Things will get much more complicated.”

Marie, who was helping me with my outfit like the other women, asked about my future plans. I nodded in response to her question.

Once I reveal my identity and it is confirmed as the truth, I will become busier than ever.

At the very least, the nation will assign bodyguards to protect me, and devil worshipers might pose threats.

Political attacks will also come without hesitation. I am prepared for these things.

“Yes. First of all...”

I paused and looked at Marie, who was diligently helping me with my outfit.

She was so engrossed in her work that she didn't realize I was staring at her.

“We should plan our wedding first, right?”

“...Huh?”

Marie was so shocked by my statement that she stopped what she was doing and stared at me with wide eyes.

Her wide, surprised blue eyes were so adorable that I wanted to give her a big hug. I smiled faintly at Marie, who was still in shock, and then glanced around.

My mother was still busy picking out clothes, not paying much attention to what I was saying. Adelia was doing the same. However, there was one exception: Cecily.

When I mentioned the wedding, Cecily froze in place. As I had expected, it was not something she could easily ignore.

“Wasn't the plan to get married after you graduated from the academy?”

My mother asked casually as she organized the clothes. I responded while Marie was still in a daze.

“That was the original plan, but I think it will be difficult. Someone like Princess Hiriya might try to interfere, and Marie could be in danger. It's much better to have the wedding soon and live together.”

“Hmm, I see. That does make sense. But rather than rushing, you should wait until things have settled down a bit. It will be chaotic for about six months, so having the wedding a year later might be better.”

“I'll keep that in mind.”

I didn't forget to glance at Cecily while I answered. Although she had resumed picking out my clothes, her mind was probably in turmoil. Despite her calm demeanor, Cecily's desire for me was as strong as Marie's.

She had often provocatively claimed she would be the first to have a child with me, and even made bold statements last time.

Given her strong feelings, it was understandable that she would be bitter about me marrying Marie first. It was only natural for her to feel disappointed, even if she knew it was the right thing to do.

Since polygamy is allowed, having multiple wedding ceremonies isn't an issue. In fact, skipping the ceremony and treating it like a mere contract would fail to build trust.

In other words, a wedding ceremony is akin to stamping a seal on a contract. Even in an arranged marriage, a wedding ceremony is essential.

“Marie, are you happy?”

“Huh? Oh, yes! Of course, I'm happy! Hehe, a wedding. A wedding.”

Marie's face lit up as I made a firm statement about the wedding. If I mentioned having children right now, she might melt with joy.

I patted her on the head and then looked at Cecily. She seemed a bit down, so I spoke to her.

“What about you, Noona?”

“Huh? What?”

“When do you think we should have our wedding?”

To cheer her up, I asked about her wedding schedule.

Cecily blinked in surprise but then broke into a joyous smile.

“Let's have it right now! The dress I'm picking now can be my wedding dress, right?”

“Hey! You can't be serious!”

“Hehe.”

Her playful spirit knows no bounds. Watching them bicker made me smile warmly. Seeing them argue about who would have a child first and how weddings and children are separate matters was oddly comforting.

I wondered how adorable their children would be. It seems I've finally come to terms with everything.

“By the way, Isaac.”

“Yes?”

“Besides the daughters-in-law here, do you have any other brides-to-be?”

“Why do you ask?”

“If there are more, it might be better to drop out of the academy. If you’re getting married every six months, will you have time to study?”

“... ..”

I was at a loss for words. Even with a minimum of two brides, adding more would make my schedule as tight as my mother predicted.

“*Sigh*. Did you do this without thinking again? Adelia.”

“Yes, Baroness.”

“From now on, you will manage Isaac’s schedule on a yearly basis. Otherwise, this kind of thing will keep happening.”

“I will keep that in mind.”

“By the way, don’t you want to have a wedding? Even as a concubine, you can still have a ceremony.”

“I’m sorry, but I must decline. This is more than enough for me.”

Thus, another busy day passed.

“What should I say first?”

“Just speak in a way that feels comfortable for you.”

The day of reckoning had arrived.

Translators note:

Chapter 306: I am (1)

Transportation in this world is very underdeveloped. There's not even a hint of airplanes, and trains are just entering the development stage, leaving carriages as the primary means of travel.

Even carriages are very expensive to use, given that horses, as strategic assets, naturally command high prices. Thus, the one week I had allotted for people to travel was an insufficient amount of time for those coming from other countries.

Even though there are teleportation facilities, they can only be used under limited circumstances and only allow movement from capital to capital.

This means the timeframe I proposed effectively limited attendance to high-ranking nobles who could afford the journey. Despite this, many nobles saw this event as an opportunity to expand their networks and attended, as did many commoners.

Since there are far more commoners than nobles, it was only natural that most of the attendees were commoners. As a result, Michelle territory was teeming with people, comparable to the exhibition.

Some took this opportunity to bring and showcase their own artworks, though there were no official performances or plays—just people touring Michelle territory.

Even so, the number of nobles seemed to be higher in proportion. The difference in clothing made it easy to distinguish between nobles and commoners. Of course, this observation might still be skewed, as many people likely stayed in inns due to the sheer volume of attendees.

Nobles were more interested in this event than commoners. The reason was simple: commoners had little interest in who Xenon was. More precisely, they were less interested, falling into two main categories: those who, like Cecily or Kate, saw me as the savior of the era, and those who loved the works themselves.

It's easy to distinguish between zealots and fans, but upon closer inspection, the line is very thin. This occasionally led to arguments and even fights between the two groups.

On the other hand, nobles could not remain purely as fans. Once entangled with me, they would get caught up in all sorts of rumors and gain power accordingly.

You don't have to look far to understand the situation—just consider Arwen and Musk. Both of them have had a hard time solely because of their association with Xenon.

The reason why so many nobles are attending this event is mostly political. Despite all the talk about being a saint or a chosen one by the gods, in the end, I am still just a person.

Some are coming to see if they can gain anything from this event, while others might be attending out of genuine interest. This shows how significant the name Xenon is in this world.

“Hello, Isaac. Have you been well?”

“Oh, Kate.”

I was in the waiting room of the concert hall where the event was to take place, nervously watching the time tick by, when I encountered a familiar face. Kate, who would play a very important role today, was there. As always, she was dressed in her white nun's habit and greeted me with a gentle smile.

Thanks to the magic and technology of the demons, the waiting room was brightly lit. However, it couldn't compare to the golden, wheat-like glow of Kate's hair.

“Did Luminous really give permission?”

“Yes, Luminous said he would gladly grant your request.”

Kate nodded and gave a satisfying answer to my question. This is why Kate's role today is crucial. Even if I stood on stage and revealed my identity, would people believe me outright? I doubt it.

They would likely think Xenon had appointed a spokesperson. From the perspective of someone outside the Ters royal family, this event might seem too sudden.

But if Kate vouched for me, it would be a different story. As a cardinal, Kate wields significant influence within the Xavier Papal State.

If Kate wanted to, she could temporarily declare the concert hall as a divine sanctuary.

“But is it really possible? To declare a temporary sanctuary?”

I asked out of curiosity. It sounded straightforward, but logically, Kate's claim seemed implausible. After all, the only places where gods can exert direct influence are temples.

"For me, it is possible."

"For how long?"

"Ten minutes in most places. Here, about thirty minutes. This territory is unique because it is blessed by two gods."

Kate replied nonchalantly. It reminded me of how exceptional her abilities are and why she has received divine favor. Although she might have unconventional views, her unwavering faith in Luminous is clear.

'I should include this in the book.'

It's a technique that would suit Lily, the character hailed as a saint, perfectly. Unlike other skills, it's also feasible in reality, leaving no room for doubt. Moreover, when a sanctuary is declared, it's as if the god is directly watching, so no one would dare commit any wrongdoing.

This is why I can confidently stand on stage. Additionally, I have a protective spell that Cecily cast on me. While it might not deceive the eyes of a god, it means that even if a devil worshiper somehow manages to attack, I would be unharmed.

"But Isaac."

"Yes?"

"Are you really planning to go out dressed like that?"

Kate asked with a puzzled expression. I looked down at my attire in response to her question. Despite all the frantic preparations, my outfit was quite simple.

My outfit was plain, lacking any flamboyant decorations. It was a simple red ceremonial coat, paired with an ordinary white shirt that could easily be found in any store.

Although you could call it a sleek look, to the people here—especially the nobles—it was a rather unimpressive attire. I remembered how the women had vehemently opposed my decision to wear this outfit.

“Yes. People are here to see me, not my clothes. This will do just fine.”

“Isaac, you are indeed a modest person.”

“That’s a polite way to put it. More bluntly, it means I don’t know how to spend money like a noble.”

Kate was right. I often heard that I was modest, but in reality, I simply didn’t know how to spend money. My expenses were minimal, limited to a few sheets of manuscript paper.

Even my magical pen and typewriter were gifts, leaving me with little reason to spend. I did splurge a bit when giving gifts to loved ones, but even then, I wasn’t extravagant.

“Do you prefer modest people, Kate?”

“I like people who spread light in this world, like you, Isaac.”

“Haha. You’re flattering me.”

“It’s not flattery, it’s the truth. So, when will you give me the seed of light?”

“...”

“I’ll be waiting whenever you’re ready.”

I cleared my throat, a bit uncomfortable with Kate’s unwavering determination.

“Ahem. By the way, Kate, has anything unusual happened to you recently?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well... you have a scratch on your face.”

Trying to change the subject, I mentioned the thing that had been bothering me since earlier. There was a noticeable scratch on Kate’s cheek. Whether it was from an animal or self-inflicted, it was a significant mark on her otherwise flawless skin. I hesitated to bring it up, not wanting to create an awkward situation, but I couldn’t ignore it any longer.

“Oh... this...”

Kate looked flustered as soon as I asked. She slowly raised her hand to cover the scratch on her cheek.

Even though Kate has a fanatical side, she's still a woman who would feel uneasy about a scar on her face. But something seemed off. Kate could easily heal such a wound, so why did she leave it untreated?

Moreover, as a high inquisitor, she is tasked with directly dealing with heretics and demon worshipers. A scar of this nature on Kate likely means something dangerous happened, and I couldn't help but worry.

"Isaac."

"Yes, Kate?"

"May I borrow your hand for a moment?"

Kate, who had hesitated to speak, cautiously requested. Her blue eyes were filled with a mixture of emotions, almost a plea. Puzzled but willing to comply, I offered my hand. Kate gently touched it as if handling a delicate artifact, then grasped it firmly.

A golden light began to emanate as soon as our hands touched. It radiated warmth and a sense of divinity, the holy power that only clergy can manifest. This divine energy started to flow into my hand.

"Isaac."

"Yes?"

"Could you please use this hand to touch my wound?"

In the midst of this peculiar situation, Kate made her request. I looked up to meet her eyes. She seemed both tense and imploring, a look that was impossible to refuse. Not that I had any reason to refuse.

I extended my hand, now imbued with divine power, toward Kate's cheek. I hesitated momentarily but then gently touched her cheek. As soon as I did, Kate closed her eyes slowly, savoring the touch.

Hwaaaaa

As my hand touched her cheek, the golden light intensified, and to my astonishment, the wound on her cheek began to disappear. The scar healed completely, restoring her skin

to its flawless state.

I knew that divine power had healing properties, but witnessing it firsthand was astonishing.

“Haah...”

“Is it over?”

I asked quietly as Kate let out a soft, excited sigh once the wound was completely healed.

Kate gently held the hand I had placed on her cheek and slowly opened her eyes. Her blue eyes, now glistening with moisture, sparkled in the light.

“Thank you, Isaac.”

“I didn’t do anything...”

“No, you did. This feeling of being completely cleansed of any impurity.”

She said in a voice dripping with sweetness.

“This is something only you can do, Isaac. Thank you so much.”

“... ..”

It felt like a strange switch had been flipped.

As the scheduled time approached, the concert hall began to fill with a sea of people. Those already seated and those trying to find a place. All of them came to find out who Xenon is.

Just like the previous exhibition, countless people from all over the world gathered, which meant there were many things to pay attention to.

If it were a social gathering instead of a concert hall, the bustling atmosphere would have been even stronger. The reason for choosing a concert hall as the venue was that there was no need to wander around and everything would end just by sitting in a seat.

“Did they intentionally only give a week? The rumors would spread quickly anyway.”

Leort voiced his opinion while looking at the stage where Xenon's identity would be revealed. Normally, such large-scale events should be scheduled for at least a month, but for some reason, the period was very short.

Moreover, the time it takes for news to spread worldwide should be considered. Given that, a week is tight unless you are a high-ranking noble.

“Maybe they just sent the message for only those who could come. If they extended the time, there would be even more people.”

Rina, sitting next to Leort, offered her opinion. Leort nodded as if he agreed. In reality, Isaac set the duration to a week without much thought, but they had no idea about that.

“But Rina, are you really okay with it?”

“I'm fine, brother. His personality isn't bad and he looks good, doesn't he?”

“It wouldn't matter if it was just a marriage of convenience, but...”

As expected, the conversation between the siblings was about an arranged marriage. The moment Isaac reveals his identity, Rina has no choice but to enter an arranged marriage. Although Isaac is engaged to Marie, the imperial family would have to 'present' Rina as well.

But if that happens, relationships will get tangled. Officially, Rina should be the principal wife, but in fact, Marie is. Of course, considering Xenon's status, they have to comply with his wishes, but human feelings don't work that easily.

“As I have repeatedly told you, I am okay. Besides, I had been thinking about it from the beginning, so I don't even have any special feelings now. Wouldn't it be easier to think that I'm just going to a good man?”

“If that's what you think, I won't say anything, but relationships between men and women...”

“That's enough. Before saying things like that, don't you think you should consider yourself first, brother? Princess Hiriya is already done for, so you should look for another.”

Rina's counterattack left Leort with nothing to say, making him smile bitterly. As she pointed out, he also urgently needed to find a partner.

Originally, Princess Hiriya was a candidate, but as everyone knows, it ended the moment Isaac slapped her. Since then, they've been searching domestically and internationally for a suitable bride, but it's not as easy as it sounds.

“And it would be better if you did it before I get married. Otherwise, it will be too difficult to find a candidate because your standards will be too high.”

“Alright, alright. I'll find someone myself, so stop nagging.”

If Rina marries first, Leort's wife's brother-in-law will be Xenon. Under such conditions, who would readily propose? Leort looked around after calming Rina. Almost all the faces were familiar, but a few were different.

Especially Descal, the King of Helium, known to the public as the 'Demon King'. Currently, Descal is seated next to his queen, Aisilia. Cecily is also with them, chatting amicably, likely because Isaac is absent.

'It's going to be noisy for a while.'

Leort knew through Rina that Cecily was dating Isaac. And that would undoubtedly turn into a significant storm in the future. The same goes for the Kingdom of Ters. From the perspective of the Minerva Empire, the Kingdom of Ters self-destructing was beneficial, but the aftermath was a concern.

Once a storm passes, only calm follows, but the upcoming storm is more than just a storm.

'I need to start arranging the security personnel.'

While Leort was mentally assessing Isaac's security team, he suddenly heard murmuring from the crowd.

“Huh? Who is that?”

“Someone's going up on the stage?”

“Could it be?”

As he quickly shifted his gaze to the stage, he saw a man with red hair confidently walking up.

It's finally starting. Leort smiled in anticipation as he focused on the man.

In the meantime, the handsome young man with red hair, Isaac, confidently stood at the center of the stage and faced the crowd directly.

“... ..”

As soon as Isaac stood there confidently, the murmuring quickly died down. Once the murmuring subsided, Isaac glanced around briefly and cleared his throat to prepare his voice.

“Hello, everyone.”

And very quietly,

“My name is Isaac Ducker Michelle.”

In a calm voice,

“I am Xenon, the author of Xenon’s Biography.”

He dropped the bombshell right from the start.

Translators note:

Chapter 307: Isaac (1)

The concert hall was filled with silence for a while after I dropped the tactical nuke from the start. I savored that silence with a smile. Thanks to Cecily's voice amplification magic, there wouldn't be a single person who didn't hear me.

Therefore, everyone must have heard that I am Xenon, the author of Xenon's Biography. It's not strange that there's no immediate reaction, just quietness. It's hard to believe right away. Unlike during the trial, there was no buildup, I revealed it straight away.

Because of this, they would be more bewildered than surprised. Even with Count Kamar's testimony, my appearance is far from what they imagined Xenon to be. It was because of a preconceived notion. The world had freely built countless images of Xenon, but most of them directly linked to a 'sage.'

Naturally, a sage is expected to be an old man with more knowledge and experience than others. Certainly not a fresh young man like me. Over time, various speculations, such as being a regressor or a prophet, floated around, but the image of the sage never disappeared.

"...Is it true? Is that man really Xenon?"

"He seems to have sent a representative. Or not?"

"He has red hair and golden eyes, but... so does Baron Michelle."

"Is he really that young?"

As expected, the reactions unfolded as predicted. The people sitting on the first floor, mostly commoners, accepted it more readily, but the nobles on the second floor were skeptical. It's only natural that they doubt I'm Xenon. It would be strange if they didn't.

That's why I had asked Kate for help in such a scenario. As the murmuring in the hall grew louder, I maintained my smile and spoke.

“I’m sure it’s difficult for everyone to believe my words. I understand your feelings. Therefore, I asked a special guest to help. Cardinal Kate?”

At my call, Kate, who had been hiding behind the stage curtain, gradually revealed herself. Her appearance instantly silenced the murmuring.

Her very presence radiated a divine aura, and her radiant appearance shone brilliantly. As everyone’s attention focused on her, Kate walked gracefully to my side and gave a slight nod. Then, she turned forward, gently clasping her hands together, and began her work.

“Light.”

Unlike other clerics, her incantation was simple. However, because it was Kate, even that one word carried immense power.

Phaaat!

With that word, a burst of golden light erupted, a display of Kate’s radiant holy power, incomparable to what I had seen backstage. Ordinary clerics’ holy power is white, but those with exceptionally deep faith like Kate have a golden glow.

I’ve heard that even cardinals find it difficult to emit a golden light as dazzling as Kate’s. In terms of holy power alone, she is nearly as powerful as the Pope.

As I and the others quietly observed, Kate gathered her holy power and proceeded to the next step.

“Bless this place!”

With arms wide open, Kate released the golden light she had gathered. The already bright concert hall seemed to grow even brighter as the golden light spread. It wasn’t just an impression, it actually brightened.

The light she dispersed seeped into the ceiling and every corner of the building, like fireflies delicately lighting up the grass, like a Christmas tree glowing in various colors.

It was a declaration of sanctuary, something only a few clerics with pure faith could achieve. The spectacle was unparalleled, like something out of a fantasy world, and it was a scene that would remain vividly in memory.

“It is done.”

“Oh... it’s finished?”

“Yes.”

Kate’s words brought me back to reality, otherwise, I might have forgotten that I was standing on stage. I thanked her and turned to face the audience.

The audience, like me, was admiring the golden light that adorned every corner of the concert hall. Even without understanding the power behind it, the sheer beauty of the phenomenon was like an art piece, evoking natural awe.

“What Cardinal Kate just did is simple. It temporarily turns this building into something akin to a temple.”

“This place is like a temple now?”

“Is that even possible?”

“If it’s Cardinal Kate, maybe...”

Reactions were polarized here as well. Some, including the nobles, were astonished, while the majority, including commoners, simply accepted it. This disparity likely stems more from differing levels of interest rather than education.

Even I don’t fully grasp the difficulty of what Kate did, so I just think it’s impressive.

With the declaration of the sanctuary completed, I looked around at the now murmuring audience and began to speak again. I made sure to project my voice with enough power to keep their focus.

“Therefore, I declare here that I will never lie from now on. If I do lie, the gods themselves will punish me. Will you believe my words now?”

“... ..”

Experiencing something so extraordinary left the audience in stunned silence. Silence often implies agreement, and considering it was Cardinal Kate who declared the sanctuary, they had no choice but to believe.

With the groundwork perfectly laid, I scanned the eyes fixed on me. There were familiar faces, but also many I wasn’t particularly pleased to see. Most, however, were strangers. These people would now learn the truth I had hidden for so long. Feeling a strange mixture of excitement and anxiety, I took a deep breath.

Even a simple public announcement made me this nervous. How do those who perform on stage handle such tension? I found myself newly admiring stage performers and artists.

'This is the end of it.'

Hiding my identity had brought countless benefits. For one, it kept me safe from unknown threats, including devil worshippers. But those benefits end today. As Cecily mentioned in her speech, a bird is not born to die in a cage.

With that thought, I prepared to reveal the truth to the gathered audience, feeling a sense of closure and a readiness to embrace whatever comes next.

The future is bound to be filled with many challenges and surprises, but as long as I can foresee and prepare for them, there should be no problems. I looked around the audience once more and spoke in a quiet yet firm voice.

“Many of you must be surprised. Wasn't Xenon supposed to be an elderly sage? Or someone who returned from the future or a prophet? Wouldn't that make him more of a cleric?”

Indeed, among the countless speculations, the image of a sage was the most prevalent, followed by that of a cleric. It is common knowledge that unless one has deep faith and direct help from the gods, prophecy is impossible.

However, contrary to everyone's expectations, I revealed myself as a very ordinary noble. My father's remarkable history aside, that is an exception.

“Not at all. I am neither a sage nor a person from the future or a prophet. The work ‘Xenon's Biography’ came solely from my imagination. Please keep that in mind. I am not as extraordinary as you might think.”

This is not humility, it's the truth. I'm not extraordinary, except for the vivid memories of my past life. I didn't mention that, though, as it would inevitably lead to the belief that I received divine blessings. The gods would likely understand and overlook this omission to prevent confusion.

Next, I needed to address how I knew about the various ‘this-why-this’ events. Starting with the contamination of the World Tree's roots, which was the origin of these incidents. I turned my head in another direction at the thought of that event.

There sat Arwen, looking demure. When our eyes met, she flinched slightly, then smiled shyly and bowed her head. Arwen, who had always struck me as cute, seemed even more so today. There was no trace of her queenly dignity, just a bashful young girl.

“Some of you might wonder, ‘How did he know about the contamination of the World Tree’s roots and the devil worshippers?’ The truth is, both can be somewhat inferred by delving a bit deeper into history and mythology. The devils drove this world to the brink of destruction, but thanks to the World Tree gifted by Goddess Harte, they were repelled. In other words, the World Tree is the divine treasure that devils would aim to destroy first. While the direct investigation revealed that the contamination was a remnant of the devil war, do you think the devils would have left it untouched?”

“... ..”

“Absolutely not. As for the devil worshippers... I believe our complacency and dulled judgment during times of peace played a larger role than history itself. The devil war is not just a myth but an actual event that happened in the past. History tends to repeat itself, yet we chose to forget it.”

Even if you don’t know about the World Tree, the issue of devil worshippers would have been noticed if you had paid a little attention. It’s just that the cunningness of devil worshippers, which has continued for hundreds of years, has covered it all up.

As we saw with the incident of the fallen cardinal, it’s no exaggeration to say that devil worshippers already dominate the entire underworld. Although Cardinal Bach has died and Xavier has proclaimed a holy war, steadily sweeping them up, the reality is that it’s still far from enough.

“Other incidents are similar, but some parts are truly coincidental. Like the forbidden elf magic of fusion, or the Helium’s death squad Reaper, and so on. Honestly... there’s nothing more to say. It all just came from my mind.”

Some of the coincidences were too implausible to fabricate, so they could only be dismissed as coincidences. Still, it seems to be believed because a sanctuary has been declared.

Honestly, if the sanctuary hadn’t been declared, most people wouldn’t have believed it. Each of these coincidences is an event that could shake the foundation of the country, so who would believe it’s just a coincidence?

“It’s the same with the demons. I’ve only heard about what kind of people demons are, I’ve never met them personally. Therefore, I had no preconceptions and could write

stories like Sakran. Above all, if demons were truly evil, they would have drawn their swords long ago. But demons, despite being persecuted by everyone, endured and strived to see the light. I really liked this aspect, so I wrote such a story. There is no other reason. Those who strive to achieve light are beautiful in their existence and will.”

I didn't forget to praise the demons. Cecily clasps her hands tightly and looks at me with a blissful expression at my praise.

Though it's a slightly burdensome gaze, it's okay since she is happy. In reality, demons are such a race, so it's not a lie.

“Then many people will wonder. Why did you write Xenon's Biography? What was your purpose in writing such a work?”

“... ..”

“I will say it here. Xenon's Biography started purely as a hobby. I had no intention of spreading any particular ideology or theory, nor did I seek fame. I just started writing with the hope that everyone here would enjoy it.”

As everyone knows, Xenon's Biography started purely as a hobby.

Enduring the physical onslaught of beloved partners has become half a duty, but the essence itself hasn't changed. Of course, the first work I wrote upon being reincarnated holds significant meaning. Completing it would be both refreshing and bittersweet, yet liberating.

“So I hope you all read Xenon's Biography with joy. It's quite alarming that incidents from Xenon's Biography occur in reality, but I hope you don't feel afraid because of that. I don't want anything but for you to enjoy it.”

This is the unvarnished truth. Whenever Xenon's Biography is released, people look forward more to what incidents will occur rather than the story itself. As a writer, it's an ambiguous situation whether to like it or not, but it's equally uncomfortable. Attention is diverted to strange places rather than praises for the work.

It's certainly good that Xenon's Biography helped save the world from crises. But treating it like a sacred text is burdensome for me. Above all, seeing cases like Cecily's devilization, where non-existent events are created, even I have become fearful.

“Some people might think after hearing me: If you’re so scared, why don’t you just stop writing? If the current situation is burdensome, why not put down the pen?”

Indeed, I had such thoughts at times. Focusing on history and becoming a scholar rather than a writer wasn’t a bad idea. However, that thought didn’t last long and was thrown in the trash. Why?

“Everyone, I love writing.”

I love writing stories.

“I like showing my writings to you all and having you read them.”

I want many people to see the stories in my imagination.

This innate writer’s spirit, which existed even in my previous life, hasn’t changed even after being reincarnated.

“Calling my writing a prophecy or a scripture is fine. What I want is simple: for you to truly enjoy reading my stories. Creating a common culture that transcends gender, race, and class. Writing stories that everyone can enjoy, as seen at the exhibition.”

“... ..”

“That alone satisfies me. I don’t need fame, ideology, power, or wealth. Just your reactions to my writing fill me up.”

The reason I didn’t put down my pen despite feeling burdened: because countless people, including those present here, are reading my stories.

For the sake of those people, I will never put down my pen. Even if someone threatens me to stop writing, I won’t succumb, and even if my hands are cut off, I will use my mouth or feet to write.

My resolute and modest determination seemed to be conveyed, as no one voiced any objections. That’s because they must have realized that I have no selfish desires.

As I glanced around the room filled with golden light, I smiled gently. Now, there’s only one thing left to do.

“Once again, let me introduce myself. My name is Isaac Ducker Michelle.”

My name is Isaac Ducker Michelle.

“In this world.”

In this fantasy world.

“I’m the writer who writes about things that could happen in this world.”

Writing fantasy novels.

“The author of Xenon’s Biography, I am Xenon.”

An ordinary writer.

“I will continue to work hard and write.”

Translators note:

For some reason this chapter made me feel emotional...

Chapter 308: Isaac (2)

My modest introduction, neither flashy nor elegant despite the scale, can be seen as simple in a good way or unimpressive in a bad way. It's a gathering not only of commoners but of dignitaries from all over the world.

In terms of my previous life, it's akin to a meeting of the president and key ministers. Moreover, these people have authority and power far exceeding that of a president.

Unlike a president, their words can influence an entire country and even have a significant impact on the world.

While Kate's declaration of the sanctuary marked a grand beginning, my subsequent introduction was as ordinary as it could be. Honestly, they could have put a good speaker in my place, and the proceedings would have gone smoothly. That's how monotonous it was.

So, should it be considered a failure? That's a bit ambiguous. There's still the question time, which can be considered the most important part after the introduction.

No one would expect to gather people and then dismiss them in less than 10 minutes. So, to buy time and take questions, I had a Q&A session. With Kate extending the sanctuary intermittently, there's no risk of incidents.

However, during the Q&A session, the nobles were moved to the waiting room. Although I would have preferred to have the Q&A session with the commoners, it was to maintain the nobles' dignity.

While I mentioned during my introduction that I hoped everyone would enjoy it together, reality and ideals are distinctly different. I'm not so naive as to confuse the two.

No one could object to my words, but there might be some who were inwardly dissatisfied. After all, I wanted Xenon's Biography to be read by everyone regardless of age, gender, race, or class, but I didn't mention interpersonal relations.

Moreover, the nobles gathered here are not just any nobles but kings or those of equivalent status in their respective countries. Even as Xenon, I must observe basic courtesy. When in Rome, do as the Romans do; it's better to treat nobles as nobles.

The waiting room was already fully prepared and as spacious as the area where the social gathering took place. That's why they moved there. Now, my task is to answer the questions from the commoners one by one. Without the nobles, the commoners were free to ask questions without any burden.

By the way, there was no need for a voice amplification spell. Kate had already set things up when she declared the sanctuary. While magic produces the desired results through complex formulas like programming, divine power just requires prayer to work.

Of course, this doesn't mean that magic is inferior to prayer—absolutely not. It's just that Kate has an abnormally strong divine power.

“So, how did you come up with the steam locomotive? Did that also come from your mind?”

“I just thought it would be convenient to have something like that. But I never dreamed it would actually be invented.”

“Are you really not a person from the future?”

“Of course not. I just have a bit of a vivid imagination, nothing more.”

I was already in a difficult position with a tough question right from the start. Even after answering, the person who asked the question didn't seem entirely convinced. Still, since the sanctuary was declared, it would be hard to call it a lie. Besides, I'm a noble before I am Xenon. It means they can't treat me carelessly.

I smoothly moved on and took the next question. Since it was one question per person, the process went smoothly. Occasionally, non-human races appeared among the questioners, each with unique questions. For example, an elf who looked like a scholar asked...

“Xenon, you seem to have a deep understanding of magic. Could you possibly give me some advice?”

“I'm sorry, but I don't know the first thing about magic, sir.”

“But in the book, it was described in great detail. Especially the motion-recognition magic that Mary demonstrated—it became a huge topic in Alvenheim. How do you explain that?”

“Motion... what?”

“Motion-recognition magic. It’s a theory where magic is activated with simple motions. Weren’t you the first to think of this theory? Associating frequently used or efficient spells with specific gestures so that performing them immediately triggers the magic. If this also came from your mind, you should at least know the basic principles, right?”

How would I know that, sir? I really don’t know anything. I responded with an awkward laugh.

I had forgotten, but thanks to the elf’s question, I was vividly reminded that this is a fantasy world. The stories that seem possible only in a fantasy world have a high chance of actually happening here, including battles and magic.

Especially if someone like the elf scholar who asked me the question has a high level of curiosity, they will make every effort to find out.

“Hmm. I see. It seems to be a difficult question to answer.”

However, the elf scholar nodded in understanding, as if he had reached some conclusion on his own.

Worried that my lack of knowledge might have been exposed, I quickly moved on to the next question. The elf scholar’s question was particularly challenging, but other people’s questions were more straightforward.

“May I ask why you chose a human as the protagonist? Is it because you, Xenon, are also human?”

“Partly, but I also see humans as a peculiar race. They have a tenacity that doesn’t give in, even if they kneel. I liked that tenacity, so I made a human the protagonist. Next person?”

“Why did you kill off Kair?”

“... ..”

There were a few unusual questions, but I managed to handle them smoothly. However, crises always seem to arise.

Just like the elf scholar asked me a difficult question about magic, this time a demon woman posed a challenging question to me.

“How did you know that one could overcome their inner evil? For hundreds of years, we demons have never thought of that.”

“It’s only impossible because you think it’s impossible. Also, Xenon’s Biography is a novel where impossible things can be made possible. I didn’t expect Princess Cecily to actually do it, though.”

“May I ask what your relationship with Princess Cecily is? I heard you both attend the same academy...”

“Sorry, but it’s one question per person.”

Luckily, I was able to deflect it decisively. The demon woman looked disappointed at my firm response, but it didn’t matter.

After a series of straightforward questions, I was beginning to feel at ease. Just as we were nearing the end, the next person to ask a question was a beastman. He had a face that resembled a dog overall.

Unlike Leona, he seemed to be a pureblood, not a hybrid, as he had more animalistic features. Intrigued, I gestured for him to speak.

“Please, go ahead.”

“Thank you. In Xenon’s Biography, you have distinctly portrayed the strengths and weaknesses of each race. This is a very personal question, but what are your thoughts on us beastmen?”

“Beastmen?”

“Yes. I’d like an honest answer, without any pretense.”

“Hmm...”

An interesting question that also points out a flaw in Xenon’s Biography. Indeed, the depiction of beastmen in the book is somewhat lacking compared to elves or demons.

The characters themselves are certainly appealing, but the depiction of “beastmen” as a race has been somewhat inadequate.

Elves are portrayed as arrogant but justified by their pride and skills.

Demons hold a sense of pride in fighting their inner evil.

Dwarves, while seemingly skilled with their hands, lack creativity, as shown in the steam engine episode.

Lastly, humans. Since Xenon is the protagonist, humans display far more strengths and weaknesses compared to other races.

Humans are a paradoxical race, with clear distinctions between good and evil, yet their actions often blur these lines depending on their interests. The protagonist, Xenon, is clearly depicted as good, but with ample explanation provided throughout.

On the other hand, beastmen... While their presence is not minimal, they are mainly depicted as a bold race that clings to tradition.

Although Satan from the Seven Deadly Sins had an impressive end, it suited the character of ‘Wrath’ and not the beastmen. Can it be said that this fully explains the charm of beastmen? I don’t think so, just as the questioner implied.

“My thoughts on beastmen... Ah, before that, what is your occupation?”

“I’m a warrior.”

A warrior, meaning a soldier. It goes to show that you shouldn’t judge a person by their appearance. Despite his gentle, puppy-like face, he possesses great strength. I took a moment to gather my thoughts and then shared my view on beastmen.

“My view on beastmen is this: a race that suppresses their instincts for survival.”

“... ..”

“Founding King Hick managed to establish a civilization amidst human oppression and massacres. However, the moment a country and civilization are established, barbarism must be abandoned. For beastmen, barbarism directly correlates with combativeness. This is why each beastman is called a warrior—because of their fighting spirit. Through combat, they prove their worth and freely express their instincts.”

Conversely, as civilization and society progress, the position of beastmen will diminish. However, no one knows how long this process will take.

Look at the past life. Even in the modern era of the industrial revolution, military might was paramount. Imperialism spread worldwide, and the number of countries suffering from colonization increased. Of course, this led to the rise of Nazis and Hitler, resulting in World War II, but it also marked the end of imperialism.

“I’d like to say more, but... it seems it would lead to unpleasant topics, so I’ll stop here. Is this answer sufficient?”

“Yes, it is.”

Although unspoken, it won’t be long before beastmen show their teeth. Their population is steadily increasing, while humans no longer display the same unity as before.

Especially given the pressing need for food among beastmen, they will inevitably engage in conquest wars. History has proven this, so it is an event bound to happen someday.

And I plan to write about this in another novel, as a sequel to Xenon’s Biography and to expand the world-building further.

“Next person?”

I took the last question.

“When will Jin and Lily get together?”

“... ..”

It was the hardest question to answer.

With that unexpectedly difficult question session finally over, I returned to the waiting room where the royalty and nobles were gathered.

“Xe-Xenon!”

“Hmm?”

A familiar voice pierced my ears. An urgent cry filled with sobs.

Turning my head, I saw a very familiar woman running towards me in a hurry from a distance.

The woman, with a haggard face, was none other than Hiriya. Her previous beauty had somewhat faded, but she exuded a decadent charm. With tears welling up in the corners of her eyes, she looked like a tragic heroine.

Of course, none of that mattered as she charged towards me like a bull, causing quite a bit of alarm. Even the people around were so surprised that they couldn't react.

If things continued as they were, Hiriya would have reached me, but...

“Stop right there.”

It wasn't Kate, who had been by my side, but Adelia, who appeared from somewhere and boldly stood in front of me.

As my personal maid, it's not strange for her to protect me, but her silent appearance was a bit surprising. Could she have improved her skills in such a short time? During the Q&A session, she had been hidden but nearby, guarding me.

“Sister?”

Hiriya, seeing Adelia blocking her path, widened her eyes in shock and glanced at me.

Adelia, in a business-like tone, instructed Hiriya. I couldn't see her face, but she was likely expressionless.

“Do not approach Isaac any further.”

“Please, just once... Just give me one chance! If not, then I'll really...”

I didn't know the details, but here was a princess pleading with her older sister, a bodyguard, and being calmly rebuffed.

In this situation, which anyone could see was complicated, various gazes focused on us. Although I was slightly displeased with Hiriya for creating such a strange atmosphere from the beginning, fortunately, someone stepped in to restrain her.

“That's enough, Hiriya.”

Hiriya's older brother and the crown prince of the Kingdom of Ters, Laos. He placed his hand firmly on her shoulder with a stern face.

Hiriya looked at him with a bewildered expression when he touched her shoulder. Laos gave her a look of disappointment before shifting his gaze to me, standing behind Adelia, and our eyes met.

“... ..”

“... ..”

We exchanged silent glances for a moment. Laos then quietly and politely spoke, his lips barely moving.

“My sister has caused trouble. I apologize. Hiriya.”

“No, no! No! Xenon! I’ll do anything, please show mercy...”

Hiriya struggled, but Laos dragged her away faster than she could resist. I stared blankly at their retreating figures and then looked around.

Everyone was watching me with curious expressions, a natural reaction since more people didn’t know the situation than those who did. I gave a sheepish smile and bowed my head to them. The situation was awkward, but I had to do what needed to be done.

“Hello, everyone.”

Now, only one thing remained.

“I am Isaac Ducker Michelle, the author of Xenon’s Biography.”

It’s time to build connections.

“Nice to meet you all.”

...Though honestly, it might not mean much.

Translators note:

Chapter 309: Isaac (3)

This world, or more precisely, this planet, is smaller compared to Earth. This is something I heard directly from the gods. However, considering that 70% of Earth is covered by oceans and this world is not, its actual size might rival that of Earth.

There are major nations like the Minerva Empire, the Kingdom of Ters, Helium, Alvenheim, Animers, Machina, the Papal State Xavier, and the Duchy of Belua. In addition to these, there are other small and large countries, but the total number is significantly fewer compared to Earth.

(TL: I just checked and realized I mistranslated ‘Duchy of Belua’ as ‘Republic’. My bad.)

The reason for the small number of nations, despite the absence of modernization, is the ‘monsters’ and the harsh ‘natural environment.’ Even the elves, blessed by the gods, cannot overcome the monsters and the environment.

True to a fantasy world, there are many places where humans cannot live: volcanic regions, areas with constant blizzards like Antarctica, and environments where not a single blade of grass grows.

There are still unexplored regions, but they are currently occupied by monsters, and habitable areas are very limited. Thus, the small number of nations is not surprising. As a result, the number of people gathered in the waiting room is neither large nor small.

If several centuries were to pass, the number might increase significantly, but that’s a story for the distant future. For now, the priority is to build connections with the people gathered here. Although I have already established many connections, it’s good to maintain appearances.

Furthermore, among the gathered people, there are dignitaries whom I do not know.

“Nice to meet you. My name is Gith Hal Berano.”

The man in front of me had a robust presence, comparable to Musk, and sported dark blond hair and a beard. His appearance was charismatic and gave off a strangely friendly impression, fitting for a king. If he were a bit more casual, one might mistake him for Musk's brother.

I greeted him briefly and looked at the woman beside him. More intriguing than the man was the woman who seemed to be his consort. She had sky-blue hair and eyes, similar to King Friedrich, but unlike Hiriya, she exuded a kind and gentle aura.

“Hello. I am Olivia Hal Berano, Duchess of the Duchy of Belua. It is an honor to meet you, Xenon.”

The woman with sky-blue hair greeted me with proper etiquette. Unlike some, her demeanor exuded natural elegance and grace, truly fitting for a dignitary.

As everyone might have guessed, this woman is the eldest daughter of King Friedrich and the first princess of the Kingdom of Ters.

I heard that Gith fell in love with Olivia at first sight. After persistently courting her, they finally ended up together. Initially, Olivia found Gith bothersome, but she soon recognized his qualities and married him. Although it was partially a political marriage, there were many rumors about their blissful relationship.

“Nice to meet you. As you know, I am Isaac Ducker Michelle, the author of Xenon's Biography. I would appreciate it if you called me Isaac rather than Xenon.”

“It is an honor to meet the esteemed guests from the Duchy of Belua. I am Marie Hausen Requilis, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Requilis and Isaac's fiancée.”

After I introduced myself, Marie, who stood by my side as my fiancée, bowed gracefully. Publicly announced as my fiancée, she could stand confidently in such settings.

She must feel a thrill inwardly. Until now, she was known as the fiancée of Isaac, not Xenon, but the situation has changed today. While most people here are familiar faces, meeting new people brings an indescribable excitement.

“Nice to meet you, Lady Requilis. Both you and Isaac are truly beautiful. You two look great together.”

“Thank you. You are also very beautiful, Duchess Olivia.”

“But how did you and Isaac meet, Lady Marie?”

The expected question came from Olivia. On the surface, it might seem that the Minerva Empire arranged for Marie to be with me to keep me tied to them. This is what she and others unfamiliar with the situation would think. However, this is not the case at all.

I held Marie by the waist and pulled her close to me. This was to display and confirm our affection.

“Many people think that the Empire assigned Marie to me to keep me here, but that’s not true at all. Marie confessed to me before she even knew who I was.”

“Really?”

Olivia, and even Gith, widened their eyes in surprise and looked at Marie. I glanced at Marie and saw her blushing with embarrassment. The way she subtly moved closer to me confirmed it.

She was so adorable that I wanted to nibble on her, but with so many people watching, I had to restrain myself.

“Yes. I revealed my identity shortly after that. But even if she knew who I was, Marie wouldn’t have cared. Right?”

“Yes...”

Marie, blushing, held onto my arm. Unlike her usual bold demeanor, she changed when she openly showed affection. Olivia watched our relationship with a pleased smile before asking another question.

“So, what made you confess to Isaac, Lady Marie? I’m curious about this.”

“Obviously, his looks. I live off admiring him every day.”

Her straightforwardness is also something I like. Olivia was taken aback by Marie’s candid response, then looked at my face intently before nodding.

“Hmm... I can’t disagree. Still, I think my husband is the most handsome.”

“Haha. I was quite handsome in my youth.”

“Say that after losing some weight.”

Our conversation with the representatives of the Duchy of Belua, including Olivia, proceeded without any issues. Sensitive topics were avoided, and Olivia did not mention Adelia, who was by my side. It wasn't a matter of ignoring her like the previous Ters royalty but rather avoiding potentially awkward situations.

Considering Hiriya had just cried and begged earlier, they must have noticed something. However, the reason I could treat her kindly was due to Adelia's opinion.

Adelia had mentioned that Olivia treated her like an older sister should during her time in the Kingdom of Ters. Although it was only for a brief three months, she provided comfort comparable to Lara.

If Olivia hadn't become the consort of the Duchy of Belua, perhaps she could have alleviated some of Adelia's trauma.

“The Duchy of Belua has benefited greatly from Xenon's Biography, right?”

“Of course. Our treasury is so full right now that we're struggling to decide where to spend it.”

As Gith's joyful response indicated, the Duchy of Belua had gained significant financial benefits, comparable to the publishing house.

Olivia cleared her throat to give a hint, but it was impossible to stop Gith, who was already immersed in happiness. The Duchy of Belua was originally known as a neutral country with a well-developed commercial sector. Its strategic location was unparalleled.

It was the only region where humans, dwarves, beastmen, and elves could all come together. Although its territory was smaller than other countries, its importance exceeded that of the previously mentioned Stavirk region. It was a strategic stronghold and a transportation hub.

In an era where nations could easily justify conquest wars, the fact that the Duchy of Belua could maintain its neutrality speaks volumes about Gith's governance. If the magic locomotive is invented, the Duchy of Belua would likely be the first to have it installed.

For Xenon's Biography to reach far and wide, it needs to pass through the Duchy of Belua, making them a potential solid partner like Musk.

“I look forward to our continued cooperation.”

“The pleasure is mine. I would love to introduce my children, but they are still quite young.”

“That’s fine. They can meet my children later.”

“That’s excellent news. Hahaha.”

The problem is I don’t know how many children I will have. They don’t yet know that I have more women in my life besides Marie. Even if they suspected it, they wouldn’t mention it openly to avoid making things awkward.

As our conversation with the Duchy of Belua was winding down, Olivia shifted her gaze from Marie and me to Adelia. The moment their eyes met, Adelia flinched briefly but then offered a vague smile and bowed her head. Olivia also gave a brief nod in return before addressing me.

“Isaac.”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

“You have an excellent bodyguard by your side. It’s very reassuring to see.”

Her words were tinged with both regret and pride. Upon hearing them, I immediately looked at Marie instead of Adelia. As everyone knows, Marie has a natural ability to discern people’s true intentions. In other words, she could tell if Olivia’s words were sincere or not.

And then, she made eye contact with me and slowly nodded.

This confirmed it. Olivia, like Lara, treated Adelia with humanity.

Thanks to that, I could also treat her kindly.

“Thank you. As you said, Lady Olivia, Dame Cross is a trustworthy person. Both as a person and as a knight.”

“That...”

Olivia hesitated, opening her mouth as if to say something but then closed it again. Soon, she gave a bitter smile and shook her head.

“I look forward to working with you, Sir Isaac.”

Olivia's greeting carried various meanings. Whether it was aimed at me or Adelia, I nodded in acknowledgment.

Thus ended the conversation with the Duchy of Belua, and we moved on to the next.

"Huh? You all are..."

"It's been a while. No, it's been a long time."

Surprisingly, the next people who approached were none other than the beastmen. And they were beastmen I was familiar with.

One was Balkan Lions, Leona's half-brother and a lion beastman. The other was Jinai Crochukar, a hyena beastman.

This event was for the representatives of each nation, and seeing these two meant...

"Could it be that you became the great chieftain?"

"Thanks to someone, yes. Hahaha."

Jinai responded to my question with a hollow laugh. At his pointed remark, Balkan glared at her sharply from the side.

To think Jinai would actually become the great chieftain was an uncomfortable situation, but it was a foreseeable development.

Currently, Animers needed a wise king, not a strong one. Although Jinai used her cunning in a negative way, she was still a sufficient role model for a king.

However, I never imagined she would overcome all the opposition and become the great chieftain.

"Honestly, at first, I never thought this woman would become the great chieftain. But considering it was none other than Xenon's advice, it makes sense."

Balkan, who had been glaring at Jinai, spoke to me. His tone was polite and respectful, quite different from before, and it felt somewhat awkward since he was Leona's brother.

I scratched my head awkwardly, and Jinai grumbled to herself. It wasn't rude, she was literally grumbling to herself. The problem was, everyone could hear her.

“With Xenon’s advice, I couldn’t help but become the great chieftain. Now, I have no way out, and I don’t know what to do.”

“If you want to complain, do it outside.”

Surprisingly, even Balkan was speaking formally to Jinai. There had been a lot of ups and downs, but it seemed Jinai’s wisdom had been proven. I couldn’t help but smile at the oddly fitting chemistry between the two and asked about their recent activities.

“How’s Animers these days? Is everything going well as I suggested?”

“There are objections, but many beastmen agree because it’s the only competition where they can show their fighting spirit. It’s rare to have an opportunity to unleash the most important instinct for a beastman all at once.”

“That’s good to hear. What else?”

“It’s tough because it’s all muscle-heads. Picking officials based on strength alone is why the country was in such a state. No wonder it was so easily taken advantage of.”

“Ahem. Ahem.”

Even though Jinai was openly criticizing, Balkan only cleared his throat and didn’t offer any excuses. It seemed everything Jinai said was true.

Still, with Animers only looking towards a future of development, there didn’t seem to be much to worry about. Jinai, despite everything, could be trusted to do what needed to be done.

“By the way, forgive me, but what about Leona...”

“Ah, ah. That’s a personal matter. Don’t bring it up here.”

Even now, look at this. When Balkan tried to carelessly bring up a highly sensitive topic, Jinai urgently stopped her. If they were to discuss it privately, it would be one thing, but bringing it up in a crowd like this would only complicate matters. This alone was proof of Jinai’s exceptional wisdom.

“Well then, I look forward to working with you.”

“I look forward to working with you as well.”

With that, the conversation with Animers concluded. Next up...

“It’s been a while. Have you been well?”

It was Queen Arwen of Alvenheim’s turn. Unlike others, she maintained her characteristic mature tone instead of speaking formally.

It felt comfortable that even Arwen didn’t use formal language, as it would have been awkward otherwise. Besides, as an elf known for her arrogance, nobody else would care much about it.

“It’s been a while. I’ve been well. How about you, Arwen?”

I contemplated whether to use formal speech but decided to speak casually. Unlike others, Arwen and Musk originally knew my true identity. Hence, there was no issue in speaking informally to show our usual familiarity.

Arwen responded to my friendly greeting with a smile.

“I’ve been busy every day, but thinking about meeting you kept me going. Meeting you today feels like all my hardships are melting away.”

“Uh... really?”

Arwen’s response was laden with clear intention. As soon as I heard her response, I checked on Marie. Marie was smiling brightly, but I knew that smile was meant to hide her true feelings.

It’s only natural to be cautious, knowing that Arwen has a romantic interest in me.

“Has everything been okay?”

“Yes, everything’s fine. Alvenheim is gradually stabilizing, and the elves are uniting as one. It’s all thanks to you.”

“I didn’t do anything special. I just helped a little.”

“Speaking of which...”

Arwen paused briefly, looking around. Although a few people were glancing at our conversation, most were busy networking.

For some reason, she blushed and spoke in a cautious voice.

“I have a gift for you. It’s not just from me but from all the people of Alvenheim.”

“Ah, the gift you mentioned before?”

“Yes.”

“What is it?”

While asking, I glanced at her guard, Keir. It seemed he had been officially appointed as Arwen’s personal guard.

Keir, upon making eye contact with me, coughed and looked away, silently indicating he couldn’t reveal anything. Meanwhile, Arwen blushed and responded in an embarrassed voice.

“If you’re curious about what the gift is, come to Alvenheim. Just don’t forget to send a message before coming.”

“Hmm... Not today?”

“Today? No, absolutely not!”

What kind of gift could it be that would cause the queen to abandon her composure and vehemently refuse? I looked at Arwen with a puzzled expression.

Perhaps due to her outburst, the attention towards us was becoming noticeable, especially from Cecily’s direction. If this continued, strange rumors might spread, so I needed to take control.

“Alright. When I have the time, I’ll visit Alvenheim. It shouldn’t take too long.”

“Uh... okay. Sorry for causing trouble.”

“It’s no trouble at all.”

“Then... Isaac.”

“Yes?”

Arwen called out to me, hesitating and glancing around. She seemed unsure and was gauging the situation. While I was pondering this, she spoke in a voice as quiet as a whisper.

“...do you?”

“What?”

“What color... do you like?”

Arwen’s sudden question about my favorite color caught me off guard. I raised an eyebrow in confusion. Regardless, Arwen seemed to be lost in her own thoughts, covering her face with her hands.

Not wanting to cause any misunderstandings, I quickly responded, especially since I did have a favorite color.

“If I had to pick, I’d say red?”

“...That’s just like you. Got it.”

“Is it related to the gift?”

Arwen couldn’t meet my gaze and answered softly.

“...Yes.”

What on earth could this gift be?

Anyway, that ended my conversation with Arwen.

Ouch!

“Why did you pinch me?”

“Humph. You don’t need to know.”

Marie pinched my side.

“A gift, huh... Can elves really be that provocative? God’s chosen, my foot...”

It seemed Marie had figured out the nature of the gift Arwen mentioned.

Translators note:

Just as I started to think he’s a bit cool, he goes dense again...

Chapter 310: Isaac (4)

After my conversation with Arwen, the rest of the networking passed without incident. Most of the faces were familiar, making it awkward to pretend to be friendly. If no one was watching, we might have chatted freely, or I might have felt more out of place.

The most challenging part was dealing with Cecily. Her usual playful nature was in full force, claiming she didn't know I was Xenon, and now she understood why I spoke so well at the academy, among other things.

While Marie, Arwen, and a few others gave her disapproving looks, Cecily remained unfazed, continuing her teasing.

However, I didn't forget to drop hints for my upcoming announcement. Cecily looked at me with eyes full of affection, saying she would never forget this favor. Anyone perceptive enough would realize that Cecily had romantic feelings for me and that she was likely to make a bold move soon.

Given the good reason of repaying a favor, people would see it as natural for Cecily to marry me. Since Descal was still in good health, if we got engaged, we'd likely live together for a while.

But when the time came for her to inherit the throne, she might leave. The catch is that this could be hundreds of years away, as Descal is still young by demon standards.

While there might be a push for a quick succession to promote generational change, I doubt Cecily would go along with that. She would probably be too busy clinging to me until she became queen, and that life would start the moment our engagement was announced.

“Sir Isaac, regarding the writer Mary, whom you cherish. When do you plan to introduce her to us?”

Cecily, continuing our friendly conversation, suddenly asked about Cherry. This piqued the interest of others, who turned their attention to me. Mary, as you know, is Cherry's

pen name, and she is a rising star following “Xenon’s Biography.” She almost got her start stifled, but I managed to save this talent.

Currently, I have the drafts for two volumes ready, but due to recent busy schedules, I haven’t been able to help much.

“I plan to introduce her when she feels ready. We need to respect her wishes since she’s quite shy.”

“I see. Have you all read the works written by Mary?”

“Of course! ‘Xenon’s Biography’ is great, but I also enjoyed ‘Once Again at the Red Sunset’.”

“The story about turning back time to achieve one’s desires was really fascinating. Her writing skill is as excellent as Xenon noticed.”

“But the second volume is coming out so late. I can’t wait to read it.”

As expected with romance novels, it’s quite popular among women. Although men show some interest due to the time-travel aspect, it’s not as strong as the women’s enthusiasm.

I didn’t feel bad about the conversation shifting to another work while I was present. In fact, I too wished Cherry’s work would be published soon.

“The second volume will be out soon. It’s just a matter of sending it to the publisher, so please be patient.”

“Really? That’s a relief.”

“This is the normal pace. ‘Xenon’s Biography’ was released unusually quickly.”

“Wasn’t it because of a gift from the demons that the writing speed increased? What kind of gift was it?”

During the conversation, someone mentioned the masterpiece typewriter gifted by Helium. When the subject came up, I glanced at Cecily. Her pride was evident as she lifted her head high.

Despite the development of printing technology, this world still has professional scribes due to the imbalance in their technology. Thus, a single typewriter could revolutionize the printing industry, making it a historically significant invention.

“It was indeed a fantastic gift. It made me realize how advanced demon technology is. Can you believe that pressing a button with a letter engraved on it prints that letter on paper?”

“No way. Is that possible?”

“Wouldn’t that be magic?”

“Even with magic, you’d need a certain level of technology, wouldn’t you?”

As the admiration for the typewriter grew, Cecily’s pride swelled even more. She crossed her arms, which highlighted her ample chest even more.

Cecily easily brushed off personal compliments, but praises directed at the demons made her happier than compliments about herself.

However, there was someone who grew increasingly displeased with the ongoing praise for the demons, and that was Arwen, who stood a little distance away from me.

She was currently conversing with Rina but occasionally glanced in our direction, indicating that she was eavesdropping on our conversation. Her long ears twitched, making it clear she was listening. Considering the topic had shifted to race, it was natural for her to be concerned.

“People used to think of demons as monsters before ‘Xenon’s Biography’ was published, but now they seem just as admirable as the elves. They have a certain noble quality.”

“That’s true, but aren’t elves more elegant? They were the first to establish civilization and are the origin of everything. The inventions from Helium could easily have been made by the elves.”

“I agree with that.”

Somehow, a debate that had been a hot topic among humans recently emerged. It was akin to the age-old tiger vs. lion debate but in this world, it was elf vs. demon.

Despite the presence of Helium’s royalty and Alvenheim’s queen, the humans engaged in this discussion, oblivious to the potential diplomatic implications.

Fortunately, I managed to keep the discussion from becoming too heated. Nevertheless, I couldn’t shake the feeling that I needed to tread carefully. This wasn’t just any gathering;

a single careless word could lead to serious diplomatic consequences.

Previously, when Cecily and Arwen had a grand confrontation, it was a personal duel. But here, in an official setting, it could turn into a significant diplomatic issue.

Thus, those involved in the debate were mindful to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each race moderately. This was tolerable, but the problem was my presence.

“Sir Isaac, what do you think?”

“About what?”

“I’m curious whether you think the elves or demons are superior.”

I faced the man who had dared to ask the question. His face was unfamiliar, but his sun-kissed bronze skin and silver eyes were striking. Additionally, he had a tattoo resembling an Egyptian symbol on his right eye, and his gaze was devoid of any malice.

He genuinely wanted to know my opinion. Whatever I said would be accepted, but the challenge lay in the presence of the highest authorities of each race here. Both Cecily and Arwen were watching me with eager expressions.

‘I’m glad I anticipated this to some extent.’

This situation was predictable. “Xenon’s Biography” depicted not just humans but also other races. It’s natural for readers to have such questions, and there was no malice behind it, just pure curiosity. I had also prepared an answer for such a situation.

“May I ask your name?”

“I am Asala Band Saera from the Stavirk region.”

As expected, he was from Stavirk, known for its bronze-skinned people and silver eyes. This region is a minority group and a current headache for the Minerva Empire.

Known for their craftsmanship second only to the dwarves and their mastery of fire, they are often called the Fire People. I glanced at Rina while meeting Asala’s silver gaze.

Historically, minority groups striving for independence often face oppression from their governments. This phenomenon is common on Earth as well. As the princess of the Empire, Rina naturally wouldn’t view Asala favorably. She was already narrowing her eyes at him.

'He's risking his life by being here.'

He likely intended to forge ties with me for political leverage. Once connected to me, it would be difficult for the Empire to send assassins his way.

The Empire would need to maintain a good image with me, and news of Asala's assassination would tarnish that image, making the Empire's actions highly scrutinized.

Of course, that's the Empire's concern and doesn't affect me. Since Asala's question was genuinely curious, it was important to answer sincerely.

"First of all, Asala, you asked the wrong question. In my opinion, it's hard to determine whether elves or demons are superior. The difference lies in their development patterns. Demons progress slowly and steadily, while elves remain stagnant for a period and then experience rapid growth."

"Oh, I think I understand what you mean."

"Indeed. Demons, aside from the risk of becoming devils, haven't made significant mistakes unlike the elves."

"We can't be sure yet. Remember, Helium has only just begun engaging in diplomacy. On the other hand, elves, despite their internal conflicts, have always been a dominant power."

This seemed to appease both parties. Cecily looked satisfied, and Arwen nodded slightly, seemingly appreciating the fair comparison.

After my response, the struggle for supremacy between the elves and demons did not cease. I quietly slipped away from the scene and moved to another place. Staying any longer would not benefit me, and the time for disbanding was approaching.

It's a social gathering without even prepared drinks to uplift the mood. There are still many issues to resolve, and I can't waste any more time.

"It must have been very difficult to answer, but you did well."

Marie, who always stayed by my side, praised me in an admiring tone. When I looked at her, I saw a smile on her face. Seeing her smile, a mix of satisfaction and pride, I responded with a smile as well. I didn't forget to ruffle her hair as a sign of affection.

Marie also seemed to be in a good mood with my display of affection, and she snuggled up closer, smiling.

'There's no threat from the devil worshipers... soon I'll have to disband them.'

Although I hadn't mentioned it to anyone, I had been secretly worried about signs of devil worshipers. For them, this would be the perfect opportunity to target me, but targeting me now would be the same as throwing away their lives.

Of course, there might be some crazy enough to attack even at the cost of their lives. But so far, no such signs had appeared. The entire performance hall, including the waiting room, had been declared a sanctuary by Kate, guaranteeing safety equivalent to a temple.

If devil worshipers were to invade, lightning would strike down on them immediately. More importantly, they might threaten my family and those around me instead of targeting me directly. I planned to thoroughly prepare for this possibility.

"Will it be busy at the academy as well?"

"Not only will it be busy, but you'll also have to be surrounded by guards."

Marie and I entered the break room for a moment of rest. When I sighed and complained, Marie responded clearly. As my mother had said before, life at the academy could become not just difficult but nearly impossible.

First of all, there's the issue of my wedding with Marie, and on top of that, news about my connections with many women, including Cecily, will burst out.

Just imagining the schedule gives me a headache, but since I decided to take responsibility for it, there's no problem. I'm just worried about what kind of incidents might occur during the process.

"Marie."

"Yes, go ahead."

"Do you think I'll do well in the future?"

When I voiced this concern, Marie's response was a masterpiece.

"If you're feeling uneasy, do you want to touch my chest?"

“... ..”

I wondered if Cecily’s playful nature had rubbed off on her. Marie spoke mischievously and leaned her face against my shoulder. I chuckled at the unconventional comfort and gently stroked her hair.

“Isaac.”

“Yes.”

“I won’t mind if more women come into your life. It seems to be your nature.”

Marie’s words pierced my heart, but sadly, I couldn’t refute them. When I stopped stroking her hair, Marie turned her head to look at me directly. I also turned my head to face Marie’s beautiful face, her blue eyes shining brightly.

“Just promise me one thing. I always come first, and if my requests are reasonable, you’ll grant them. I’ll make compromises too, alright?”

“Of course, that’s a given. Were you feeling uneasy?”

“A little. Queen Arwen and Rina might come too, and they’re all more impressive and outstanding than I am. It made me a bit anxious. Even Adelia is stronger than me.”

“... ..”

As Marie revealed her inner feelings, I looked at Adelia, who was guarding us. At my gaze, she bowed her head slightly and quietly left the break room.

Even though we had to keep guards for safety, the sanctuary declaration still held.

Even without Adelia, the likelihood of something happening is close to zero. Relieved, I spoke to Marie.

“Marie, as I’ve repeatedly mentioned, you are the most special woman to me. You were the first girl I befriended after I was born, and the one who confessed to me first. Despite being a noblewoman of a duchy, you have a down-to-earth personality. And you have a rather obstinate nature as well.”

“Could you leave out the last part? I’m not that obstinate.”

“Shall I replace it with a cat-like then?”

“That’s the same thing...”

“It’s cuter.”

When I called her cute, Marie’s face instantly turned as red as a ripe persimmon. This is Marie’s charm and the reason I love her.

She appears easygoing yet sometimes shows a fragile side, occasionally whines like a child, and at other times displays mature traits.

Her actions are diverse, but every single one is filled with endearing qualities. This is why I can’t help but love her and why I want to spend my life with her.

There is no one in the world as cute, beautiful, and lovable as Marie.

“Then it’s a promise, right? Luminous is watching us, so no backing out?”

“Of course.”

“Heehee.”

Seemingly reassured by my words, Marie spread her arms and hugged me tightly. A sweet scent filled my nose, and a soft sensation transmitted to my skin.

Though my mischievous inner self threatened to emerge, I held it back, deciding to let it out at night. I gently hugged Marie with a soft smile.

“Marie.”

“Yes, yes.”

“Let’s continue to take care of each other. And, I love you.”

A heartfelt confession to a lifelong partner. In response to that confession, Marie poured her heart out in return.

“I love you too, Isaac. Never leave me, okay?”

“That will never happen. Even if I leave, it will be together with you.”

“What if the world tries to separate us?”

Why ask?

“I’ll stitch that world back together.”

Even if devil worshippers threaten us.

“No matter what happens.”

Even if unforeseen events occur.

“I won’t be separated from you.”

I won’t be separated from my loved ones.

About three days have passed since Xenon’s identity was revealed.

Until now, there have been many speculations about Xenon’s identity, such as being a sage or a future person. But all these speculations were put to rest...

[Xenon’s Biography is a story that came from his mind. Who would believe that?]

[What if he experienced another world and couldn’t perceive it due to ‘constraints’? That seems more realistic...]

[Saying it came from his mind means he experienced that world. Xenon never lied.]

[There are definitely ‘constraints’ placed on Xenon! He must be a regressor who came from the future...]

...but it did not end the suspicions. Instead, the doubts only grew stronger.

“Seriously, why won’t they believe me? The bigger problem is that this isn’t the end.”

[Breaking news. Xenon’s Biography Volume 23 will not be published in the Kingdom of Ters! Is this reliable news?]

[Citizens of the Kingdom of Ters are confused by the unexpected news...]

[According to news from a noble of the Kingdom of Ters, it is closely related to the recently released Volume 22...]

[The royal family of the Kingdom of Ters remains silent. What is happening to them?]

Expected chaos has come to the Kingdom of Ters.

Translators note:

Chapter 311

Before discussing the situation in the Kingdom of Ters, there are parts that many people might find puzzling.

Xenon's Biography was a cultural phenomenon enjoyed by people of all ages, races, and classes. This was something Isaac mentioned at the time of its release.

However, comparing this statement with the rumors slowly spreading in the Kingdom of Ters, there is a discrepancy.

Although Isaac did not directly announce it, very unsettling rumors are gradually emerging in the Kingdom of Ters.

[Xenon's Biography Volume 23 will not be released in the Kingdom of Ters, and no new volumes will be released thereafter.]

For the citizens of the Kingdom of Ters, this is not just a bolt from the blue, but a catastrophic event.

Not only the common people who have been joyfully reading it but also artists who attend exhibitions are passionate about Xenon's Biography.

It is not just because of the title "Cultural Nation," but because the majority genuinely enjoy it.

Above all, Xenon's Biography significantly boosts the cultural influence of not only the Minerva Empire but also the Kingdom of Ters.

The reason for this is the Xenon Exhibition. There is no better place for unknown artists to showcase their talents.

No matter how talented an artist is, if they do not get the spotlight, they fade away.

The Xenon Exhibition helps these artists shine and blossom.

Through this process, many artists who previously lacked attention have started to emerge.

Surprisingly, the biggest beneficiary of this is not the Minerva Empire but the Kingdom of Ters.

Not all artists, like those in Helium, focus solely on Xenon's Biography. There are countless other fields to create in.

The Kingdom of Ters was aware of this, so even when they lost the right to host the exhibition, they only licked their lips in disappointment and maintained a relatively calm stance.

[Citizens of the Kingdom of Ters are currently in chaos... The commoners' delegation is demanding an explanation from the upper echelons.]

[The upper echelons claim they do not know what is happening, but the rumors have already spread widely...]

However, when it was announced that Xenon's Biography would no longer be released in the Kingdom of Ters, they could not help but be shocked.

More precisely, it is not the upper echelons of the Kingdom of Ters, but the commoners who are most affected. Besides being called a cultural nation, they are just readers of Xenon's Biography.

Xenon's Biography is so famous that it is harder to find someone who hasn't read it than someone who has. It is considered a must-read not only in the Kingdom of Ters but also in other countries. This has been true even before it became a sacred text.

It's fundamentally interesting and captivating, making it easy for both nobles and commoners to read.

As previously mentioned, books in this world are often composed of very difficult and complex words, making it challenging for commoners to read.

It is worth noting that the illiteracy rate is surprisingly low. Alongside academies, which are not quite fitting for the times, paper-making techniques have significantly advanced.

The biggest problem is the lack of books suitable for the 'middle' level. While paper-making has advanced, resulting in collections of fairy tales and other stories, there are

no books suitable for intermediate readers.

Once past the basics, there are only books akin to English SAT preparation guides, requiring readers to solve problems as they read.

Consequently, many people turn to essays or diaries written by explorers or adventurers, but those are not quite suitable as they are in diary format.

For these reasons, Xenon's Biography has become incredibly popular, loved by countless people, almost to the point of addiction.

Let's recall what happened a year ago during the sudden hiatus incident.

Not only did commoners raise their voices and gather in front of the publishing house, but the fallout from Isaac's letter almost reached the royal family.

It was a situation comparable to the Prohibition era in the United States.

Fortunately, it turned into an opportunity for the Xenon Exhibition to be held, but it could have sparked a second Jairos Revolution.

And now...

"Explain what is going on! Why is Xenon's Biography not being published only in our country?!"

"Is it because Xenon is from the Minerva Empire?"

"Come out and explain! We've been waiting day by day for the next volume, and yet no one seems to know what's going on?"

Currently, in the Kingdom of Ters, the sparks of another revolution were gradually beginning to ignite.

In the Kingdom of Ters, there exists a very peculiar culture where commoners can 'directly' raise their voices against the nobility.

By direct voice, it means harsh criticism, excluding insults. In other countries, this would likely result in imprisonment for contempt or even execution.

But in the Kingdom of Ters, this is possible. The 'delegation' directly represents the voice of the commoners and delivers harsh criticisms to the nobility regarding their policies.

The reason this is possible is due to the ‘Jairos Revolution’ that occurred several decades ago. Although the revolution itself ended in failure, let’s reconsider why it is still recorded as a ‘revolution’.

Before the revolution, nobles could act tyrannically without any repercussions, but that is no longer the case.

If they make even a small mistake, another revolution might occur, so why would they risk acting tyrannically?

This holds true even now. Upon hearing the rumor that Xenon’s Biography would no longer be published, the commoners’ delegation was alarmed and went to the nobles.

Just as there is a delegation for the commoners, there is, of course, a delegation for the nobles.

Typically, they meet once a month at a specific institution to exchange opinions face-to-face. Today happens to be that day.

“We’ve told you several times, but we are also unaware of the details. That being said, wouldn’t it be better to ask Xenon directly about this matter?”

One of the noble representatives said in a calm voice to the commoners’ delegation.

Indeed, his point was valid, as it would be much better to ask Xenon, or rather Isaac, directly about this issue.

Raising their voices here wouldn’t yield any results.

‘Although we know the reason...’

However, despite their words, the speaking noble, along with most of the noble delegation, knew the reason.

Most of the delegates seated here were present during Isaac’s trial.

Initially, they tried to manipulate public opinion to take down Isaac, but once his true identity was revealed, the situation turned 180 degrees.

Moreover, they are in a situation where they have learned even the disgraceful secrets that the royal family of Ters wanted to hide so badly, leaving them unable to take any action.

“That’s ridiculous! Xenon is a kind person who wants everyone to enjoy Xenon’s Biography without discrimination! It doesn’t make sense to exclude only our Kingdom of Ters!”

A commoner countered the noble’s argument with another valid argument, causing the room to become noisy again.

The mediator among the delegations tried to calm things down, but it was to no avail.

The rumor has been circulating for a week starting today. In a world without the internet, rumors spread slowly, but once they spread properly, they grow uncontrollably.

There is no way to confirm the truth. Once a spark ignites, it gradually spreads and turns into a massive fire.

“Would you believe it if Xenon himself said he banned the sale only in our country?!”

Eventually, a noble, unable to bear it any longer, revealed the truth, but...

“Don’t talk nonsense like a passing dog meowing! Who would believe that? Xenon banning sales only in our country? Why?”

“Exactly. There must be a reason why it’s not being sold only in our country, so why do you claim to know nothing about it?”

“Exactly. Tell us the reason! If it makes sense, we will back down quietly!”

It was like digging their own grave. The noble who made the statement could only receive harsh glares from their fellow nobles.

In this way, the Kingdom of Ters, or more precisely, the upper echelons, are in a precarious situation.

They could buy time by feigning ignorance, but if Xenon’s Biography is truly not published, it would lead to a revolution.

Some might question whether a revolution could really break out just because Xenon’s Biography is not sold.

The Jairos Revolution plays a part here too. The reason for the Jairos Revolution was the suppression of art from commoners.

To explain in detail, it was more like ‘censorship’ than suppression. Nobles had freedom in their artistic pursuits, while commoners were heavily restricted.

If anyone proceeded with dissatisfaction, they would be thrown in jail immediately, and especially if they engaged in ‘satire,’ they would be executed.

In other words, ‘censorship’ is both the most sensitive issue and a weapon for the people of the Kingdom of Ters. When those in power attempt to impose censorship, it’s an opportunity for the people to raise their voices.

“Is it really because Xenon is from the Minerva Empire, as the rumors suggest? If that’s the case, you know what might happen!”

An elderly man shouted in a raspy voice. The noble representatives noticeably shrank at his outcry.

The Jairos Revolution occurred 40 years ago. The old man is a living witness to the revolution and carries the most weight in this room.

His words hold more gravity than those of others.

‘Damn it... What a mess.’

The noble representative frowned at the old man’s outcry but found himself at a loss for words. No, he had plenty to say, but he couldn’t say it.

To convince them, he would have to reveal everything that happened at the trial. That might slightly tarnish Isaac’s reputation.

But doing so would be a desperate move and cause greater damage to the Kingdom of Ters.

Moreover, Isaac had a legitimate reason: protecting his bodyguard, a very romantic justification.

Either way, the Kingdom of Ters is facing the worst possible situation.

And there’s one more thing.

“According to the rumors, it’s deeply related to Volume 22. The main content of Volume 22 reveals the tragic past of Envy and a story of revenge. How do you explain this?”

“Could it be that our Majesty... No, it’s better to skip this topic.”

“This is a sensitive matter...”

The image of Friedrich, which had been meticulously built up, was slowly being eroded. For now, it's just suspicion, but even suspicion can be dangerous.

The commoners' delegation is already showing signs of caution at the mention of this topic. After all, challenging the king is a gamble even for them.

Thus, the discussion kept going in circles, but conversely, if the truth comes out, it would mean the end of the Kingdom of Ters.

No matter what Isaac is thinking, he's currently walking a very fine line.

'Please let this pass peacefully...'

'If we can just get through today, we can buy another month.'

The nobles are desperately hoping that this time will pass without incident. If today's meeting ends without a hitch, they'll gain another month.

During that time, they can think as hard as they can and come up with a solution.

As the discussions kept going around in circles without any progress, a very hot piece of bad news came to their ears.

The bad news was none other than a letter from Xenon, or Isaac.

The letter, as usual, was polite and courteous, and to summarize, it roughly said this:

[As I've mentioned, I want a culture that everyone enjoys. If that culture is disliked, isn't it a problem with that country?]

For those who knew the situation, the reaction might be, 'This guy?' to such a sly letter.

“Look at this! Xenon says our country is the problem!”

“Quickly tell us the reason! If not, we'll storm the palace ourselves!”

“Do you want a taste of revolution?!”

For the Kingdom of Ters, it was like pouring gasoline on a fire.

“We'll give you a week. If you can't convince us in that time...”

Just as Isaac was before.

“Then we’ll make sure to make you speak up ourselves!”

The Kingdom of Ters is now at a crossroads.

Translators note:

For some reason I can’t access the novelpia site rn, so no titles until it works again

Chapter 312

The incidents in the Kingdom of Ters have been reaching my ears continuously. I received updates in real-time through newspapers without needing to hear it from others.

Although the events occurred in a distant country, the news spread to the Minerva Empire through various newspapers within just two days.

I've always thought this fantasy world is full of strange and wondrous things. Given the era, these developments seem impossible, yet they happen.

While I'm concerned that this could be used for propaganda and media manipulation in the future, that's not a pressing issue right now. Let's focus on the current situation in the Kingdom of Ters.

The situation was already soaked in gasoline, and my letter served as the spark, causing everything to burst into flames.

The upper echelons were hastily trying to contain the fire, but it's a futile effort. Moreover, to properly extinguish the fire, they would have to reveal all the royal family's dirty secrets.

Can't they just ignore it? That would be an ignorant statement, showing a lack of understanding of the Kingdom of Ters.

The Kingdom of Ters currently exhibits a peculiar social structure, somewhere between a monarchy and a republic.

There is a king who oversees most policies, but if there is strong opposition from the people, he cannot push through.

If there is a legitimate reason, he might forcefully push through, but the aftermath would have to be handled by the king and the nobles.

This is possible because, during the Jairos Revolution, the commoners realized that although individually they are weak, together they are as strong as those in power.

Furthermore, with the existence of the academy, one-third of the knights are commoners, and needless to say, the majority of the soldiers are commoners as well.

Thanks to this peculiar structure, there was no major bloodshed during the revolution. In fact, it turned out well, as it allowed the Kingdom of Ters to advance its system one step further.

If the Kingdom of Ters had imposed even harsher measures after the revolution, it would have ended up like the French Revolution.

Anyway, the Kingdom of Ters now stands at a crossroads, just as it did decades ago. Friedrich and the royal family must either reveal the whole truth or continue to hide it.

Even if they try to keep it hidden, they can't because too many nobles were present during the trial. Silencing them is impossible, and one of them might expose everything to save themselves.

Moreover, the nobles of the Kingdom of Ters include Count Kamar, who has frequently checked the royal family and provided me with unintentional help.

I don't know his true intentions either. If a revolution breaks out, he would think of his safety first.

Furthermore, if a revolution occurs and many nobles, including the king, are sent to the guillotine like in the French Revolution, it would significantly impact other countries as well.

In other words, the Minerva Empire can't just sit back and enjoy the show. Military intervention would be quite tricky.

Amidst this complicated situation, I, who was genuinely watching with interest...

“How much did you say in total?”

“Even after all taxes... it's close to what I just mentioned.”

“Is this even possible?”

“It's the best-selling book in the world, isn't it?”

I was calculating money. To be precise, calculating the earnings from Xenon's Biography.

Originally, it was money that had been set aside due to the risk of my identity being exposed. Later, with the help of Leort and Rina, I started to withdraw it little by little, and even that was a large amount by my standards.

If I withdrew it all at once, someone would surely become suspicious. In fact, there were people who noticed the movements and attempted to track it.

But look now. Despite being just a 'fraction,' neatly stacked gold bars were lined up.

Gold has always been a symbol of wealth and the essence of 'money.' Even if a country's economy collapses, the value of gold remains absolute.

And in front of me, these gold bars are radiating a brilliant light.

'They say even the gold coins are only gold-plated...'

The common currency of this world is gold-plated, but these are all pure gold. The value is unimaginable.

I blinked and glanced to the side. My lovely fiancée, Marie, stood there with her mouth wide open in shock.

Coming from the only duchy in the Empire, she must have a lot of funds, but it's probably her first time seeing gold bars piled up like this. It's understandable why she's so stunned.

Adelia, standing behind us, was no different. She had a bewildered expression, unable to maintain her composure.

'But this is just a fraction?'

The issue is that this is just a fraction. Even one gold bar is quite heavy, so I've only brought a small portion.

The remaining gold bars must be stacking up in the underground vault by now. It's such a large amount that it will take several days to complete.

Additionally, the personnel assigned to the underground vault and the vault itself need to be overhauled. This part will likely be handled directly by demons or elves.

Given the quantity, the security will probably rival that of a coin mint. In the future, many thieves will attempt to break into our mansion.

'I have more to think about than I initially realized.'

It turns out, I don't just need to be wary of devil worshippers. As I endlessly stared at the shimmering gold bars, I shifted my gaze forward.

In front of me sat Musk, the publisher's president and a trustworthy business partner, smiling broadly.

Since all the gold bars in front of me are the profits from selling Xenon's Biography, it's not surprising that he visited our mansion.

Also, since I announced that I am Xenon, we need to discuss our future plans.

"Mr. Musk?"

"Yes, go ahead."

"I'd like to hear about your plans for the future..."

With a smile still on his face, Musk replied.

"Mr. Isaac."

"Yes."

"We've now earned enough money to buy a building in the capital."

"Pardon?"

What an outlandish statement. Just as I thought that, Musk continued.

"Oh! Now we have enough money to buy horses."

"... .."

Somehow, I get the image of a billionaire buying a Lamborghini just by praying. It's the same thing Musk is implying now.

For reference, horses are several times more expensive than buildings. Since automobiles like tanks haven't been properly invented yet, they are strategic assets.

Anyway, what Musk is showing me is this: Even if I do nothing, Xenon's Biography continues to sell like hotcakes.

As I realized this and gave a wry smile, Musk spoke to me in a voice brimming with happiness.

"Xenon's Biography is still being sold worldwide. And this won't change even if Mr. Isaac reveals his identity. In fact, there's no plan. The pressure that used to be on me will now be on you, Mr. Isaac, and I'll just continue selling books as I always have."

"Ah... I see. It seems I asked a pointless question."

"Not at all. May I ask you one question?"

"What is it?"

Musk clasped his hands together and hesitated slightly at my question. His face still had a smile, but his hesitation piqued my interest.

He then looked at me cautiously and asked in a very careful voice.

"How much time is left until the completion of Xenon's Biography... That's the most sensitive issue."

"Ah."

I immediately understood the question. As the publisher, it's the most critical issue for him and deeply connected to me.

Moreover, Xenon's Biography is gradually approaching its conclusion. In Volume 23, the battle with Envy ends, and starting from Volume 24, the counterattack begins in earnest.

During the counterattack, Pride will reveal the truth related to the ancestors of the elves. I anticipate that this will cause quite a stir.

Anyway, it is certain that the conclusion of Xenon's Biography is approaching. After roughly calculating in my head, I spoke.

Given the political issues and the wedding, it won't be as fast as expected.

"Probably... it will be completed within six months at the latest. Only the final arc remains."

“Hmm... I see.”

At the answer of six months at the latest, Musk wiped the smile off his face and adopted a serious expression.

Xenon's Biography is like an inexhaustible well for him, but he can't rely on just one work forever.

He had actually planned to hold a writing contest. Although Cherry's work is there, it can't be expected to have the same impact as Xenon's Biography.

Being a person whose mind works quickly when it comes to money, he must have thought about what to do after Xenon's Biography ends. Still, the uncertainty is inevitable.

“Are you going to ask me to delay the ending a bit?”

So I probed. What kind of answer would Musk give?

In my previous life, there was a rather notorious bad habit in the Japanese manga industry. They would try to prolong popular series to artificially boost sales.

It is particularly famous that when the creator of Dragon Ball announced its conclusion, the Minister of Culture personally visited him.

Of course, that visit was due to various complex reasons, and there were many instances where unexpectedly popular works were extended for long runs.

As a result, many works were ruined. Would Musk react the same way?

“No? Oh, no. Absolutely not.”

“Why not? If I decide to extend it a bit, it would be very beneficial for you, Mr. Musk.”

But Musk gave an unexpected answer. Looking at Marie sitting next to me, she also had a surprised expression.

Despite appearances, is he truly someone who doesn't cross the line? As my regard for him increased, he spoke again.

“Xenon's Biography will continue to sell steadily for the next 10 years. Of course, it will sell less than it does now.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s simple. The population will continue to grow, and Xenon’s Biography will sell in proportion to that. So, there’s no need to ruin the work’s quality by extending it unnecessarily.”

“...”

I corrected myself. Musk is truly someone with a keen eye for money.

As he said, the population is steadily increasing, and Xenon’s Biography will sell accordingly.

A child is born to a couple, the child grows up, becomes independent, and forms their own family. In that process, they will likely buy Xenon’s Biography.

It’s not just an ordinary novel but is revered almost like a sacred text. Considering that the Bible sold nearly 4 billion copies in my past life, it’s easy to understand.

‘What a scary person.’

So, was the writing contest really just an insurance plan? Or did he not expect Xenon’s Biography to sell this much?

As I restrained my curiosity to delve into his mind, I gave a small chuckle.

“I was worried for nothing. So, why did you ask about the completion?”

“So that I can at least be prepared. Speaking of which, do you have any thoughts on your next work...?”

So this was his main objective. Musk mentioned the next work in a more cautious tone than before.

Seeing his clasped hands fidgeting, it was clear he was quite curious. And it wasn’t just him.

Even Marie and Adelia, standing behind me, were showing interest.

And I had already prepared an answer for this.

“I do have one. However, it’s not a hopeful adventure story like Xenon’s Biography. It’s deeply related to war.”

“War... That sounds very profound. Could you give me a brief idea of what it’s about? Ah, not that it would affect our contract. If it’s a book by Mr. Isaac, we’ll definitely sign a contract.”

“Then... Mr. Musk.”

“Yes.”

I faced Musk and quietly began to speak.

“Mr. Musk, what do you think about a world without mana?”

“A world... without mana?”

“Yes. And one more thing. It might be a dangerous thought, but what if gods cannot directly exercise their power in that world?”

“...Would such a world even exist?”

Yes, it does. Because I come from that planet.

Musk, as well as everyone else, looked at me as if he’d heard something completely absurd. He must think my story isn’t just strange but impossible.

But I have no intention of explaining further here. Although I’m tempted, I have to hold back for the sake of the impact.

“I’m planning to write about such a world. A world without mana, where something else has developed instead. What do you think?”

“I can’t imagine it at all.”

“What are you planning to write?”

Marie was the next to ask, filled with curiosity. I responded with a subtle smile.

“It wouldn’t be fun if I told you in advance. If I had to give a hint, it would involve something similar to a steam locomotive.”

“...I always wonder what goes on in your head. Are you really not from another world?”

Marie's sharp question made me feel a bit uneasy. I just shrugged my shoulders at her question.

Anyway, now that I've mentioned the next work, there's only one thing left to address.

"But Mr. Isaac, are you really planning not to sell Xenon's Biography in the Kingdom of Ters?"

This was the most important and sensitive issue for Musk. The Kingdom of Ters is a crucial market.

As the nation prides itself on being a cultural hub, the Kingdom of Ters has purchased a large quantity of Xenon's Biography. Even with import taxes due to it being a foreign product, it sells like hotcakes.

Given that it constitutes a significant portion of the revenue, it must be a painful loss for Musk. However, he doesn't know the complex circumstances between the Kingdom of Ters and me.

Instead, he's very perceptive and didn't bother to bring up that part.

"Yes. Due to complicated circumstances that I can't explain, I plan to maintain my current stance."

"Hmm... I understand. In that case, it can't be helped."

Even now, as soon as I mentioned complicated circumstances, he quickly shifted the topic.

Honestly, he could have been curious, but his character is extraordinary. I wonder what it would have been like if someone like him were a noble.

"Then, I'll take my leave now. May I visit often in the future?"

"Of course. I look forward to it. Ah, and..."

Before he left, I picked up one of the gold bars from the pile.

Being pure gold, it was quite heavy.

"Take this with you. You've worked hard."

"Hahaha. It's okay."

“No, please take it.”

“Really, it’s fine.”

Up to this point, I thought he was refusing out of politeness.

“I don’t take small change.”

“...”

This man is something else.

About three days passed since then.

“The royal family of Ters is coming to our mansion?”

“Yes. They should be at the Imperial Palace in the capital by now.”

The royal family of Ters was visiting our mansion.

“Did King Friedrich come too?”

“No, I heard the queen came instead.”

“...”

As expected, the king seems to have a hard time getting out and about.

Translators note:

Chapter 313

Even though I criticized King Friedrich for being reluctant to leave his seat, that's actually a perfectly normal reaction.

At the time of the announcement, Descal and Arwen from Helium and Alvenheim participated, but this is because they are demons and elves.

They have the ability to protect themselves, so they can move around freely. If necessary, they can simply teleport away for a quick escape.

On the other hand, human kings generally have weaker physical strength and, unlike other races, have shorter lifespans and age faster.

Therefore, they must travel with a powerful escort force, and it's obvious how strong that force needs to be.

If by any chance a violent conflict were to occur, the king's safety would be in great danger. Hence, it is very rare for a king to leave his throne.

This doesn't change even if I'm Xenon. There's also the risk of the worst rumor spreading that Xenon was threatened.

In fact, just sending the queen is quite a bold move. Especially since King Friedrich is known for being a devoted husband, the queen holds significant power.

Her name is Maria Dukeard von Kurchers. Although their marriage was arranged, their relationship is so good that it is well-known throughout the kingdom.

The fact that Friedrich has not taken any concubines apart from Maria shows his affection for her. Moreover, they have four children.

Despite clear evidence, Friedrich's persistent denial of Adelia's existence was likely due to his affection for Maria.

“Did Queen Maria ever trouble you, Noona?”

Before meeting the royal family of Ters who had come to our mansion, I asked Adelia.

As Adelia was tidying my hair, she paused as soon as I asked the question.

Her expression in the mirror was ambiguous. She seemed to be thinking about how to explain it.

After organizing her thoughts, she resumed combing my long hair and began to speak.

“She didn’t exactly trouble me. But she did give me a lot of pointed looks. The stepmother must have had a hard time, too.”

Adelia, ever the kind-hearted person, gave a gentle response. Reflecting on her words, something piqued my curiosity, so I asked again.

“By the way, stepmother? Do you call the queen ‘stepmother,’ Noona?”

“Yes, she said it was okay. She never directly troubled me and even educated me.”

“Hmm...”

Usually, stepmothers have a negative image across cultures and times. It’s inevitable, as who could truly love someone else’s child as their own?

Moreover, inheritance issues make it even more uncomfortable to be close. If someone genuinely loves a stepchild, they can be considered truly magnanimous.

Additionally, if an illegitimate child outshines one’s own, the natural human response is often jealousy and mistreatment.

The fact that Maria didn’t mistreat Adelia speaks volumes about her character.

“Did she know you wanted to become royalty?”

“Yes, but she warned me against it if possible. She advised me that even if we became one family, it would only bring me hardship. She suggested that becoming a knight and living a decent life, even if not part of the family, might be a better choice.”

“She’s a person of great character.”

“Yes, in fact, our relationship was more like that of a teacher and student rather than mother and child. I treated her that way too.”

Adelia's mood seemed to lift as she spoke, her reflection in the mirror showing a gentle smile.

If Queen Maria had a poor character, Olivia or Lara, with their strong sense of justice, might not have existed.

Thus, while Adelia has had her struggles, Maria seems to be the greatest victim. Her only 'crime' was loving her husband.

Friedrich, while certainly a good husband, refuses to acknowledge his past mistakes. As a result, the sparks of revolution have ignited in the Kingdom of Ters.

Had he acknowledged even a little and recognized Adelia, this situation might not have arisen. I can't understand why his honor is worth all this trouble.

Is honor really more important than the country? Even if he's an exemplary king, his lack of character is deeply disappointing.

"So, you'll come with me, right, Noona?"

"... Can I come along too?"

"Of course. The conversation won't proceed without you. Plus, Marie isn't here right now, and handling this alone is a bit daunting."

Currently, Marie has returned to the academy. Even though she could stay at the mansion as Xenon's fiancée, she chose to go back.

She said she wanted to enjoy the newlywed life after the wedding. Although she liked waking up to see my face every day, she wanted to save that for later.

If we had known earlier that the royal family of Ters was coming to our mansion, she would have stayed. Unfortunately, the news came the day after she returned.

"There's no need to be nervous. You just need to answer a few questions."

"Aren't you the one who's nervous?"

"I've even given harsh words to King Friedrich, so why would I be nervous?"

I'm serious. Since revealing that I'm Xenon, I fear nothing.

... Except for my mother, who will be livid after reading the ending. Not just her, but many fans might cause an uproar.

When Kair died, there was a procession of mourners coming to our estate, so imagine the reaction to Jin's death.

Even if a letter can calm things down, it will be difficult to mend the fans' broken hearts.

'Maybe I should write a side story just in case.'

It will be an alternate universe story, unlike the Kair and Jin side stories, and not canon.

It's definitely not because I'm afraid of my mother. Even though there was an incident when she came to Helium in person during Jin's awakening! I'm not scared at all.

"Isaac."

"Yes?"

"Your body is shaking. Are you nervous?"

"No?"

To be honest, I am a little scared.

While Adelia was helping me get ready, the royal family of Ters arrived at the mansion. They arrived earlier than expected, so Adelia was busy moving around.

Although I'm in a position of authority in this situation, the visitor is not an ordinary noble but the queen, the second most powerful person after the king.

When meeting someone for the first time, the first impression is crucial. I didn't want to make a bad impression, so I acted quickly.

"It's a pleasure to meet you. I am Maria Dukeard von Kurchers, the Queen of the Kingdom of Ters and consort of King Friedrich. It's an honor to meet the esteemed Xenon."

As soon as I entered the parlor, a woman stood up and greeted me. Her greeting was full of elegance and nobility, and her voice conveyed wisdom and grace.

With long, dark brown hair that was richer in color than Adelia's, and blue eyes that shone with sharpness, she looked every bit the queen.

Her beauty was flawless, without a trace of wrinkles, likely due to consistent care, and her demeanor exuded maturity.

Her name, as mentioned, was Maria, Queen of Ters and consort of King Friedrich.

Unlike most queens who would adorn themselves with elaborate dresses and jewelry, Maria wore a dress with a tasteful blend of blue and navy, showcasing her innate nobility.

“Hello! I am Lara Dukeard von Kurchers, the Third Princess of the Kingdom of Ters! It's an honor to meet Xenon!”

Beside her, Princess Lara, whom I had met before, hurriedly greeted me. Judging by her actions and expressions, she seemed quite flustered.

It's no wonder she was surprised, as the person who visited the palace last time was Xenon. I smiled politely and greeted them.

“Thank you for making the long journey. As you know, my name is Isaac Ducker Michelle, the author of Xenon's Biography, Xenon. It's an honor to meet you all. And this is...”

I paused and glanced at Adelia standing behind me. The others followed my gaze to her.

Adelia exchanged glances with each person, then bowed her head and greeted them in her characteristic husky voice.

“I am Adelia Cross, Isaac's personal maid. It is an honor to meet the lights of the Kingdom of Ters.”

Maria responded with a graceful smile and nodded. Lara, beside her, hesitated for a moment before raising her hand and giving a gentle wave.

For Lara, Adelia was like an older sister, so the situation was undoubtedly complex for her. This wasn't because Lara was young but because of the circumstances.

Maria seemed to understand this and didn't press the matter, allowing it to pass with kindness.

“Though we have prepared little, I hope you can rest comfortably.”

“Not at all. In fact, this atmosphere puts my mind at ease.”

Maria’s response to my offer was one of genuine appreciation. I couldn’t help but smile wryly at her words.

Although our mansion’s parlor was by no means inferior compared to others, Maria and Lara were royalty. They must have visited places far more luxurious and splendid than this.

In my heart, I would have preferred to have this conversation in the palace’s reception room, but they had suggested this venue first.

“Do you find the tea to your liking?”

“It compares very well to what we drink in the palace. Is this Murmangul tea?”

“Yes. Our estate may be modest, but we grow high-quality Murmangul.”

“Modest? You are too humble.”

Initially, our conversation was light and superficial. Jumping straight to the main topic would have been premature since we knew so little about each other.

We exchanged various stories to create a good first impression and ease into more serious matters.

The main topic was too serious, involving the very existence of a nation, so it was essential to lighten the mood.

Queen Maria’s internal turmoil must be intense at this moment. I felt sympathy for her.

“So, Adelia Unni, when did you become Xenon’s personal maid?”

As we continued our pleasant conversation, Lara, who had been quietly watching Adelia, asked a question.

When the clear voice cut in, the conversation between the queen and me naturally ceased, and our attention turned to her.

Meanwhile, Adelia, who was asked the question, flinched slightly and then began to look at me for guidance. I nodded to indicate it was okay.

“I haven’t been Isaac’s personal maid for long.”

“Didn’t you say you wanted to become a knight?”

“I am also serving as a bodyguard. The primary duty of a personal maid is to assist the master, which naturally includes protection.”

“Then when can you visit our palace...”

“Lara.”

Just as Lara was about to ask another question, Queen Maria interrupted. Although she only called her name, it carried a tone of strictness.

Lara promptly closed her mouth and started glancing around nervously.

Her behavior was typical for her age, bringing a smile to my face. However, Queen Maria didn’t seem to find it amusing.

“I apologize on behalf of my daughter. I am truly sorry.”

“It’s fine. It’s only natural to be curious at her age.”

From what Adelia told me, Lara, being the youngest, was raised with plenty of love, which sometimes made her a bit clueless.

Still, it wasn’t problematic, and it showed how much she liked Adelia.

As I watched Lara sulk under her mother’s reprimand, I brought up another topic. It concerned Hiriya, who had initially prompted our discussion.

“But what about the others, particularly Princess Hiriya? She didn’t seem well the last time I saw her.”

“... Hiriya is doing better than before. There’s no need for you to worry, Xenon.”

The pause in her response indicated that her condition might be similar or worse than before. I nodded in understanding.

With the sparks of revolution igniting again, the pressure on Hiriya must be unimaginable.

Though this is the result I aimed for, I want to prevent any extreme actions. I hoped she could have been present here today.

I wanted to slap her one more time. Even if it didn't alleviate the pressure, it might provide some solace.

"...Speaking of Hiriya, Xenon."

"Yes?"

While I was lost in thought, Queen Maria called out to me. I looked up at her, seeing a serious expression on her face.

It seemed we were about to get to the main topic. I adjusted my posture to listen attentively and focused on what she had to say.

Lara, too, seemed to grasp the gravity of the situation, falling silent and nervously glancing around.

As a heavy silence filled the room, Queen Maria finally spoke.

"Would you consider forgiving Hiriya's sins..."

"No."

I anticipated the question, so I could answer firmly. Cutting her off mid-sentence was undoubtedly rude.

However, it was necessary to firmly assert my position, as I was in the position of power.

Maria seemed to expect this response, remaining calm and composed.

"...I understand. Let's move on to another question then."

"I will answer any question sincerely."

"Thank you. I will get straight to the point."

Queen Maria looked directly at me as she spoke.

"Xenon, you must be aware of the current situation in our kingdom. It's no exaggeration to say that it's the greatest crisis since the Jairos Revolution."

"I am aware."

“This situation is a result of your decisions... but the root cause lies with us. We do not deny this. However, I wonder if you might consider showing mercy.”

“Mercy...”

I pondered over her request for mercy, not leniency, but mercy. Coming from the queen herself, this was a weighty plea.

Even though the words seem similar, the meaning and power they carry are vastly different.

Queen Maria humbled herself. Although she had reason to do so, she didn't let her honor as a queen get in the way. This was a stark contrast to Friedrich, who had only chased honor and made things worse.

“I apologize.”

“...”

“This matter is no longer in my hands.”

Despite her attitude, I had no intention of reversing my decision. As I said, the situation had already left my control.

If the royal family of Ters had revealed the whole truth, they might have succeeded in quelling the unrest. But they hadn't, and that was the problem.

The deadline mentioned by the commoners' representatives was one week, and now there were only three days left.

“...I understand Xenon's decision. May I make one request?”

Recognizing my firmness, Queen Maria didn't argue further and retreated gracefully. It seemed she had anticipated this outcome.

Anyway, she had a request, so I had to listen. I nodded to indicate that she could proceed, and Maria placed her hand on Lara's shoulder.

As Lara looked at her mother with a puzzled expression, Maria made a rather surprising request.

“I would like you to take care of Lara until all this is over.”

“Pardon?”

“Mother?”

Both Lara and I looked at Maria in shock. Adelia, too, was surprised by the sudden request.

While everyone was taken aback, Maria spoke with a complicated smile.

“This request has no political implications. As you know, the Kingdom of Ters is in a crisis, and Lara is still young. Could you look after her until the situation stabilizes?”

“...”

“With Adelia here, I believe Lara will feel at ease. That’s why I’m asking.”

Indeed, if a revolution were to break out, the royal family, including Lara, would be in great danger.

It truly felt like a situation where they might face the guillotine, just like in the French Revolution. Maria’s request to entrust Lara to me was to ensure her safety in such unpredictable times.

Moreover, with Adelia, who was close to Lara, she wouldn’t feel lonely.

Perhaps that’s why they brought only Lara and not others. Maria had foreseen this situation.

“...Queen Maria.”

“Yes. Please, go ahead.”

“What do you plan to do?”

Maria’s purpose wasn’t to seek forgiveness from me. She came only to entrust Lara.

So, what is her true intention? In this precarious situation for the Kingdom of Ters, what does she intend to do?

As the situation became more confusing, Queen Maria smiled gently and spoke in a soft voice.

“I will return and do what needs to be done.”

“...”

“If the spark grows into a large fire, only ashes will remain, but if it is extinguished quickly, the ashes can serve as fertilizer. This is true for people as well, people grow through their mistakes. I hope my husband realizes his mistakes and grows.”

“What if King Friedrich does not change?”

“If I cannot change the one I love, it means my capacity is limited. I have no intention of blaming him.”

Such a person should have been the king. Listening to Queen Maria, I felt genuinely sorry.

However, because someone like her is the queen, King Friedrich might change. If he doesn't, it means the person himself is beyond help.

“I understand, Queen Maria. I will accept your request.”

“Thank you for your mercy.”

“Is there anything else you would like to say?”

At my question, Queen Maria's gaze shifted. Not towards me, but towards Adelia.

She then gazed at Adelia with a deep, lingering look for a while before turning her attention back to me.

“I have nothing more to say.”

Three days remain.

“What can I, a mere bystander, say?”

Our mansion has gained another guest, albeit an uninvited one.

Translators note:

Chapter 314

Queen Maria left Lara in my care and immediately returned to the Kingdom of Ters. I suggested she rests for a day before departing, but she declined, saying time was of the essence.

As I watched her departing figure heading back to the volatile situation in Ters, I couldn't help but feel bitter. She ended up in trouble because she met the wrong man, despite being a person of great character.

If King Friedrich had gracefully admitted his mistakes, Queen Maria wouldn't be in this predicament. That doesn't mean she's flawless, though.

As she mentioned, she committed mistakes by being a bystander. She might have pitied Adelia, but she didn't directly intervene.

Moreover, she watched from a distance even though she knew her children were bullying Adelia. Regardless of the circumstances, her inaction was a mistake.

As mentioned in our conversation, the Kingdom of Ters is already beyond my control. The future will depend on Friedrich's choices.

It seems Queen Maria will try to persuade Friedrich, but whether she can break his stubbornness is the key. Friedrich was the one who confirmed the kill in front of everyone.

This experience made me reflect on many things. I wielded power for Adelia's sake, but is it right that even people like Queen Maria should suffer as a result?

King Friedrich is indeed a devoted family man who showered his family with love. Adelia was just excluded from that affection.

Originally, I was in a position of watching from a distance, but I realized that careless actions with the pen can cause unintended harm to innocent people.

'It's like how someone's tweet can make stock prices soar or plummet.'

As someone once said, “Social media is a waste of life,” I should avoid sending letters unless absolutely necessary.

Unless it’s a special case like now, overusing them could lead to backlash and harm those around me.

But while I’ve realized my actions, I will still keep an eye on the Kingdom of Ters. As Queen Maria mentioned, if they get through this well, the kingdom will grow stronger.

King Friedrich, despite his flawed character, has been an effective ruler and enjoys good reputation among the people. The only reason this mess happened was because he touched the sensitive issue of ‘censorship’.

If he temporarily sets aside his honor and clearly admits his mistakes, the people will likely understand. Even if he gets criticized, the state needs to exist for him to maintain his throne.

“Xenon.”

“Yes, Princess Lara. What is it?”

First, I need to take care of the conscience of the Kingdom of Ters (Lara). I looked puzzled as Lara asked her question with her bright blue eyes wide open.

I pondered for a moment on what her question implied but soon understood her meaning.

“My real name is Isaac. Xenon is my pen name as a writer. I would appreciate it if you called me by my real name, Isaac.”

“Can I call you Isaac?”

“Whatever is comfortable for you, Princess.”

“Then, how about Isaac Oppa?”

“...”

I was momentarily speechless, caught off guard by her calling me Oppa. Lara seized the opportunity to smile brightly and spoke with a friendly tone.

“I’ll speak comfortably, so you should do the same.”

“Uh... okay, I understand.”

“Can you drop the formal speech and just call me comfortably?”

“...Alright.”

When I accepted without hesitation, Lara beamed with joy, her white teeth showing, clearly pleased. She exuded the air of a youngest child who was raised with plenty of love.

In a way, she seemed a bit naive, but it wasn't bothersome and rather endearing.

Moreover, it seemed that Lara didn't fully understand 'Xenon' yet. To be precise, she didn't grasp the power that the name Xenon held.

To Lara, Xenon might simply be a writer of enjoyable novels. I bent down slightly to meet Lara's eye level.

“Lara, do you read Xenon's Biography?”

“Of course! I don't think there's anyone in our country who hasn't read it!”

“Do you know how famous Xenon's Biography is?”

“Since many people read it, it must be really famous, right?”

Lara answered, placing her index finger on her cheek. I gave an ambiguous smile at her response.

Royalty and nobility like Lara receive various education from a young age to maintain their dignity.

So, even at 15, she should display maturity, but she showed none of it. This means she was likely pampered and treated with utmost care by those around her.

Or it could simply be her natural personality. Either way, since she was close to Adelia, it didn't matter to me.

“Oppa, who did you inherit that hair from?”

“I inherited it from my father.”

“Can I touch it once? I've never seen red hair before.”

Thanks to her personality, we quickly became comfortable with each other. She showed the most interest in my red hair.

Her chirping like a lark was endearing. She was truly adorable.

Lara played with my hair, marveling sincerely.

“It’s really soft. Who takes care of your hair, Oppa? Is it Adelia? She used to brush my hair a lot when I was younger.”

“Really? No wonder she’s good at brushing hair. Then Adelia will brush your hair starting tomorrow?”

“Yes! Did you hear that, Adelia? You have to brush my hair from tomorrow!”

Lara nodded vigorously and spoke to Adelia with a tone full of expectation. It was very impressive.

Adelia couldn’t resist Lara’s earnest gaze and smiled wryly as she nodded. Lara beamed with happiness.

She must really like Adelia. As Lara continued to play with my hair, I asked her,

“Do you like Adelia that much?”

“Yes!”

“Why?”

“Everyone else was too busy to play with me, but Adelia always did. She read me books, walked with me in the palace gardens... She played with me a lot.”

There was a reason she followed Adelia so devotedly. I glanced at Adelia upon hearing her response.

Adelia smiled too, perhaps reminiscing about the few happy memories in the otherwise hellish life at the palace.

Her affection wasn’t limited to just Lara, she showed it to everyone. Even without looking far, she poured her affection on Hiriya as well.

It only resulted in brutal humiliation due to Hiriya’s inferiority complex. And Laos, from what I heard, disliked Adelia from the beginning.

“But Isaac Oppa, are you secretly a royal like Adelia?”

“Huh? Why do you ask that suddenly?”

“It just seems like it. You have red hair and golden eyes. Plus, you’re prettier than me.”

Though I’ve been called handsome many times, being called pretty is a first. Still, a compliment is a compliment, and I didn’t take it negatively.

“I got my looks from my mother.”

“Oh, really? Anyway, you’re not a hidden royal, right?”

“Definitely not. My father was promoted from commoner to noble.”

Though I said that, I sometimes wonder if there’s more to it. While I don’t think I’m a hidden royal, I do speculate that we might be descendants of a hero.

This is mainly due to my family’s extraordinary strength. Our physical abilities are far above average.

My father is one of the top three strongest in the empire, and Dave and Nicole are skilled enough to join the Navy Knights.

Even I, who was considered the least talented, have grown impressively with just basic training after a late growth spurt.

Of course, I have overwhelming divine power, but even considering that, my physical stats are still remarkable.

‘As for my mother, well...’

Let’s skip discussing my mother. Like father, like son; it’s not surprising that my mother’s strength is considerable. If she were weak, it would have been hard for her to endure the nights.

Anyway, I haven’t neglected to investigate the origin of our red hair. It’s extremely rare, as our family seems to be the only ones with it.

If we were descendants of a specific ethnic group, it would make sense, but there’s no such connection. There’s no mention of red hair in books or even in the descriptions from the wars that produced numerous heroes.

'Grandfather was said to be strong too. Is there really something to this?'

The martial arts and physical training my father taught us came from my grandfather, whom I've never met. Over time, my father passed down these skills to my siblings and me.

What's more, unlike most knights who wield swords, our family uniquely specializes in using 'battle axes.'

Given our inherent strength, this makes sense, but it's still an unusual choice of weapon. Even Nicole, who appears delicate, can carry around a boulder.

Thinking about all this gives me a lot of inspiration. The idea of a people whose records were completely erased for some reason is fascinating. It would be a lie to say it doesn't pique my interest.

After all, even the 'fusion' of elves was recently rediscovered after being erased from records due to its dangers.

Of course, I won't add this to Xenon's Biography right now; it would be better suited for a sequel. Adding it now risks complicating the story.

"So, are you satisfied with the explanation? My family and I are just ordinary nobles."

"I see. I thought you would know since you're Xenon."

"I don't know everything. Contrary to what people say, I'm neither a sage nor a prophet. I'm just a regular writer."

"A regular writer who makes prophecies and saves the world? Mom said lying is bad."

"..."

Lara, either full of energy or brimming with curiosity, continued to ask numerous questions. I answered each one diligently.

As we spent time together, evening approached. It seemed like a good point to end the conversation, as we needed to prepare dinner and provide Lara with some indoor clothes.

"Let's stop here for now. We need to get ready for dinner and find some clothes for Lara. Do we have suitable clothes for her?"

“I’ll check and see.”

“Alright. Thanks for that.”

“Oh, Isaac Oppa.”

“Yes?”

Just as I was about to stand up, Lara called my name. I turned to look at her, and she gazed at me with sparkling eyes.

“Can I sleep with Adelia tonight? I really want to sleep with her since it’s been a while.”

“Hmm...”

I pondered for a moment, seeing the deep affection Lara had for Adelia in her request. Adelia’s work hours were almost over, so if I gave permission, she would likely agree.

I looked at Adelia to see if she was okay with it. If she was fine, I’d allow it.

Surprisingly, Adelia seemed hesitant. Normally, she would have nodded, but now she appeared a bit restless.

Seeing this, I realized the situation. At least for tonight, it wasn’t possible.

The reason was simple. Until yesterday, Marie had been here, but now she was gone. In other words, this was Adelia’s chance to have me to herself for a while.

Even if she couldn’t express this directly, her actions showed it.

“Sorry, but I don’t think it will work tonight.”

“Why not?”

Lara looked more puzzled than disappointed. I replied, not forgetting to wink playfully.

“Because tonight, she’s planning to sleep with Oppa.”

“Hmm.”

Adelia blushed and cleared her throat at my response.

“Oh my...”

Even though Lara was young, she had apparently received proper education on such matters, as she covered her mouth with her hands.

Time passed since then.

[King Friedrich’s Shocking Confession: “I Have a Hidden Child.”]

Queen Maria’s persuasion worked, and Friedrich set aside his honor.

Translators note:

Chapter 315

Sometimes, you've probably heard the saying, "Honor doesn't put food on the table." This is often said to people who create trouble or are stubborn because they can't let go of their honor.

But despite the frustration, it's true that honor can provide sustenance. Honor can be interpreted in various ways, but it mostly relates to one's image.

Just as first impressions last, an image, once formed, stays in people's minds for a long time. This image is crucial, especially for celebrities and broadcasters in my past life.

If one's honor is damaged and their image is tarnished, the loss is immeasurable. They could immediately lose their source of income, and in severe cases, it could lead to social ostracization.

Even in this world, which is close to medieval, it's no different. Regardless of how honor is embellished, fundamentally, it relates to one's image.

Sometimes people prioritize practicality or financial gain over honor, but even these people have basic honor, even if they're not aware of it.

No matter how much they pursue gold, they still live within the "law's" boundaries. If they commit crimes, practicality and wealth are meaningless as they head straight to prison.

People abide by the law for this reason. Committing a crime leads to inevitable criticism from those around, naturally tarnishing one's image.

This applies not only to crimes but also to morally wrong actions. Nobles often lose power not just because of a power struggle but because they've committed actions that tarnished their honor.

You don't have to look far—just look at my father and me. My father, despite being a baron, is a powerful force openly supported by the empire, and as for me, there's no need to elaborate.

Had my father not been the Red Lion but an ordinary knight, and had I not been Xenon, we would have remained a very ordinary noble family. This shows how much can be gained through honor.

Thus, honor can greatly benefit society and is, in some ways, the foundation that sustains a country. Especially for those protecting the nation—the “soldiers”—honor is more precious than life.

This isn't just a metaphor; it's factual because soldiers risk their “lives” for their job. Many people live and die for honor, but few explicitly risk their lives to protect it like soldiers do.

This is why Minerva's unique law, which forces those who insult soldiers to enlist, exists—to make them realize that honor isn't something to be trifled with.

However, as shown by Friedrich's example, there are times when one must set aside their honor. In fact, from my study of history in my past life, Friedrich's case is mild.

There's a very fitting example of what happens when one clings to honor too tightly: war.

In my previous life, the world saw two global wars because European countries couldn't set aside their honor. Similarly, in this world, the racial war broke out for similar reasons.

Therefore, it's crucial to know when to let go of honor and not to stubbornly cling to it.

In this regard, Friedrich's choice can be seen as the right one. If he had held onto his honor, a second Jairos Revolution might have erupted.

[King Friedrich personally confessed his past mistakes to the representatives of the commoners.]

[Unable to overcome his youthful impulses, he had an affair with a woman other than Queen Maria...]

[He acknowledged the child but did not accept them as family, treating them with neglect and disdain...]

It seems Queen Maria's persuasion worked, as Friedrich confessed all his wrongdoings.

Just from what I read in the newspaper, it was surprising how detailed his confession was.

Although he didn't mention any names, anyone with a bit of knowledge about the situation could figure out who he was referring to.

This made me suspect whether they were planning to use Adelia for political purposes. If that were the case, I would act immediately.

[Count Kamar: If you think pushing the responsibility onto others will solve the problem, step down from the throne yourself. Our Kingdom of Ters must seek a different system moving forward.]

[The people of our Kingdom of Ters are enlightened. They know how to think and act for themselves, coming together to raise their voices. They know their own strength well.]

[Is the current system truly fitting for our Kingdom of Ters? Shouldn't we, at the very least, adopt a minimal electoral system like Alvenheim, if not bloodline succession?]

Following this, Count Kamar revealed his true intentions. Surprisingly, he mentioned the concept of 'voting.'

Even in Alvenheim, voting rights are not granted to commoners. Yet, he suggested that even commoners should have the right to vote.

Strictly speaking, it would be granted to the representatives of the commoners. It's a step closer to democracy, though it still has ambiguous aspects.

Nonetheless, it remains a groundbreaking statement. Moreover, given the near-revolutionary situation, his reasoning is perfectly justified.

Nobles are compelled to act out of fear of revolution, and commoners have realized they too hold 'power.'

This situation resembles a peculiar blend of the Holy Roman Empire's electoral system and a republic's voting rights, with a touch of Athenian democracy.

As expected from a cultural nation, they seem poised to evolve further by learning from this incident.

Of course, the crisis hasn't been fully resolved. Friedrich must endure the torrent of criticism following his confession.

[King Friedrich is not a romanticist, but merely an ordinary king.]

[The biggest victim is, in fact, Queen Maria.]

However, because he is a king and not just an ordinary noble, the criticism was surprisingly mild. Nonetheless, even mild criticism takes considerable courage.

Given King Friedrich's generally positive image, most commoners seemed to react with, "Is that all?"

Although his mistake was serious, the idea that a revolution almost happened over this felt somewhat anticlimactic. The scandal ballooned into an unnecessarily large issue simply because the king couldn't control his lower urges.

Consequently, the blame shifted towards Xenon—towards me. What does Friedrich's illegitimate child have to do with Xenon?

To clarify, I sent a kind letter explaining everything.

[The illegitimate child King Friedrich mentioned is currently serving as my loyal personal maid. And...(omitted)...this situation unfolded due to my petty desire for revenge. I apologize to the citizens of the Kingdom of Ters who almost suffered because of my actions.]

Once the full story was revealed through my letter, people finally understood. While this might have tarnished my honor a bit, it was the right thing to do.

Surprisingly, fewer people criticized me than expected. Many saw a more human side of me and appreciated that I had emotions just like anyone else.

Moreover, the royal family of Ters was already facing a barrage of criticism, so the blame directed at me was minimal.

'So, what did they think of me before this?'

Surely, they didn't see me as a mere writing machine. Anyway, I'm glad things seem to have settled down well.

With the announcement that Xenon's Biography would be released as scheduled, the people of the Kingdom of Ters were overjoyed. Just as the long-running incident

seemed to be coming to a close...

“What? Father... I mean, King Friedrich abdicated?”

“Yes, instead, Queen Consort Maria has taken the throne. We should call her Queen Maria from now on.”

“That happened...”

Surprisingly, news came that Friedrich had abdicated and handed the throne to Maria.

Both Adelia and I were stunned by this news. While I had expected him to set aside his honor, I hadn't anticipated he would abdicate the throne.

The throne isn't something to be taken lightly, it's the leadership of an entire nation. Especially in the Kingdom of Ters, which espouses a monarchy, the king's power is immense.

The fact that he handed the throne to the queen is extraordinary. I stared at the newspaper in disbelief and fell into deep thought.

'Is it to prevent Count Kamar from gaining power?'

Currently, Count Kamar was pushing for a form of democratization. If this actually happens, it's clear he would be the next ruler.

Additionally, unlike some royals who directly tormented Friedrich and Adelia, Queen Maria is undeniably a 'victim.'

Moreover, Queen Maria not only refrained from tormenting Adelia but also secretly supported her. Supporting a child not of her blood speaks to her magnanimous nature.

Thus, transferring the throne to Queen Maria could potentially stabilize the current situation, but it's not easy for someone to relinquish power.

What could have prompted Friedrich to abdicate? From my perspective, receiving the news through the newspaper, it's a baffling choice.

“Father handed the throne to Mother?”

Lara, who had been listening to our conversation while munching on cookies, chimed in. Incidentally, Adelia had baked the cookies herself.

Although her first attempt resulted in something akin to charcoal, her skills have improved over time. Today's batch was unfortunately too salty.

I glanced at Lara, who had interjected, and informed her of the truth.

“Yes, that's correct.”

“That's strange. Why give it to Mother instead of Brother Laos? *Yum yum.*”

Lara, eating the cookies with gusto, voiced her confusion. As she pointed out, it's puzzling why Friedrich handed the throne to Maria instead of Laos.

Though Queen Maria's family came from a humble noble house, they would now rise to at least the rank of a countess or higher. Furthermore, Friedrich transferred the throne swiftly, likely without internal consultation, despite the inevitable opposition.

I couldn't help but question Friedrich's actions, which were difficult to understand.

“Isaac Oppa, take a look at this.”

“Huh? What is it?”

“Read this part of the newspaper.”

Just as I was about to get lost in thought, Lara pointed out a section with her finger. I turned my gaze to it.

[Is it possible that Xenon orchestrated all this to further advance the Kingdom of Ters? Perhaps to remind commoners of their power...]

[Granting voting rights to commoners gives them ‘qualifications.’ The boundaries between nobles and commoners are gradually being blurred.]

[Other nations are wary of Count Kamar's mention of ‘voting’ and are trying to understand Xenon's intentions behind all this...]

What nonsense is this? Is this some kind of conspiracy theory? I laughed dryly as I read the article Lara pointed out.

People interpret dreams better than they are, so it's better to give up on understanding these theories. Let them think what they want.

“Oppa, did you really do this for...”

“Not at all. I just wanted to protect Adelia. There’s no grand reason behind it.”

“If you say so.”

She didn’t seem convinced, but I decided to let it go. Trying to explain further would only tire me out, and I doubted she would believe me anyway.

As I watched Lara nibbling on cookies, I chuckled wryly and then looked up. Across from me, Adelia was sitting neatly, gazing at me.

When I smiled, Adelia responded with a gentle smile and a nod. Although it wasn’t her usual confident smile, just seeing her smile was enough.

“Adelia.”

“Yes, Isaac.”

“Are you okay now?”

Adelia answered my question.

“I’m happy. Truly.”

“That’s all that matters.”

If Adelia had completely let go of her regrets, that was enough for me.

Seeing us like this seemed to warm Lara’s heart, and she casually dropped a bombshell while munching on her cookies.

“So, when will Oppa and Unnie have a baby?”

“...”

“...”

“I thought babies were made when you sleep in the same bed?”

This mischievous child.

Several days had passed since King Friedrich abdicated in favor of Queen Maria.

During this time, as we couldn't understand Friedrich's true intentions, we continued with our usual daily routines.

"... Who did you say is coming this time?"

"King Friedrich is coming with Princess Hiriya. It seems they are coming to apologize."

Friedrich and Hiriya were scheduled to visit our estate.

"And what about Crown Prince Laos?"

"I'm not sure about him."

It appeared Crown Prince Laos would not be accompanying them.

Translators note:

Chapter 316

The mansion became extremely busy with the news that Friedrich, now the Grand Duke, would be visiting. It was even more noticeable than when Queen Maria visited.

The employees were busy tidying up every corner of the mansion since this morning, and I was no exception. I couldn't do anything properly because I had to get ready since early morning.

After all, even though he has handed over the throne, Friedrich was once a king. The transition might not have been completed properly, so his authority would still be fully maintained.

Therefore, it wasn't just me; Adelia had the hardest time. She is my personal maid and also Friedrich's hidden illegitimate child. This fact became known to everyone through a letter.

My mother also suggested that we might as well dress up since things turned out this way, but Adelia vehemently refused. She said it was fine to wear a maid's uniform, but she would never wear a dress.

Even Nicole wears a dress for official events, so I asked why she didn't like it, and she said it reminded her of her past, making her feel uncomfortable.

When I asked what she meant, she said she once wore a dress in the palace and heard people gossiping that she was pretending to be royalty despite being just a half-breed.

Since then, she avoided dresses and said it was one of the decisive reasons she became a knight.

Hearing about her unfortunate past, my mother had no choice but to step back. Instead, Adelia received a simple makeup.

In fact, she was so naturally beautiful that she didn't need much makeup. Just a simple cream to give her skin a glossy look was enough.

Unlike Cecily or Rina, who had strong impressions, Adelia's plain and puppy-like appearance suited even this minimal makeup.

“Are you nervous?”

“It would be a lie to say I'm not nervous, right?”

After all the preparations were done, Adelia and I waited in the bedroom for a while. Currently, Friedrich and Hiriya were talking to Lara, who has been staying at our house as a guest.

Since it seemed like they might be discussing something serious, we planned to let them finish their conversation first before joining in.

Like Queen Maria, now the reigning queen, Lara was also innocent. Honestly, the mere fact that this situation arose is unfair to Lara.

“Noona, what do you think Friedrich is going to say?”

“Well... I don't know either.”

About 20 minutes had passed since Friedrich and Hiriya arrived at our mansion. Adelia and I were discussing what might happen next in the bedroom.

The most important point was why Friedrich came to the mansion and why he handed over the throne to Queen Maria.

I was curious about why Laos didn't come, but it didn't interest me as much. With Lara already at our mansion, if Laos also came, there would be no one left in the Kingdom of Teres.

The transition wasn't fully completed yet, so it made sense not to leave Maria alone. This was something understandable.

“Why did he come? He could have just stayed still...”

Adelia murmured in a timid voice, fidgeting with her clasped hands. The usual confidence she exuded was completely gone.

Friedrich was the source of her trauma. I recalled her facing her family a year ago.

Even just looking at them made her break out in a cold sweat and show extreme anxiety. If her siblings caused her that much distress, Friedrich must have been even worse.

During the trial, Friedrich outright denied Adelia's existence. Even though it was expected, it must have deeply wounded Adelia's heart.

'Honestly, it's a bit infuriating.'

I can understand Friedrich's position. As a king, if his honor and dignity were tarnished, lurking hyenas would pounce on him.

However, if he had set aside his honor for a moment and humbly admitted his mistake, the situation might have changed, even if just slightly.

He made mistakes in his youthful recklessness, but at least he could have shown that he was someone who took 'responsibility.'

For high-ranking nobles like Friedrich, 'responsibility' is extremely important. There are countless people who stubbornly deny everything until their downfall.

In that sense, even though Friedrich barely managed to escape the pit of ruin, the resentment remains unchanged. If I weren't Xenon, the situation would have favored Friedrich, and he wouldn't have acknowledged Adelia's existence at all.

It means that the situation cannot be viewed positively from any angle.

"Why now... It would have been better if he didn't come at all, so why..."

Adelia murmured, her thoughts seemingly aligning with mine. I looked at her troubled expression and silently took her hand.

When I held her hand, Adelia flinched and slowly lifted her bowed head to look at me.

I smiled as if to say everything would be fine, and Adelia responded with an embarrassed smile.

"Now that the situation has reversed, you can say what you want to say, Noona. Okay?"

"I know, but... when I meet him, I don't think I'll be able to speak. *Sigh...*"

Adelia let out a frustrated sigh. Her sky-blue eyes were clouded with worry.

I gently wrapped my arm around her shoulders to help her feel more secure. Patting her back to reassure her was a bonus.

Noticing my comforting gesture, Adelia chuckled softly and spoke to me.

“Are you comforting me?”

“What else would I be doing? If you really want, I can do something else too.”

“Honestly... You’re so different from my first impression of you. I didn’t know you could be so sly. Does Nicole know?”

“Rather than sly, how about calling me warm-hearted?”

“If you couldn’t even speak, you wouldn’t be so annoying. But still, thank you.”

Despite her words, Adelia subtly moved her hips closer to me. Even though she spoke that way, she preferred emotional closeness with me the most.

So, I moved the arm that was around her shoulder to gently hold her head, slowly pulling her closer until our foreheads touched.

Even without deep physical intimacy like making love or kissing, Adelia was satisfied. For her, the most important thing was to wash away the stained wounds of her past.

After keeping our foreheads together for a while, we simultaneously pulled away. Then, looking into her sky-blue eyes, I spoke.

“Shall we go now?”

“Yes.”

We held hands until we got up from the bed, but once we stepped out of the bedroom, we let go. For a moment, Adelia’s face showed a deep sense of regret, but she quickly shifted into her role as a maid. She wore her characteristic calm smile, a practiced expression.

She had received so much training from the head maid to master that expression. She once complained that she would rather do physical work than endure the mental stress of this. But that’s in the past now. She performs her maid duties perfectly and acts as a reliable shield protecting me when we go out.

In addition to this, she continues to receive martial arts training from my father, improving her skills day by day.

‘I’m glad Adelia is my bodyguard.’

Since revealing I am Xenon, many bodyguards are bound to be around me, but Adelia alone is sufficient. It would be incredibly awkward with anyone else.

I glanced back at Adelia, who was quietly following me, and then approached the drawing room where Friedrich and Hiriya were waiting. Standing confidently before the drawing room door, the same one where we had met with Queen Maria, I paused for a moment before knocking gently.

Knock knock knock

“This is Isaac Ducker Michelle. May I come in?”

I spoke in a voice that was neither too loud nor too soft, ensuring it was heard inside. Lara would probably greet us soon.

Creak

“Oh, you’re both here?”

As expected, the door opened, and Lara greeted us with a bright face. I responded with a smile to her ever-innocent demeanor.

She then turned around once and fully opened the door for us to enter. Normally, this task would be done by an employee, but since it was a confidential conversation, she handled it.

“Then I’ll be going now. Goodbye, Father, and Hiriya Unnie. I’m leaving!”

Lara gave a brief farewell and quickly disappeared. I glanced at the firmly closed door and then shifted my gaze.

As expected, Friedrich and Hiriya were sitting side by side. Friedrich met my gaze calmly, while Hiriya immediately looked down as if she had committed a sin when our eyes met.

‘But their condition seems a bit...’

Friedrich also looked somewhat tired, but he was in better shape compared to Hiriya. She looked utterly haggard.

Her dark circles, which couldn’t be concealed even with makeup, hung down like they could skip rope, and the noble and dignified demeanor she once had was nowhere to be

seen. Her once proud shoulders were now hunched. She looked like Adelia had a year ago when was suffering from anxiety.

I had somewhat expected this, but seeing it in person made me realize it was worse than I had thought.

'First, I should sit down.'

This and that, but now is now. After making eye contact with them, I looked at Adelia.

Adelia understood my intent and moved cautiously. As she moved, I also walked towards the distinguished guests visiting our mansion.

The closer we got, the more Hiriya trembled. However, Friedrich calmed her down somewhat by holding her hand.

“Nice to meet you, your maje... no, Grand Duke. As you know, my name is Isaac Ducker Michelle. I am the author of Xenon’s Biography.”

“I am Adelia Cross, the master’s personal maid.”

We didn’t forget to greet them politely before sitting down. I almost called him “Your Majesty” by mistake but managed to change it just in time.

“I am Friedrich Dukeard von Kurchers. It is an honor to meet the author of Xenon’s Biography.”

“I-I am Hiriya Dukeard von Kurchers, the second princess of the Kingdom of Ters...”

Unlike Friedrich, who introduced himself plainly, Hiriya stammered and barely managed to greet us. From a distance, I couldn’t tell, but up close, I noticed she was sweating and her complexion was pale, possibly from nervousness.

I wondered if she might faint at this rate, as her condition was far from good, to put it mildly.

“Have you been well?”

Since they couldn’t lead the conversation, I brought up a topic first. It was a somewhat pointed question, but it was intentional. Given the current low level of goodwill, it was unlikely that I’d say anything nice. They probably couldn’t respond much either.

Friedrich seemed to understand my intentions and gave a bitter smile at the difficult question.

“As you said, there have been many events. I realized once again the power that the people hold and how insignificant honor can be. Countless thoughts crossed my mind every day.”

“.....”

Friedrich began to speak like a sage who had achieved enlightenment. I listened to his story while glancing at Adelia, who was sitting beside me. Although she appeared calm on the outside, her fists on her lap were clenched tightly. She probably found his words contemptible.

As I mentioned before, if I weren't Xenon, things might have turned out like in Xenon's Biography, like with Envy. She would have been crushed by the immense power of authority, losing the man she loved right before her eyes without being able to resist.

Of course, Marie would have been a strong supporter, but the situation would have been much more complicated than it is now.

“My wife told me that people stake their lives on their name and sometimes need to let go of that honor.”

“.....”

“That's why I gave up the throne. If I couldn't let go of the honor of being a king, it was better to give up the throne entirely. Thanks to that, I realized a lot...”

“I'm sorry, but I need to interrupt.”

I couldn't stand to hear any more of his lengthy excuses. Friedrich had certainly grown. This was an undeniable fact.

If I weren't Xenon, none of this would have happened? That's just a hypothetical and therefore meaningless. What's important now is the present. Friedrich has realized his mistakes and has completely let go of his honor.

However, he still hasn't tied up all the loose ends. I didn't bring Friedrich and Hirya here just to hear such pitiful words.

“Grand Duke Friedrich, what is the reason for your visit to our mansion? Surely you’re not here to acknowledge Adelia as family now, are you?”

“Absolutely not. Even if I did, I doubt that child would accept it.”

“I will never go back. No matter what proposal you make.”

When Friedrich cautiously brought up the topic, Adelia replied with a voice that seemed to suppress her anger. Hiriya, who had been silent, flinched at Adelia’s subtle fury.

“I am Adelia Cross, Isaac’s personal maid. Don’t even think about passing on that contemptible surname to me.”

“You heard her, right?”

“...Yes.”

At Adelia’s firm resolve, Friedrich nodded with a bitter expression.

“Just so you know, if you have any thoughts of using her...”

“I have no such intentions. I handed the throne over to my wife to prevent that very scenario. My wife and Adelia are complete strangers with no blood relation.”

“Even that stranger treated me well, but you all...!”

Adelia, who had been harboring much pent-up resentment, was on the verge of exploding. Her eyes were wide open, and her tightly clenched fists trembled. Though she didn’t fully erupt, her feelings were undoubtedly conveyed. I held her arm to help her temper her emotions.

Meanwhile, Friedrich remained calm under her intense glare, but Hiriya was not. She let out a high-pitched scream and shook violently.

“I-I’m sorry! I don’t expect any mercy, just please spare my life...!”

“No one is taking your life.”

It seemed the revolution had left a lasting fear. I responded with a look of disbelief and then turned my attention back to Friedrich.

He blinked slowly, and as soon as our eyes met, he quietly began to speak.

“So, I came here to say this, albeit belatedly.”

With those words, Friedrich pushed his chair back and slowly stood up. As he stood, both Adelia and I turned our attention to him. He then walked over to stand beside Adelia, looking at her face for a while. Adelia glared at him with a face full of complex emotions.

While a strange tension filled the air between the father and daughter—

Friedrich slowly knelt down.

“I apologize.”

He bowed his head, expressing his apology in a calm voice. Even though he had abdicated, this was an act of completely casting away his pride as a former king. Just kneeling was enough to tear his honor to shreds, yet he even pressed his forehead to the ground.

“I sincerely apologize for causing trouble by failing to abandon that one piece of honor.”

“... ..”

“And...”

Friedrich slowly lifted his face.

Thud!!

“I’m sorry.”

He struck his forehead forcefully against the floor, making a loud noise that echoed through the drawing room. If his previous apology was from the position of a “king,” this one was as Adelia’s “biological father.”

Moreover, the forceful bow emphasized the sincerity of his apology as her father.

“I am sorry for treating you so coldly to protect that wretched honor. And I am sorry for never acknowledging you as my child. I regret it all.”

“... ..”

“I won’t ask for forgiveness. But, I felt that if I didn’t take this chance, I might never have it again. So I came to you despite the rudeness.”

Adelia looked silently at Friedrich, who had bowed his head to the ground in front of her. I wanted to see her expression, but I couldn’t as she had turned her head away.

However, judging by her trembling body, it seemed she couldn’t contain her overwhelming emotions. Honestly, I would have felt the same way.

For a long time, heavy silence filled the room. It felt like an hour had passed, but only ten minutes had gone by. During those ten minutes, Friedrich remained bowed, waiting for Adelia to speak.

About five minutes later.

“It’s too... late.”

Adelia finally spoke, her voice heavy with a mixture of sadness and anger. Despite her words, Friedrich did not lift his head.

“I just wanted something ordinary. Even if you couldn’t call me your daughter directly, I just wanted to live a normal life. I wanted to laugh and talk like other children, and to be loved by adults.”

“... ..”

“But you didn’t allow that. You didn’t do it, not even until the end. Couldn’t let go of that wretched honor? No. Even without that honor, you would never have acknowledged me. You didn’t give me even a shred of the ‘affection’ that others gave me. I will never forgive you.”

Bitterness can be resolved. But if it hardens, it’s impossible to break it apart without shattering the emotions entirely.

That’s exactly where Adelia stands. Though I am here to support her now, her hardened wounds continue to torment her heart.

The sharp edges of her pain cruelly gouge at her soul, and each gouge leaves another scar. Friedrich’s apology does nothing but add to Adelia’s wounds. It might tie up loose ends, but it won’t break her bitterness.

However, it serves perfectly to sever any lingering attachment.

“Now that we’ve tied up loose ends, disappear from my sight. Don’t come to me again, and don’t even think of approaching Isaac. I will live my life as Adelia Cross. Not as a princess of the Kingdom of Ters, but as Isaac Ducker Michelle’s personal maid.”

“... ..”

“And if, just if, you ever cause harm to Isaac...”

Adelia clenched her fists tightly and muttered, her voice filled with all the pent-up anger inside her.

“I will become the sword of revenge and pierce your hearts.”

“... ..”

“Like Envy in Xenon’s Biography, I will cut off your heads and turn the kingdom to ashes, no matter what. So please...”

Her voice choked up, and she paused for a moment before finally managing to continue.

“Please... don’t appear before me. Father.”

“... ..”

“Even though our relationship is worse than strangers, even though you are the one who created my terrible past, I don’t want to kill my own blood. So...”

The lingering attachment that had tormented Adelia...

“Go. Now.”

...completely broke away today.

Translators note:

My stockpile of chapters run out but I will try to still upload daily, although there may be an off day every now and then, at least until I have some time to mass translate again.

Chapter 317

With the belated apology from the royal family of Ters over, Adelia's face brightened considerably. She exuded an unmistakable air of happiness, as if she had finally let go of her lingering regrets.

Friedrich's apology had an impact, but perhaps Hiriya's was the most significant. The clear sound of a slap echoed in the drawing room as Adelia struck her cheek cleanly.

The amusing part was that she hit the exact same spot I had hit before. Along with the slap, Adelia's words remained vividly in my mind.

"If you do that again, I'll hit the other side. Keep that in mind."

"Yes, yes! I understand, Unnie! I absolutely will!"

Hiriya, holding her cheek that was starting to swell, had a relieved expression. She probably felt that she had finally settled all her burdens.

Of course, even though she had settled things, I could still reduce her to a wreck at any time, so she didn't take any further actions. If she had any common sense, she wouldn't act out again.

Though I could have made her a slave or worse, Adelia didn't want that, so we let her go. I'm not the kind of person to go that far either.

Honestly, keeping her as a slave would be useless unless there was some purpose for her. As a knight, her skills were inferior to Adelia's, and she would just be a waste of resources.

In any case, we concluded things with Friedrich and Hiriya, and the only one left was Laos, but Adelia refused to see him.

"Why bother? I don't even want to see his face, so he can just get lost."

That was exactly what she said. Slapping Laos wouldn't have been satisfying, and she didn't want any further ties with the royal family.

However, she did say she would gladly allow Lara to visit. It was a small act of mercy, showing the last bit of her conscience.

Having ended our bitter ties with the royal family of Ters, we returned to our peaceful daily life. Returning to our routine meant I handled the remaining tasks while Adelia, as always, assisted me.

“Sigh. When will I ever finish reading all this?”

The problem was that there was so much it made me want to curse. I sighed at the pile of letters stacked high on my desk.

The contents of these letters are fan letters and greetings from famous families, among various other types of correspondence. Naturally, these letters were sent to Xenon, which is to say, to me.

Originally, they would have gone to the publishing house, but after revealing my identity, they started coming directly to the mansion.

Moreover, unlike before when I maintained an air of mystery, now that people know who Xenon is, the volume of letters has increased significantly. Reading all of this makes me nauseous, and the problem is, this isn't even the end of it.

“Wow. This drawing is really well done!”

“Who drew it?”

“Let's see... Bernado Helinka? Do you know who that is?”

“No idea.”

Not only letters but also packages containing various items started arriving at the mansion in large quantities. Just the visible amount was enough to make me laugh in disbelief, and the problem is, this isn't even all of it.

All the letters and packages that have made it to my room have already been 'inspected.' In other words, there are still many more that haven't been checked yet.

Since my identity was revealed, there is a risk of devil worshippers attempting an attack, so everything is inspected one by one. This is handled meticulously by wizards

sent from the royal palace, Helium, and Alvenheim.

They are particularly thorough with packages; if there's any sign of magic, they immediately set it aside. If there's any explosive magic, it could endanger the entire mansion.

So, while I'm only checking the ones that have been cleared, the sheer volume was still daunting.

'I wonder when I'll be able to go back to the academy.'

After revealing my identity, the academy began to make accommodations for me. Even royalty can only take a maximum of one year off, but I have been granted unlimited leave.

The academy sees this as a golden opportunity to boast that Xenon is an alumnus, an unprecedented honor. They wouldn't miss this chance.

They even said that if I wanted, they could let me graduate anytime and even offer me a faculty position.

However, I firmly refused as it felt too shameless, and I have a lot to learn under Elena. Moreover, unlike the professors, I don't have much knowledge.

Think about why professors are professors. At the very least, they are experts in their fields and have presented numerous papers. They are monsters in their own right.

Even though I have the experience of a previous life, my knowledge of this world is far from sufficient. Perhaps if it were an honorary position.

“Show me. I want to see how well it's drawn.”

“Here you go.”

Adelia, who had been inspecting it for safety, handed me the drawing. Although I've seen many works at exhibitions, this is the first time a drawing has been sent to the mansion.

You might ask what I've been doing until now, but as I said, it takes time to inspect everything. We can't afford to overlook even a 0.001% chance of danger.

So today, we received this mountain of fan letters and packages. The problem is, this is only what's been sorted so far, so more will likely keep coming.

Just thinking about it makes me dizzy, but let's take a look at the drawing first.

"It's Jin and Lily, right?"

The drawing Adelia showed me was of the popular couple Jin and Lily from Xenon's Biography. Lily was standing at the front with her hands clasped in prayer, while Jin stood behind her.

The drawing perfectly captures Jin and Lily's relationship. Especially striking is Jin's willingness to become the shadow for Lily's light.

Although the era makes the art style different from the illustrations of my past life, it's still a work created for me, a fan art. Moreover, the composition itself is excellent, fully capturing the watercolor's unique emotional touch.

"I should ask Mother or Marie about this later. Come to think of it, I don't have any connections with other artists."

"Oh... Isaac, look at this one too."

"Hmm?"

As I was thinking it wouldn't be a bad idea to meet some great artists someday, Adelia handed me another drawing. Her face was slightly flushed with admiration as she passed it to me. Curiously, I took the drawing without suspicion.

And as I looked at the drawing, I couldn't help but blink in surprise.

"...This is Lilith, right?"

"Yes."

"Hmm..."

It's fan art of Lilith, who embodies lust. Given her character, the depiction is boldly revealing, almost to the point of being scantily clad.

The drawing is tantalizing, with Lilith's wings strategically covering only the most intimate areas, making it even more provocative. Given that Lilith's motif is Cecily, I can't help but see her in the artwork.

The quality is so high that I'm worried Helium might come to confiscate it. It seemed to push Cecily's sexiness to its limits.

Before my imagination went any further, I placed the drawing on the desk. While I've seen Cecily in person, this artwork is quite stimulating in many ways.

'There's likely to be more explicit content coming...'

The issue is that there are planned erotic scenes between Xenon and Mary. Before reclaiming Alvenheim from the demons, they reaffirm their love, potentially for the last time.

This scenario doesn't just apply to the main characters, but also to Jin and Lily. Such situations are common on actual battlefields, so it's not lacking in plausibility.

The challenge lies in whether to depict my experiences directly or use metaphorical expressions to describe them subtly.

'Marie was okay with it, but...'

Recalling the first night with Marie helped with the psychological portrayal, but writing out the actual scene would be too intense and explicit. Even though it was both of our first experiences, it was as wild as animals in heat. I never knew I had that level of stamina.

It's no secret that since then, Marie has been insatiable, and I've been at her mercy daily. We've even agreed that it's fine to include our sex life in the book, but implementing it poses various difficulties.

'Drawing it is fine. The problem is the youth or children who might see it.'

I can overlook the erotic-level drawings. Although a bit embarrassing, it's just a drawing and doesn't directly depict me and Marie.

However, the readers' age range is a concern. Xenon's Biography is read by people of all ages. This means that not only adults but also younger readers are engaged with the book. While nobles are required to receive sex education, it's different for commoners, as seen in Kate's case.

Those living in cities might have access to higher education, but the majority are in rural areas. For instance, even the Michelle estate, right next to the capital, was a quiet countryside before its development.

Although some major estates have achieved urbanization comparable to the capital, the number is still very small. Naturally, the quality of education is also lower.

'Even on Earth, with its highly developed culture, there are still people who are completely ignorant or misguided. It's probably even worse here.'

Sometimes people make mistakes because they acquire incorrect sexual knowledge from pornography or erotic books. It's no different here.

Erotic stories? Expecting anything like that is unrealistic in a place where even simple texts are made difficult like English SATs.

Erotic literature itself emerged after the French Revolution to discredit royalty and nobility, so it's not historically appropriate here.

Given all these considerations, it's a deeply troublesome situation. I plan to introduce and develop these themes after the main battle with Envy in Volume 23, flowering them in Volume 24.

Originally, I intended to reveal the hidden origins of the elves in Volume 24, but due to a lack of coherence, I postponed it. I'll just drop some hints and leave it at that.

'It's something that is bound to be seen in human psychology. I have to write with that in mind.'

Some might scoff at the need for such deep contemplation over a single scene. Honestly, I'd love to describe everything that happened on our first night.

The problem is that people worldwide, not just from one country, will read it. Even in my previous life, I've seen such scenes but never written one myself.

This means I have to capture exactly what I saw and felt in this context. And I have to do it for two different scenes.

I glanced at the erotic-level drawing and then shifted my gaze. Looking around, I saw Adelia opening mail and examining another drawing.

“Noona.”

“Hmm? Did you call me?”

When I called her, Adelia blinked her sky-blue eyes and looked at me. Come to think of it, our first night together was just as intense as with Marie.

Strange thoughts briefly crossed my mind, but I suppressed them. Right now, the priority is to decide how to write these scenes.

It would be more efficient to tackle the most challenging scene first and then write the main story. So, I asked Adelia,

“Noona, how old were you when you entered the palace?”

“I think I was around 12 years old. Yes, about that.”

“Did you receive any sex education before that?”

“Sex education?”

“Yes.”

Adelia blushed slightly at my question, feeling a bit embarrassed. However, she noticed I was serious and cleared her throat before answering quietly.

“As you know, my mother was a prostitute. So, she taught me in a somewhat practical way.”

“Practical, as in...?”

“How to please a man more. She focused solely on physical pleasure without any emotional connection.”

“So, back then, during night service...”

“You’re going to get scolded.”

When I made a cheeky joke, Adelia chided me. Thanks to having completely moved past her past, she can now handle these provocative conversations without issue.

I smiled lightly and dropped the joke, returning to the main topic.

“Do you know how commoners receive sex education?”

“It’s varied. There are academies, but commoners who receive education before that usually come from very wealthy families. Most of the time, it’s taught by their parents.”

“I see...”

Not every estate has schools or academies, and education before adulthood is mostly the responsibility of the parents. Each family’s way of life differs, so it’s not standardized.

“But why are you asking about this?”

“It’s because there’s going to be a love scene at the end of Volume 24. Xenon and Mary, as well as Jin and Lily.”

“What? They’re finally getting together? Finally?”

Adelia’s eyes widened in surprise when I mentioned the scene. She even walked up to me quickly, her expression showing she was eager to know if I was serious. I had almost forgotten that Adelia was a fan of Jin and Lily.

She felt that Jin, who had a miserable and gloomy childhood, was a reflection of herself. Even being abandoned by his biological father was the same.

As a result, she got along well with my mother.

“Uh... Yes. As the story heads towards its conclusion, there should be events like this, don’t you think?”

“Oh! Finally...”

Adelia, moved as she clasped her hands together. Is it just an illusion, or does she somehow resemble my mother?

Adelia, who looked expectantly at me with an eager expression, spoke as I stood there with a puzzled look on my face.

“Is that what you’ve been worried about? Just write it down straightforwardly.”

“But someone might copy it. We need to make sure incorrect information doesn’t spread.”

“Hmm... Yeah, it would be a bit awkward if we wrote down exactly what we did.”

“Right?”

More than that, there’s one person in particular I’m most concerned about.

“We don’t want to instill weird ideas in a perfectly normal person, right? We need to prevent that as much as possible.”

Meanwhile, around the same time, at the Luminous Temple in the Michelle Estate.

“Achoo!”

Kate, who was praying devoutly as usual, suddenly let out a sneeze.

[What’s the matter, my child?]

‘Ah, it’s nothing. My nose just suddenly felt itchy...’

Kate, who can now communicate directly with Luminous just like Isaac.

‘So, Luminous, when will I be able to receive his light?’

[...It might be soon.]

‘Really?’

[It depends on how you take it.]

‘Ah!’

She couldn’t contain her joy upon receiving Luminous’s oracle-like message.

Translators note:

Chapter 318: Education (2)

If I'm pondering over a scene that will appear at the end of volume 24, it means that volume 23 has already been released.

The main plot of volume 23 revolves around the final showdown between Envy and Xenon in a kingdom on the brink of destruction. Throughout, numerous arguments and logical exchanges take place.

Envy justifies his own revenge while acknowledging his misdeeds, and Xenon views Envy not with anger but with pity. Despite both being taught under the same sky by the same mentor, they ended up with completely opposite fates.

One is destined to bring about the world's ruin, while the other is destined to save it.

The contrast between their situations is stark, yet ironically, Xenon understands Envy's motivations. Xenon recognizes that he, too, could have ended up like Envy, being his perfect arch-enemy.

However, understanding the pain doesn't equate to empathizing with it. To be precise, Xenon chose not to empathize. Despite Envy's heart-wrenching circumstances, the fact that he committed evil acts remains unchanged.

Thus, Envy and Xenon face each other. Their meeting place is the audience chamber. The chamber, stained with blood from Envy's massacre, sees Envy himself seated on the throne after slaughtering his kin with his own hands.

To his right lies his father's severed head, and to his left, the head of the brother who took his beloved. The beloved, who ended her own life, is seated on the queen's throne. Envy calmly awaits Xenon in this grisly scene.

Crafting that scene took immense effort. I aimed to convey the feeling of approaching a king while also evoking the sense of confronting a dungeon's master. In the end, Envy declared himself 'king', even though the kingdom was on the verge of being reduced to ashes by demons.

Thus began a light debate between the two. Realizing that they could not reach an understanding, they moved into a full-scale battle. Particularly, the words Envy spoke to Xenon just before the battle stuck in the minds of many:

[I didn't choose to be born into this world. I didn't choose to have such parents. I didn't choose to live this kind of life. I never wanted to be born into this world.]

These words echo the miserable life of Envy and represent the feelings of illegitimate children who still suffer. The perception of them is so low that it's considered natural for illegitimate children to be abandoned at birth because they could cause discord and significant turmoil in families.

Of course, there are some noble-minded individuals who take responsibility for their illegitimate children, but they are very few. Most consider them a 'blemish' and discard them mercilessly. In extreme cases, assassins are sent to cleanly remove them.

As Envy mentioned, illegitimate children are forced to live unwanted lives, perfectly fitting the case of a victim turned perpetrator. If they had been helped to live like human beings, they would never have become like this.

[Friedrich, lauded as a romanticist by the public, had his flaws. It's no different for other royalty or nobility.]

[If they couldn't control their lower bodies, they should at least take responsibility for the children.]

[Historically, there have been many cases similar to Envy's.]

[If a devil invasion actually occurred, there would be countless people who would become like Envy.]

As a result, interest in illegitimate children has significantly increased. The tragic past of Envy, combined with the reality of Friedrich, has brought this issue to the forefront. Although the perception of illegitimate children was abysmally low, it has become clear that they are 'victims' rather than 'potential perpetrators.'

[After Friedrich's shocking confession, more people are revealing that they are illegitimate children of nobles...]

[I'm not asking for responsibility. I just want to live like a human being.]

This topic being covered in “Xenon’s Biography” has had a significant impact in reality. Many people have come forward to confess the secrets of their birth, reminiscent of the mixed-blood situation in Alvenheim.

The percentage of nobles is about 0.01% to 0.3% of the total population. It seems small, but remember that the human population alone is in the billions.

[Nobles denying their children and people insisting on temple verification. What is the truth?]

[It’s the same for commoners. Desire is equal among all genders and ages.]

[Unlike human nations, Alvenheim and Helium are quiet... The same goes for Animers and Makina.]

Elves naturally have a more reserved nature and less sexual desire compared to humans, and as known, demons have immense self-control.

Dwarves are the same. They are a peculiar race that would rather touch steel than engage in sexual relations. Beastmen... let’s skip them. Their instincts as beasts and their culture are far removed from the concept of illegitimate children.

Thus, the issue of illegitimate children began to be primarily addressed in human nations. Borrowing the name of a famous incident from a previous life, it was almost ‘Illegitimate Children MeToo.’

In reality, the issue of illegitimate children was spreading unknowingly, but “Xenon’s Biography” acted as fuel, causing it to surge into a massive firestorm... or rather, it didn’t. Just as with the MeToo movement from a previous life, as time passed, more and more innocent people started to appear.

People began to exploit “Xenon’s Biography” as a shield, leading to an increase in those wrongfully entangled in the issue, gradually diluting its significance.

Fortunately, the temple allowed for the truth to be discerned, but the mental damage incurred couldn’t be undone. The issue of illegitimate children is undoubtedly a social problem that needs addressing, but those exploiting it are no different.

[An incident that fully revealed human baseness and deceit.]

[Without the presence of gods, how could we have discerned the truth?]

[If you can stand proudly before the gods, reveal your birth.]

The number of temple visitors increased as a side effect. No matter how much a mortal pleads, a god never lies. Thus, this MeToo incident will be remembered as a social movement where only the honest were acknowledged. It also serves as a suitable case for studying human depravity and psychology, with many scholars expected to publish papers on it.

As a storm passed through the world and calm began to return, I, who was pondering a scene in my mansion...

“To Jin, Lily is more than a savior. So how about treating her with a mindset of serving the savior?”

“That’s a good idea. And since Jin has acquired devilization, he must be stronger. He should treat her like delicate glassware.”

“Is it more tension or anticipation? I was tense.”

“I was excited. We should consider this too.”

Listening to Cecily and Adelia’s opinions, I quietly took notes. Their ideas aligned perfectly, keeping my hands busy. This all started because I had Gartz bring Cecily to ask for her opinion on a sex scene. Not only Cecily but also Marie from the academy was here.

Originally, I planned to write it as I pleased, but on second thought, psychological depiction was important, so I called them in.

Even though I understand a man’s heart well, I don’t fully grasp a woman’s heart. Despite being a portrayal of raw instinct, psychological descriptions are necessary for adult scenes.

‘I didn’t expect their opinions to align so well.’

Adelia focused on Jin’s troubled childhood, while Cecily concentrated on the fact that Jin was a persecuted demon. Thanks to their insights, I was able to write Jin and Lily’s scene without much trouble. However, the biggest issue arose: the ‘length.’

“Their scene is much longer than the protagonists’ scenes.”

Marie commented with a bewildered expression as she watched silently. As you might know, I consulted Marie for the scenes between Xenon and Mary. However, our first night together was somewhat intense, so I toned it down a bit. There were too many explicit parts to write openly.

Marie strongly agreed with this. When it came time to write it down, she got embarrassed and asked me to handle it first. But the real issue emerged with Jin and Lily's scene. The length was too much. By writing each part meticulously, it became much longer than originally planned.

It's a bit short to be a standalone volume but too long to append to another. The problem arose from including detailed psychological aspects as supplementary elements.

"Since it's come to this, why don't we add more to Xenon and Mary's scenes and combine them?"

Cecily, who caused the problem, suggested awkwardly with a faint smile. Adelia, beside her, also smiled faintly but seemed to agree inwardly. Marie looked at them with a hollow laugh and then turned her gaze to me, the final decision-maker.

"What are you going to do, Isaac?"

"Well..."

I pondered as I looked at the stack of manuscripts. It was hard work restraining my desires while writing them. You might wonder why I put so much effort into writing a single scene, but there's no explicit adult literature in this world.

As I mentioned before, I intend to sell it for adults, but children and teenagers who are highly curious about sex might also read it. To prevent any issues, I had no choice but to think deeply about it.

Just describing it as 'they shared a night together' and moving on? Would the readers be satisfied with that, especially when they've been eagerly waiting for this scene? Absolutely not. Moreover, this is the most crucial part of the characters' relationship, so it can't be glossed over.

"While I can manage the length... to do that, I'd need to include psychological descriptions for Xenon and Mary as well. But Mary is an elf, right? Even though there's no formal ritual due to the war, I know nothing about elven sexual practices..."

"Hmm... that's true."

Another issue is Mary's (the elf) psychology. While Jin is fine thanks to Cecily's advice, I don't understand the mind of an elf. Elves, with their temperate dispositions, regard sexual relations as a kind of 'ritual'. This is why their birth rate is extremely low.

I can't even ask my acquaintances about it. Although Elena and Cindy are my companions, they're not the type I can ask about such things.

'Arwen is...'

There's Arwen, but I'm too embarrassed to ask her. I know she has romantic feelings for me, but regardless, how could I suddenly ask her what she thinks about the first night? Even if it's for "Xenon's Biography," it might make things awkward.

"Just ask her."

"Huh? Ask who?"

"Ask Queen Arwen. You'll end up with her sooner or later anyway."

"....."

It seems our dear Marie doesn't mind. Whether she's half given up or simply accepted it, she no longer cares who I'm with. As I looked at her in astonishment, she shrugged her shoulders and joked.

"Why are you making that face? It's pointless to be jealous at this point. So stop worrying about me and just ask her. I'm curious too."

"Are you serious?"

"I'm serious. I'll do anything if it helps you."

From the look on her face, she seemed to mean it. I stared into Marie's blue eyes before shifting my gaze elsewhere.

Others seemed to agree with Marie's opinion, nodding or responding with silence. For a moment, I felt the urge to ask for Arwen's opinion as well, but she would probably consent anyway.

"...So, should I really call her?"

I glanced around nervously as I pulled a summoning scroll from my desk drawer. The scroll, of course, was for summoning Siris.

When I received yet another affirmative response, I hesitated a few times before tearing the scroll. It had been a while since I last summoned Siris, so I wondered if she would respond.

A short while later...

“W-what did you say? F-first night? Suddenly?”

Arwen asked back, her silver-gray eyes wide in surprise. Her face was deeply flushed, and her long, elven ears twitched aimlessly up and down.

‘...She’s adorable.’

She looked truly adorable.

Translators note:

Chapter titles are back!

Chapter 319: Education (3)

Since Isaac's true identity was revealed, Arwen's schedule had only gotten busier. Knowing Xenon's identity was a title that had faded, but her close relationship with him remained unchanged.

In fact, Arwen had revealed her close friendship with Isaac in front of everyone during the small social gathering. Despite the formal setting where they maintained decorum, the attendees were high-ranking politicians with keen observational skills and sharp psychological insights.

On the other hand, Isaac, who was debuting in such a social event, struggled to manage his expressions. Despite Marie's best efforts to support him, his inexperience was evident. Nevertheless, Isaac interacted with Arwen as if they were truly close friends, engaging in seamless conversation and even exchanging jokes.

Moreover, the head of the Elder Council, Fieren, had made a desperate statement during his final outburst, claiming that Xenon, or rather Isaac, was Arwen's lover and had even left her speeches.

Whether or not they were lovers was beside the point, the key detail was that Isaac had directly helped Arwen by writing her speeches. This was a direct involvement, unlike the more ambiguous assistance he provided to the demons through "Xenon's Biography."

This implied that Isaac was close enough to lend his wisdom to Arwen. If it weren't for Marie being his fiancée, rumors about them being a couple would have spread. Everyone who needed to know was aware of Arwen's romantic feelings for Isaac, but they kept quiet to avoid unnecessary confusion.

Regardless, since Isaac's confession, Arwen had been incredibly busy. While she was used to the overwhelming workload, it was the 'gift' that was the real issue. She wanted to present herself as a gift from Alvenheim, but as time passed, it became increasingly delayed.

The timing was one thing, but above all, she was embarrassed. It was practically a public declaration of love in front of everyone.

Confessing to a man who already has a fiancée? Can she handle the backlash? Especially considering that it's Xenon.

She can. In fact, it's what she desires. Alvenheim would do anything for their benefactor. Won't the throne be left vacant? No worries about that either.

She can use her powerful magic to commute back and forth. She can handle her duties in Alvenheim and live a sweet married life at Isaac's mansion.

Currently, she's working late nights, but if she manages her responsibilities carefully, such a lifestyle isn't entirely impossible. The delay is only because Arwen keeps postponing her confession.

The delegation was also urging her, asking why she was even hesitating. If she continues like this, won't they fall behind the demons? Why hesitate when they need to check the rising Helium?

However, once they understood her feelings, they left the choice to her. The elves' characteristic relaxed nature, with their near-thousand-year lifespans, also played a part.

As time passed endlessly, Arwen kept watching for the right moment but continued to hesitate. What if it causes problems for Isaac? Would he feel burdened? What if he's not interested in her? There are other beautiful women around him, maybe even more beautiful than herself, should she even try to intrude?

The queen who upheld her philosophy and implemented policies despite the Elder Council's opposition. The wise ruler who, after the race war, once again made Alvenheim a dominant nation. Though supported by "Xenon's Biography," she was integrating the dark elves with the elves.

"Your Majesty, Lord Isaac wishes to meet with you..."

"I will go at once!"

But even she was just a regular woman in front of her love interest.

"But Your Majesty, you still have work to do..."

“What could be more important than a call from Xenon? I will go immediately!”

Arwen’s statement was undeniably true. No matter how esteemed she was as the Queen of Alvenheim, she couldn’t compare to Isaac.

Let’s recall once more what happened after receiving just one letter from Isaac. We don’t have to look far, just consider the Kingdom of Ters. So it’s not strange at all for Arwen to drop everything and head to Isaac’s mansion. Even those assisting her with her duties could understand, though they couldn’t openly express their displeasure.

“What should I wear? No, before that, do you know why he called me?”

Arwen asked, flustered, while pondering why Isaac had summoned her.

Isaac knew she was busy, so he wouldn’t call her unless it was something important. What could it be?

Siris, quietly watching the excited Arwen, finally spoke.

“It’s related to ‘Xenon’s Biography.’ He said he’d explain the details directly.”

“‘Xenon’s Biography?’”

“Yes.”

Hearing it was related to ‘Xenon’s Biography’ and not something personal, Arwen felt curious. It didn’t seem like a private matter. Nonetheless, meeting him privately after a long time meant she needed to prepare.

“Tell Isaac I will come soon. Is it urgent?”

“No, he said you can come at your convenience.”

“Alright. Tell him I’ll be there shortly.”

“Yes.”

With that, Siris cloaked herself in invisibility. She would soon teleport to Isaac’s mansion.

Arwen watched her disappear and used her magic to confirm her absence. She was gone. No trace of Siris, even after several checks.

“...She won't be in any strange places, right?”

Confident that Siris had fully vanished, Arwen began to check her outfit. She wore a silver dress with a side slit, the same one Isaac had complimented her on last time. It accentuated her slender waist and the curves of her hips, something she knew would please his eyes.

If any other man looked at her with a lecherous gaze, Arwen would have just ignored it, but with Isaac, it was different. Just imagining it made her feel a thrilling excitement, her heart pounding with the thought that he saw her as a woman, not just a friend.

'There's no going back now.'

Arwen was certain that Isaac came from another world. Even during his public speech, he had omitted mentioning his origin from another world. This unique aspect made him special to her. Whatever experiences he had in that other world must have been unimaginable for a mortal.

And those experiences were likely all woven into “Xenon's Biography.” The idea that these stories emerged from his mind hinted at the existence of the ‘constraints’ he had only speculated about.

“Phew. This isn't the time for daydreaming.”

Arwen lightly slapped her cheeks to snap herself out of it. Whether he was truly Xenon from the book or Kair, it didn't matter anymore. What mattered most was her feelings for Isaac.

His kindness, his considerate actions, and finally, his handsome face, even by elven standards. Though this was a minor point, it still added to his appeal.

“I should be fine like this. Maybe I should use some perfume, just in case?”

Although she took longer than initially planned, Arwen, brimming with anticipation, headed to Isaac's mansion. Since the meeting was related to “Xenon's Biography,” there wouldn't be much personal conversation, but just seeing his face was enough. With her life filled with endless overtime work, this alone was a significant source of healing for her.

Upon arriving at Isaac's mansion and meeting her crush...

“How do elves usually spend their first night together?”

“...Huh?”

She was momentarily stunned by the unexpected and somewhat provocative question. Did she hear that correctly?

“W-what did you say? F-first night? Suddenly?”

Arwen stammered, her silver-gray eyes wide with surprise.

Arwen’s face turned crimson in an instant, and her long elven ears twitched aimlessly up and down. Isaac, thinking her reaction was adorable, gave a sheepish smile, understanding her feelings.

Jumping straight to asking about the first night had been a mistake. In his attempt to figure out how to ask the question, he had caused this awkward situation.

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to phrase it that way. I hope you don’t misunderstand. I’m genuinely curious for a pure reason.”

“That’s right, Your Majesty. He might have spoken clumsily, but it’s genuinely related to ‘Xenon’s Biography’.”

Marie chimed in, casting a sharp glance at Isaac.

Finally, Arwen managed to calm her racing heart. She almost misunderstood the situation entirely.

“Oh, I see... Is that really true?”

“It is. I’m planning to include such a scene near the end of Volume 24 of ‘Xenon’s Biography.’ Between Xenon and Mary, and also between Jin and Lily.”

“Oh! Are they finally going to get together?”

Arwen’s eyes widened in astonishment at Isaac’s explanation. Her face was still red, but this time from a different kind of surprise. Isaac nodded and handed her a portion of the manuscript he had prepared. Of course, he only gave her the part describing the situation just before the main event.

“It’s true. The reason I asked you is... I can get help from Cecily for the demons, but I don’t know much about elves. Among the elves I know, you’re the one I’m most comfortable with.”

The phrase “most comfortable with” transformed in Arwen’s mind into something more personal, like “most comfortable person.” Hearing this, her heart started pounding as she gazed at Isaac in a daze. Her silver-gray eyes glistened with moisture, and she gently clasped her hands together.

It was the expression of a woman in love, clear to anyone. Seeing this, Cecily quickly intervened.

“Ahem. So, Arwen, we hope you can help. I know a bit about elves, but not in detail.”

“Uh, yes. I understand. But you should know, I’m a half-elf, not pure-blood. While I embody elven culture, my way of thinking is similar to humans.”

“That’s even better. As you know, Mary wandered human society in disguise. And with her quirky personality, she’s quite similar to you.”

This comment gave Arwen another misinterpretation. She heard it as a comparison between herself and Mary, thinking Isaac might see her in a romantic light similar to Mary.

While I won’t explain exactly what it was, it’s important to note that Arwen’s heart skipped a beat momentarily. She swallowed hard to calm her nerves. Despite feeling like her mind was racing, she knew she had to explain.

Only then would things be easier later. With eyes that seemed to spin from the tension, Arwen slowly began her explanation.

“So, should I explain it now?”

“Whenever you’re comfortable,” Isaac replied.

“Alright. *Ahem. Ahem.*”

Arwen cleared her throat again to steady her racing heart. She knew she would stutter if she started speaking immediately. When everyone’s eyes were on her, she closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and exhaled slowly.

‘If I were to have my first night...’

Maybe her thoughts were too heated. Instead of imagining an elf accustomed to human society, she pictured her own first night. She smiled unknowingly and began to speak softly.

“As you all might know, the most important thing to an elf is their ears. Long ears are more precious than life itself to an elf. They must never be touched by anyone other than a loved one.”

“I see.”

Isaac noted down her words, likening it to the demons’ horns but understanding the subtle differences. He knew this much from general knowledge, but the ‘ritual’ aspect was what concerned him most.

“So, considering sexual relations as a ritual, can it be done without it?”

“It can. The ritual is mostly about maintaining bodily cleanliness. In Alvenheim, couples on their first night are given ‘dew.’ It’s a liquid diluted with the World Tree’s dew. They apply it to their bodies and then share their love.”

“Hmm... The World Tree has been destroyed, but if we say Mary secretly brought some, it should be fine. Is it just regular water?”

Isaac continued to take notes in his notebook as he asked, realizing that this was information he hadn’t known before and was glad he asked Arwen.

“It’s not just ordinary water, it has a bit of viscosity. How it’s used... depends on the couple.”

She hesitated briefly, but Isaac understood what she was getting at. The viscosity suggested it was similar to a gel. As they continued to discuss and outline the scene, Arwen added more details.

“They apply it to each other’s bodies, confirm their feelings for each other, and then embrace. While doing this, they gently touch each other’s ears and whisper words of love.”

“Hmm... Is there anything to be cautious about?”

“The most important thing is to avoid injuring the ears. Some humans bite with their teeth, but it varies from person to person. I’m fine with it.”

“...”

‘I’m fine with it?’ Isaac and the others felt a bit uneasy at her statement. It seemed she wasn’t fully aware, lost in her daydreams with her eyes closed.

While it was a bit odd, Isaac decided to move on. He blinked and then quietly asked.

“Got it. What comes next? Do they pray to the gods?”

“Praying isn’t a bad idea. Celebrating the first night with someone as wonderful and loving as Xenon would be... truly joyful. Having him touch my ears with those hands would be so...”

“Um... excuse me, Lady Arwen?”

“Yes?”

Sensing something was off, Cecily interrupted. Arwen opened her eyes, looking at her with a puzzled expression. Cecily scratched her cheek, feeling awkward but knowing she had to address it to prevent any misunderstanding.

“Did you, by any chance, project yourself onto Mary?”

“...Huh?”

“It seemed like you were describing your own feelings... so I just wanted to check.”

And then her gaze went straight to Isaac. Isaac was also looking at her with vacant eyes.

At the same time, the scene that she had only imagined in her head quickly changed. The man who was Xenon became Isaac, and the woman who was Mary became herself.

If you think about it, everything she had just said was basically talking about her ideal first night.

“...!!”

Realizing this, Arwen’s ears perked up high.

“Huaaa...”

She melted away, becoming limp like ice cream.

Translators note:

Arwen sure loves to self-destruct~ It’s adorable tho, so it’s okay~

Chapter 320: Education (4)

There is a word called ‘black history’ (흑역사). It refers to a past that is embarrassing to speak about or experiences that one feels uncomfortable even acknowledging.

There was no word to replace ‘black history’ in my previous life, so it was a term I used quite frequently. There’s nothing else that so succinctly refers to a past one wishes to erase.

Why do I mention this? Because our cute elf queen has just updated her ‘black history’ once again. It was an education, sure, but it was an education heavily spiced with her own personal desires. Unintentionally, her innermost thoughts were completely revealed.

How should the dew of the World Tree be applied, how should the first night be spent, and so on. Compared to her previous statement about elven communism, this was even more intense. If there had been a mouse hole, she would have crawled into it.

Honestly, she essentially revealed her ideal first night to me. Who wouldn’t be embarrassed by that? Moreover, Arwen has a romantic interest in me. If it were me, I would not only hide but run away. And I would never show my face to that person again.

“Excuse me.”

“... ..”

“Arwen?”

That’s what Arwen is doing now. Having completely melted from Cecily’s heavy dose of truth. Fortunately, she didn’t teleport away but crammed herself into the small space under the desk. As you know, it’s the desk I use to write Xenon’s Biography. She looked around for a place to hide and chose here.

The space itself was spacious enough, and since Arwen's frame was small, it wasn't a tight fit. It was a bit big to be called a mouse hole, but it was sufficient.

“Um……”

I scratched my head as I watched Arwen, who, like the last time she made the elven communism statement, was not showing me her face. It was cute, like a child showing only their back, and it felt like something she would do.

Especially, Arwen's best feature, her back line, was a delightful sight for my eyes. From her slender waist to her attractive hip line, it was mesmerizing. Moreover, the dress she was wearing this time had slits on the sides, fully showcasing her charm.

But that's that, and this is this. I called Arwen, who had her face buried between her knees, once again.

“Arwen? Can you answer me?”

“... ..”

Although I asked in a gentle voice, Arwen remained unmoved. Instead, she buried her face even deeper between her legs. Smiling bitterly, I looked around.

Marie, Cecily, and Adelia each had different expressions. Marie had her arms crossed, raising one corner of her mouth as if amused, Cecily looked somewhat disdainful, and Adelia had a wry smile.

With each of them showing different reactions, I gave another awkward smile and turned my gaze back to Arwen. Leaving her like this wasn't right, and more importantly, now that I knew her true feelings, there was no need to back off.

Poke poke

“Eeek...!”

So, I pressed my finger into the exposed side of her dress. Since it was a direct touch and not through the fabric, Arwen flinched noticeably.

Thud!

“Ouch!”

And then she banged her head on the desk. I looked at Arwen, who was holding her head and crying out, with a sympathetic gaze. Outwardly, she was a wise and charismatic queen, but right now, she seemed more like a helpless child.

While that might be part of her charm, I needed to clear up the misunderstanding for our conversation to proceed.

“Ugh...”

“Come on, let’s talk face to face. I know you’re embarrassed, so don’t just show me your back.”

Maybe because it was something I said in a situation where she was fully alert, Arwen started to slowly turn around, gently rubbing her head.

I don’t know why she doesn’t just come out from under the desk, but it seems she lacked the courage due to updating her ‘black history.’ It’s always something I think about, but it seems the position really does shape the person.

“Are you feeling a bit calmer now?”

“...A little.”

Arwen answered while turning her head, seemingly having no intention of coming out from under the desk. Her flushed face and twitching ears conveyed her emotions well. She occasionally glanced at me, but she didn’t seem to have the courage to meet my eyes directly.

I wondered if it was okay to continue the conversation like this, but thinking it through, I knew it wasn’t. So, I extended my hand.

“Don’t stay there; come out. We have a lot to talk about.”

“...”

Arwen alternated between looking at my extended hand and my face before cautiously reaching out. After hesitating a few times, she gently placed her hand in mine.

It was only now that I realized Arwen’s hands were as small as her petite frame. However, her hands were elegant and beautiful. I hadn’t noticed before since I had never held her hand.

“...I’ve shown you such disgrace. I’m really sorry.”

Arwen quietly apologized as she emerged from under the desk, though she still couldn't meet my eyes.

"No, it's... understandable."

"Your answer seems a bit delayed?"

Marie, who had been silently observing, interjected, having noticed that my words lacked sincerity. She had an uncanny ability to discern the true meaning behind people's words, leaving me without an excuse. She was right, after all.

The only saving grace was that Arwen didn't crawl back under the desk. I glared at Marie for her tactless remark and then turned my attention back to Arwen. Regardless of age or gender, people deeply in love often act irrationally. When facing the person they love, they may become flustered or make mistakes in their speech.

There's a reason why lovesickness exists and why some people die from it. Love is an emotion that easily breaks a person's heart. Just like Arwen right now. I looked at Arwen, who was clutching the hem of her dress and shyly avoiding my gaze.

Her silver-gray hair and eyes resembled the Milky Way in the night sky. She had the beautiful appearance typical of an elf, often called the embodiment of beauty. In contrast to Cecily's mature image, Arwen had a youthful appearance and a petite frame, but with a surprisingly well-proportioned figure.

"Arwen."

"...Speak."

"Shall we talk for a moment? Not about education, but something else."

I felt I needed to hear Arwen's true feelings at least once. At my suggestion, Arwen looked up and then gazed at the other women instead of me. Everyone knew what that look meant. Following Arwen's gaze, I turned my head as well.

"Cecily, you expected this, right?"

"It would be strange if I didn't. What about you, Adelia?"

"I will follow whatever Young Master decides."

"You heard them?"

Marie, having heard everyone's opinions, handed the decision-making power back to me. Whether she had given up or had been compliant since I revealed myself as Xenon, I wasn't sure. But thanks to their consideration and concession, I could make a choice. I turned my gaze back to Arwen.

Arwen seemed to have noticed something from the reactions and looked directly at me. Her tightly pressed lips and her brightly shining silver-gray eyes were incredibly adorable. I smiled softly and spoke to her in a slightly cautious voice.

“Arwen.”

“Y-Yes, speak.”

“You might have heard during the presentation, but I'm not as great a person as you think. Even if your hypothesis is correct, it doesn't change the fact that I'm an ordinary person.”

It feels like a deception, but it's not a lie. As Arwen suspects, I am indeed someone from another world. But in that world, I was like a rolling stone. An author who endlessly wrote novels, deeply affected by the shock of my parents' accidental death.

Of course, there's almost no chance my past life will be revealed, but if it somehow gets out? What kind of reaction would there be? This goes not just for me but for others as well. Currently, misconceptions are piling up, and this could come back to haunt me.

“S-So, is what I'm thinking correct? Really?”

“Uh...”

Contrary to my expectations, Arwen seemed fixated on a peculiar part of my words. The moment she heard me, her silver-gray eyes began to sparkle. Unsure of how to respond, I hesitantly nodded.

After all, with Cecily present, I couldn't lie. Though I wouldn't disclose the details, even this felt like shedding a layer of protection.

“Yes, but that's all I can say.”

“I knew it... So, it's not a ‘restriction’ but more like a ‘rebound’ side effect. Even simple teleportation causes a rebound depending on the distance, so if it's to that extent...”

Perhaps because she's well-versed in magic, Arwen, upon hearing my ambiguous response, started diving into her imagination. The thought of having to explain not only the restrictions but now also the rebound was daunting.

“What do you mean? Rebound? Can't elves and demons use magic freely?”

“That's true, but there's no such thing as no rebound. For example, if you push a boulder with your bare hands, it strains your muscles. It's similar to that.”

“Oh, I get it now.”

Marie and Cecily were chatting away beside me, but I let their conversation go in one ear and out the other. Arwen was far more important at that moment. I cleared my throat to change the atmosphere. Startled, Arwen snapped out of her theoretical musings.

“Ahem. Ahem. I apologize for showing such disgrace again.”

“It's nothing. Anyway, Arwen.”

Now, to the main point. I looked directly at Arwen and asked in a soft, gentle voice.

“Why do you like me?”

In response to my question, she gave a bright, cheerful smile and replied.

“There are too many reasons to choose just one.”

“...”

I was rendered speechless. This was the first time I had seen Arwen smile so innocently and brightly.

Feeling embarrassed, I gently rubbed the back of my neck before composing myself. There was only one thing left to do.

“Then...”

“There's no need to say it. Actually, I prefer if you don't.”

Just before I could accept her, Arwen shook her head and stopped me from speaking. She had made her feelings so obvious before, yet now she didn't want me to say anything. I raised an eyebrow, puzzled by her sudden change.

In the meantime, Arwen slowly reached out and gently held my hands, softly squeezing them. She then looked at me with a bright smile and shyly confessed her feelings.

“Can you wait a little until I gather the courage? When that time comes, I’ll bring the gift I mentioned before.”

“Is that really necessary?”

“It is, at least for me. Until now, I’ve only received from you, so please allow me to give meaning to this too.”

Although her face looked like it was about to melt from embarrassment, her voice was firm. It seemed I had to take a step back here. I nodded in agreement, and Arwen’s smile became even brighter. I wondered what kind of event she was preparing that required such effort.

“Oh. Is there a specific time you have in mind? I can adjust to your preferred time.”

“Um... can you give me about a month? There’s someone else I need to deal with first.”

“Is it a woman?”

“...”

Her intuition was spot on. As she guessed, I was planning to resolve things with Leona, specifically with her mother. Marie had told me that Leona was urgently looking for me. Her mother was likely at the academy too.

“I thought so. Well, it’s natural for a hero who saved the world to have many women around him. Have you heard of ‘heroic lechery’?”

“I know what it means, but I don’t think it’s a fitting title for me...”

“You lie so shamelessly, Xenon! Just look at us!”

Just as I was about to reject the title I couldn’t accept, Cecily, filled with mischief, shouted loud enough for everyone to hear.

...I can’t deny it now. Hearing her shout, I stiffened up. On the other hand, Arwen let out a faint laugh as if she found it amusing. It seemed she didn’t mind having more women around me.

“It’s fine. Just being with you is enough for me. Anyway, this conversation has gone on for quite a while. I’m sorry if I haven’t been much help, as I believe you called me for assistance.”

“Don’t worry about it. Thanks to you, I now know what I need to do moving forward. It doesn’t necessarily have to be about Xenon’s Biography.”

“...That mischievous nature of yours hasn’t changed.”

Arwen seemed to realize who my words were targeting. Her face instantly turned red, and she looked so adorable that I wanted to pinch her cheeks.

“Well then, I’ll be off. Let’s meet exactly one month and fifteen days from today. You can look forward to the gift prepared in Alvenheim.”

“I’ll be looking forward to it.”

“Wait a minute, Isaac.”

Just as things were about to wrap up, Marie slowly walked towards us. Come to think of it, there was still a hurdle left.

Arwen looked at her with a puzzled expression, while Marie also stared at her intently. The two women stared at each other for a while. In the tense atmosphere, Marie was the first to speak.

“You might have finished talking with Isaac, but our conversation isn’t over, is it? You shouldn’t think you can just brush this off.”

“Ah... Th-That’s true.”

“Alright! Shall we go? Cecily and Adelia, you come along too.”

And so, Arwen was dragged to another room. I had no idea what they were going to talk about, but I hoped they wouldn’t be too harsh.

How much time passed after that?

“I-I’ll be going now!”

Arwen left the mansion as if she were fleeing. Just before leaving, she alternated between looking at my face and something below it.

Seeing her leave in such a hurry made me curious, so I asked Marie what they talked about...

“We just gave her a ‘preview.’ That’s really all.”

“...?”

“We were fine, but it seemed like it would be really tough for the queen.”

All I got was a vague answer that didn’t really clarify anything.

Time passed, and when volumes 24 and 24.5 were released.

[The identity of the book released alongside volume 24 is... none other than A Beautiful Night of Love.]

[Explicit and detailed psychological depictions of both parties.]

[It must be based on Xenon’s own experiences. However, isn’t the content a bit too explicit...?]

“Oh, right.”

I forgot to bribe the media.

Translators note:

‘I forgot to bribe the media.’ This dude.

Chapter 321: Opening (1)

Before we begin, let's briefly explore the sexual culture of this world. Unlike Earth, this world contains mana and magic, and even different races and gods exist here. As a result, despite resembling the medieval era, various differences become apparent in many areas.

For example, having power and fame can earn you treatment akin to nobility, or inventions like refrigerators and magic engines exist despite not fitting the era. These peculiar differences highlight how the culture here differs significantly from Earth's.

One of the most notable differences is in sexual culture, as mentioned earlier. In this world, everyone is considered an adult at the age of 17, equivalent to a high school freshman in South Korea.

Unless in special cases, individuals inherit their parents' trade and eventually marry a compatible partner. Nobles, who are required to attend the academy, tend to marry later, although they often get engaged early on.

So, how do people in this world become aware of 'sex'? Women might begin to understand it through the significant event of their first menstruation, but what about men?

It's driven by 'instinct,' ingrained at the genetic level. Simple interactions with someone they're attracted to can make their heart race or cause physical reactions.

If they seek advice from their parents about these new feelings, their parents, being experienced, will kindly explain everything step by step. Alternatively, they might learn through certain incidents, such as accidentally seeing a naked person of the opposite sex, witnessing a sexual act, or viewing erotic artwork. These various experiences are not socially problematic; they're considered natural human instincts.

But what if Xenon's Biography, regarded as a holy book, depicted the beautiful first night between a man and a woman? It's worth noting that Xenon's Biography is rated for

all ages. It's a book that not only saved the world but also significantly improved people's literacy skills.

A fascinating and somewhat provocative story that, once you get into it, you can't put down. A book that everyone must read thoroughly, even without someone else's recommendation. How would people react if a scene of love between a man and a woman appeared in such a book?

[Explicitly depicted first night of a man and a woman. Xenon and Mary's first night was elegant, while Jin and Lily's was sublime.]

[Main and supporting characters finally coming together. Readers' reactions are enthusiastic.]

[The end of the story is starting to come into view.]

Critics, focusing only on the story itself, showed calm reactions. No matter how provocative the content, the flow of the story was what mattered to them.

However, what truly matters is the public's reaction. Ideally, the media should have been bribed, but I forgot and released it as it was. Specifically, it was released as volume 24.5, but the media blatantly reported it as an adult version.

[Explosive reactions with some expressing concerns. Although an age restriction was imposed later, the books already sold remained out there...]

[To parents: Please ensure that the newly released side story does not come into your children's hands.]

[While the scene was necessary, there will be men and women who try to emulate it.]

As a result, many expressed concerns. Even though it was Xenon's Biography, the 'first night' was a sensitive topic for them. Let's recall that occasionally, there are virgins who sacrifice their purity to pay off taxes or debts. It's a subject treated with great caution religiously, and 'lust' is one of the sins.

Although their knowledge and culture regarding this topic are less advanced than Earth's, they instinctively understand the need to handle it carefully.

[Parents' struggles: After secretly reading the adult version, children began asking various questions.]

[The problem is not the children who have awakened to sex but those who haven't. Their untainted innocence makes them more vulnerable.]

[Fortunately, sexual crimes haven't surged... If anything, they seem to have decreased due to new ways to relieve desires.]

As time went on, more and more news started to emerge. Fortunately, sexual crimes didn't increase, possibly due to the new means of relieving desires through the adult version. Instead, the opposite effect appeared.

Even the clergy do not consider masturbation a sin, let alone a crime. The gods themselves consoled people, viewing it as a natural instinct. Considering it a sin would be akin to rejecting the gods.

Of course, many children secretly read the adult version and awakened to sexuality, causing trouble for their parents. This was somewhat expected, so I can overlook it. It's my fault for not bribing the media in the first place, so I should apologize.

Anyway, although there was a slight stir, it didn't seem to cause major social upheaval...

[Couples on their first night should definitely read and follow this.]

...But what's this? I blinked as I stared at the newspaper headline.

[Both partners are eager on their first night. However, men should be patient, and women need time to relax.]

[Although sensitive areas differ from person to person, there are common areas as depicted in Xenon's Biography.]

[The process is important, but the ending is more so. If you truly love each other, embrace and feel each other's warmth.]

[Following the book's instructions will suffice for the first night. Even beyond the first night, following it can lead to greater pleasure...]

Really? I've never seen an erotic story treated as a teaching tool before. I couldn't help but laugh.

Following the detailed descriptions in Xenon's Biography is apparently enough to ensure a successful first night. This is absurd on many levels. However, it's somewhat

understandable. There probably wasn't any other detailed description of a first night like in volume 24.5.

In this world, sexual knowledge is mostly passed down orally. That alone must have been insufficient.

Of course, my experience combined with the most ideal methods made it challenging to follow exactly.

'If it was helpful, then... well...'

I thought about how it would contribute to the birth rate and the harmony between couples.

[Could we have just one more book... not about the first night, but after becoming more accustomed to it...]

No. I have no plans to write more. Although there was a hint of desperation, I have no intention of adding more scenes. If I ever did, it would be in a post-war side story. The scenes were critical turning points in the storyline, so I had to write them.

Besides, Xenon's Biography allows for secondary creations. Volume 24.5 will inevitably be adapted into illustrations, which should satisfy some of their desires.

[Writing in such detail implies experience. This could be proof that Xenon is from the future.]

[Xenon has a fiancée, yet oddly knows a lot about elven and demon sexual culture.]

[Heroic lechery. Could there be a more fitting term?]

These people. They skipped all the context and jumped straight to baseless accusations.

As everyone knows, even after confessing my true identity, people are still convinced that I'm a prophet or someone who has returned from the future.

They believe that even if these stories came from my mind, I forgot all the details due to some restriction. They think my reactions are because I've experienced things beyond what an ordinary person can imagine.

So, they're now speculating again, using volumes 24 and 24.5 as evidence. But contrary to what they think, all the erotic scenes are based on my personal experiences.

I held out the newspaper and showed it to the women beside me. Up until now, Marie, Cecily, and Adelia had been reading the newspaper together.

“Look at this. No matter what I say, they don’t believe me. They’ve been nitpicking about this kind of stuff.”

“Hmm...”

“Now you understand how I feel, right?”

The fact that such articles were being published was actually beneficial to me. It could clear up some of the misunderstandings that people had.

Cecily knew that I came from another world but mistakenly thought it was a parallel world rather than a completely different one. Although I didn’t intend to clear up her misunderstanding, I felt I should at least clarify that it wasn’t about that.

“Well, it must be frustrating. Even if you deny it, these people won’t believe you. I can understand a bit.”

Fortunately, my persuasion seemed to work as Cecily nodded and gave me the response I was hoping for. With my identity revealed, if similar articles were to come out in the future, other people’s misunderstandings could be cleared up...

“Well, I understand.”

...But why does Marie always have to spoil things? I felt my hopes crumble as I turned my gaze to her. She had a finger to her cheek, pondering, and sensing that the attention was on her, she quietly spoke.

“Isaac was skilled when he was with me. He did just as described in Xenon’s Biography. And I even fainted.”

“Skilled?”

“Yes. My mother told me that men usually rush on the first night and don’t consider the woman. But Isaac wasn’t like that, was he?”

“Now that you mention it...”

“I experienced the same.”

With Marie's credible statement, Cecily and Adelia each gave affirmative responses. They both looked at me simultaneously.

I was left speechless, unable to say anything. The basics were widely spread on the internet...

'...Ah.'

That was the problem. Following all that information from my previous life had come back to haunt me, both in Xenon's Biography and now.

"Isaac."

"..."

"Why were you so good at it? I'm your first woman, right? You didn't secretly meet other women, did you...?"

"No, really. You are my first woman. I swear to the gods."

"Hmm... It's more suspicious because you're not lying. Where did you learn all that?"

"..."

I didn't learn it, I saw it. But I couldn't bring myself to say that out loud.

When the first nights of the main and supporting characters in Xenon's Biography caused a great stir, a woman was kneeling in prayer. Before her stood a statue of Luminous, firmly in place. It emanated a golden aura, suggesting it was imbued with divine power.

The woman, praying with her hands neatly clasped and in a reverent posture, was none other than Cardinal Kate.

As always, her devoutness was evident as she prayed, but this time something was different. Her usually serene expression was replaced by one of anguish. Her slightly furrowed brows and sorrowful eyes made this clear.

[You are troubled, my beloved child.]

Luminous, with his characteristic gentle and warm voice, addressed her. He already sensed the nature of her troubles but knew the importance of letting her voice tell herself. True value of confession lies in expressing it willingly.

Upon hearing Luminous's question, Kate bowed her head slightly and spoke.

'Lord Luminous, I have committed a sin.'

To her surprise, Kate confessed to having committed a sin. Her voice, filled with guilt, became noticeably quieter. As a cardinal, and the most influential figure in Xavier, her confession was shocking.

Luminous paused briefly after hearing her confession, then spoke quietly.

[What sin have you committed?]

'I read the holy scripture published by Lord Isaac. And then...'

Kate hesitated for a moment before finally confessing her sin.

'I harbored desires towards Lord Isaac that I should not have.'

[... ...]

It was the most natural sin for a cleric who had awakened to such feelings too late.

Translators note:

Chapter 322: Opening (2)

Grand Inquisitor Kate Louise Angelica. Her life can be likened to a train running on well-laid tracks. As a child, her village was attacked by bandits, and she lost her parents, but she was rescued and entrusted to a temple. The temple doubled as an orphanage, and most of the children raised there pursued careers related to the clergy.

This alone would have set her on a certain path, but Kate's case was different. Like one blessed by Luminous, her divine power was unparalleled compared to others. As seen with Isaac, divine power can be used in various ways, but it is directly related to 'growth.'

The reason Kate could secure the position of Grand Inquisitor at a young age is because of this. Did anyone harbor dissatisfaction along the way? None. Who would dare hold a grudge against someone directly blessed by Luminous? Instead, the number of people who revered and followed her grew.

There were no issues with her capabilities either. The number of devil worshippers Kate had crushed was countless. Her combat prowess was well known, earning her the title 'Blue Flame.'

Moreover, she possessed a sharp mind. Devil worshippers, who usually stayed hidden, found themselves dragged out and beaten by Kate herself. Her prowess in both martial and intellectual fields, combined with her devout faith and the temple's care of her appearance, made her a true embodiment of a well-rounded individual.

However, perhaps due to always running on the tracks laid by the church, Kate had a significant yet seemingly minor flaw. She lacked common sense regarding sexual matters. It wasn't just pure ignorance, like a child's innocence, but rather a skewed understanding.

Take, for example, the monthly 'days.' Being human, it was natural for her to experience her first menstruation. When she saw the unexpected flow of blood and rushed to the priest in shock, the priest, though flustered, calmly explained.

'Congratulations, Kate. You have now become an adult.'

'I've... become an adult?'

'Yes. This blood is just a natural part of becoming an adult. There's no need to be ashamed or surprised.'

Afterwards, the priest began to teach her about the female body, one step at a time.

She was taught about menstruation, how to manage it, and how to maintain cleanliness. This was all well and good, but the next question Kate asked was quite awkward.

'Can I have a baby too?'

'Yes, you can.'

'How are babies born?'

'...'

The number one most difficult question for any parent to answer: How are babies born?

The priest in charge found it hard to answer but managed to come up with a response.

'Well... If you receive a man's seed, you can have a baby. But! This is only possible with a man you love. Understand?'

'Then what is love?'

'That's a difficult question to answer. It's something you'll come to understand as you grow. Given that you are blessed by Luminous, when you find someone you love, he will be happy for you too.'

That was the end of the education. The priest believed that Kate would naturally come to understand these things over time.

This turned out to be a misjudgment that might have never been realized. The church treated her not as a 'person' but as a devout 'follower' of Luminous.

Moreover, Kate herself, realizing she was blessed by Luminous, intensified her devotion. Her almost obsessive faith was dangerous in many ways, but considering that the Luminous church had once caused a significant incident, they were careful to exercise restraint.

Due to this precarious balancing act, even Luminous couldn't directly confront her. As a result, she ascended to the position of Cardinal at a young age, becoming a 'clergy' figure perfected in martial prowess.

The church was entirely unaware of Kate's lack of common sense. Blessed by Luminous, she was an object of admiration and reverence, occupying an untouchable position. Who would dare to correct her?

Sometimes, people were captivated by her beauty and background, but Kate always politely declined their advances with a smile. Her body and soul were entirely devoted to Luminous, and she firmly believed that serving him was serving herself.

Therefore, some priests, unable to contain their curiosity, asked her:

'Cardinal Kate, do you plan to marry?'

'I will marry the man chosen by Lord Luminous.'

'...Is there such a person?'

Yes, there was. It was the young man Isaac Ducker Michelle, the author of Xenon's Biography. At first, Kate was uncertain, but as time went on, she became convinced. This man was the one chosen by Luminous, the single beam of light to save the world and purify it.

So she directly approached Isaac and asked him to give her his seed, but for some reason, Isaac steadfastly refused. This left her puzzled. Countless men had courted her, so why was he refusing? Did he not like her?

But judging by his reactions, it wasn't that he disliked her. He simply seemed burdened and found her request odd. As time passed and Xenon's Biography continued to shine brighter, Kate's desire grew stronger.

Just as he spread light everywhere, she also wanted to receive his light. Noting that there were already women who seemed to have received his light, Kate waited quietly.

It was similar to a 'baptism' bestowed by Luminous. So, she decided to receive it with a devout heart, ensuring that her body remained pure as she awaited the day she would receive his seed. That was her plan.

Until she read the newly published Xenon's Biography, Kate had never consciously acknowledged her own 'desires.' The first night when the main and supporting

characters confirm their feelings and truly become one. Kate, being of legal age, was able to read volume 24.5.

'I harbored desires towards Lord Isaac that I should not have.'

And she realized it too late. Volume 24.5, with its explicit depiction of lovers' beautiful first night, shattered Kate's understanding of sexuality. But it wasn't just the content; it was a particular line that disrupted her deeply held beliefs.

[I want to have your child.]

This was said by Lily as she gently caressed Jin's face. Jin, hearing those words, turned into a beast and passionately embraced Lily. The desire to have a child. That line echoed in Kate's mind.

For a woman to have a child, a man's seed is absolutely necessary. But why did men and women embrace each other naked for this? And why did reading this make her think of Isaac's face? Could this really be the process of receiving the seed?

Volume 24.5 was a major stimulus and a thrilling experience for Kate, who had always led a bland and simple life. Like an innocent child ignorant of sex, she knew she shouldn't be reading it, but she read every word thoroughly...

And for the first time in her life, she pleased herself. She had no idea what it meant, only that it happened.

The 'instinct' ingrained in her genes had awakened.

'While thinking of him, I touched myself like a beast. Even though I knew it was wrong, I couldn't stop my hands.'

[... ...]

'Will he forgive me? For harboring such impure thoughts? For tainting myself, not by someone else, but by my own actions?'

As a result of this series of events, Kate began her confession. She was utterly devastated.

Even if she didn't fully understand the acts described in volume 24.5, simply desiring Isaac was a sin to her.

Even though it was supposed to be about a man and a woman sharing love, the desire for ‘pleasure’ was the first thing to emerge. And the target of that pleasure was none other than Isaac, a man she should revere like Luminous, yet she harbored feelings she shouldn’t have.

[... ...]

Luminous, understanding Kate’s feelings deeply, found it difficult to respond. Her desires were natural human emotions. Moreover, although she was unaware, she was already deeply infatuated with Isaac. This could be called love.

Although her near-fanatical devotion obscured it, the expression of ‘love’ can be used in various ways. There is the love between parents and children, love between lovers, love between friends, and love between a deity and their followers.

Originally, Kate’s feelings for Isaac were similar to her feelings for Luminous. The key point here is that Luminous is an elusive transcendent being, whereas Isaac is a human. This single difference confused her heart. Volume 24.5 caused her emotions to erupt into the form of desire.

This is also why she felt sinful. She considered truly loving Isaac to be a sin. The church’s misguidance and her unique faith combined to shake her identity.

[Don’t worry, my child. The feelings you harbor are not a sin.]

‘But I...’

[That feeling is ‘love.’ It is the most fragile yet strongest emotion a person can have.]

Therefore, Luminous began to gently explain to the troubled Kate. Her clear eyes blinked in surprise. Such a conversation would have been impossible with another believer, but her recently increased divine power made it possible.

Of course, she couldn’t foresee the future directly like Isaac, but ‘counseling’ was possible.

[Feeling desire for him, wanting to possess him, these are all natural. There’s no need to blame yourself.]

‘This feeling... is love?’

[Yes. You might not have realized it, but you've loved Isaac for a long time. Doesn't your heart race or do you feel happy when you think of his face?]

Listening to Luminous's kind voice, Kate thought deeply. Indeed, she often felt that way.

When a fake Xenon touched her cheek last time, she thought of Isaac. All she could think about was meeting him and purifying her tainted body. Although she didn't feel her heart race when they first met, over time, her feelings turned into something akin to fanaticism.

'This is... love...'

[Yes. So there's no need to worry too much. It's an emotion every human will inevitably feel.]

'Then the act I did last night... Is it not dirty?'

[...]

Luminous was momentarily at a loss for words. Kate was referring to masturbation. Still, since it was a natural act, he managed to respond with some difficulty.

[That's correct. It's an act to resolve your desires.]

'But what if I can't satisfy my desires no matter how much I do it...?'

[...]

Once again, Luminous was speechless. Even a transcendent being who could glimpse the future couldn't solve everything. The emotions Kate was experiencing were no different. Ideally, he wanted to explain everything to her, but as he mentioned earlier, he knew the future.

Luminous's sincere wish was to derive the best outcome from countless possible scenarios. The problem was Kate's mindset. She felt sinful, but she had no sense of 'shame' or 'embarrassment.'

In other words, a misstep here could completely distort her understanding of sex. That was something Luminous desperately needed to avoid.

[...You don't need to worry about that either.]

So, Luminous silently apologized to Isaac, who was probably at his mansion. The best solution Luminous could offer was...

[The one you love dearly will help you with everything.]

...to pass the problem to Isaac. If Isaac had heard this, he would have definitely screamed, regardless of whether he really was a god or not.

A god without a shred of responsibility, how could he just pass on such a difficult issue? Luminous vividly felt the future unfolding in his mind and gently consoled her.

[Even the most beautiful emotion, love, can turn into an illness if it festers. It's best to confess your feelings to Isaac.]

'Should I also confess my desires?'

[You should ask the women around Isaac about that. They will be your great allies. Listen to their advice.]

This was true. Women would generally understand such issues better than men. Moreover, Isaac's companions were aware of Kate's ignorance regarding sex. At least, this would prevent the situation from getting more tangled.

'I see. I understand.'

[Do you feel better now?]

'I'm not sure yet. I think I need to meet him to know.'

[Remember, you don't need to feel guilty. You just want to receive his seed, right?]

'...'

[Hmm?]

Wait, that's not right. Luminous was momentarily flustered. The future changes in real time, this is a truth he knew even before the Xenon's Biography incident. But in less than a second, the future had changed. It was a minor change, but significant for Kate.

He called out to her in a slightly anxious tone.

[Child?]

'Not just... the seed.'

[Hmm?]

Kate slowly raised her head and shyly confessed.

'Is it okay if it's not just for the seed?'

[... ...]

'Is it okay to also experience the acts and pleasures described in the scripture?'

It's okay in the sense that it's natural for men and women to share pleasure through intimacy. But Kate was different. She wasn't just focused on the seed, she was also fixated on the pleasure that would come from the act.

The once pure cleric had now awakened to something else entirely.

'Please answer me, Lord Luminous. Is it acceptable to seek the emotions and pleasures that I can only obtain through him and no one else?'

After much deliberation, Luminous responded in a very strained voice.

[...It is acceptable.]

'Thank you, Lord Luminous.'

At his answer, Kate's lips curved into a deep smile. Already, her lower abdomen tingled with anticipation for the day she would receive his seed.

'Oh, Lord Isaac... please, hurry and...'

[... ...]

Luminous witnessed his beloved devotee being overtaken by lust in real-time.

The very next day.

'Lord Luminous.'

[I'm sorry.]

'Do you think an apology is enough?'

Isaac, who had just gone through a commotion, came to confront Luminous.

Translators note:

Luminous really just yeeted that hot potato at him lololol

Chapter 323: Opening (3)

I had expected Kate to come looking for me even before the release. People with ambiguous knowledge are always the most dangerous, and Kate's understanding of sexuality was no exception.

She would be shocked by volume 24.5, consult with Luminous, and then come to me. My plan was simple: I would calmly hand her over to the women. They were aware of Kate's devastating lack of knowledge about sex and would use this opportunity to teach her properly.

They would explain the significance of such acts as a person, what true purity meant as taught by the church, and why it was important not to misuse her body, even for the sake of Luminous or me. I hoped this would help her see me differently and perhaps even temper her fanaticism, improving our relationship.

At least, that's what I thought.

"Lord Isaac, I have a request."

"Yes, please go ahead."

"Please spend the first night with me tonight."

"Understo... What?"

Until Kate, with an uncharacteristically flushed face, made her request. It seems "no backing down" was the phrase of the moment.

Ignoring my and everyone's astonishment, she placed her hand on her chest, closed her eyes, and spoke in a voice that seemed to be calming her excitement.

"After reading the holy scripture, I felt desires for you, Isaac. I felt guilty for harboring such desires and pleaded to Luminous. But Luminous told me it was alright, that I had only come to realize it late. He also told me that my feelings for you are 'love.'"

“...”

“Thanks to that, I realized. I love you, Isaac, and my desires are also part of that love. The acts described in the scripture are acts of love, and they will bring me greater pleasure than when I pleased myself. Just the act of receiving your seed holds immense significance.”

Then she opened her eyes and looked directly at me. There was madness and desire in her gaze, but strangely, it didn't feel sordid or repulsive.

It was clear I needed to handle this carefully.

Despite being completely colored by 'lust,' her purity remained intact. It was this purity, now tainted by lust, that made her seem fallen in another sense. What kind of conversation had transpired to change her so drastically? I was utterly bewildered.

It's not as if she had become a different person; Kate's characteristic innocence remained. It was just colored by something different.

“So, Isaac, I ask you. Please spend the first night with me. I need to know beforehand to receive your seed more easily in the future.”

“...Is that really your only purpose?”

A lust-driven Kate aroused suspicion. In the past, I might have just thought she was a bit naive and let it pass. But now she knew the 'methods.' However, she only understood the methods and not what they symbolized or meant.

In other words, it's not her knowledge that's the problem but her 'perception.' Let's think about how terrifying a fanatic can be. They are monsters who believe that anything is permissible for the sake of their god.

Fortunately, Kate wasn't entirely like that, but still...

“Yes. And Isaac, you can also experience pleasure. Luminous told me that it's okay for the man I love to feel that pleasure.”

“Oh my...”

She was simply lacking. I held my head, feeling dizzy. Kate's words weren't wrong.

The pleasure that loving couples derive from sexual relations is a natural sensation. Luminous probably meant it in that sense, but Kate was the problem. From the

beginning, she considered receiving my seed to be a sacred act.

Moreover, Kate, as a cardinal managed by the church, had lived a celibate life. They say late awakenings are the scariest, and she was a prime example of that. Combined with her unique devotion, she had become an unpredictable individual.

Realizing her feelings for me as love, she was charging forward like a runaway train.

“...Wait a moment, Cardinal Kate. Can we talk?”

Finally, Marie, unable to watch any longer, called out to Kate.

Kate turned her gaze towards Mari. Marie sighed at the sight of Kate’s seemingly innocent yet lustful face. It was a sigh filled with complex emotions.

Afterwards, she pondered on how to explain and then quietly opened her mouth.

“Cardinal Kate, have you now learned how babies are made?”

“I learned it through the scriptures.”

“Did you not feel embarrassed or think it was shameless while reading it?”

Even the most open-minded person has a hint of embarrassment, as Marie’s question implied. This is a basic human emotion.

It can happen when one’s intimate parts are exposed due to a mistake or when they are inadvertently exposed to a certain atmosphere, and so on.

I wonder if Kate feels such emotions too.

“Why would it be embarrassing? Lord Luminous said it was natural.”

She doesn’t! I became convinced and clapped my forehead.

Once again, Kate hadn’t changed at all. She was simply colored by different hues.

She would carry out all commands for Luminous and would even sacrifice her life for me, the clergyman.

A new desire called ‘lust’ was just added to this large canvas, but the base itself remained unchanged.

“.....Then, Cardinal Kate, do you have such feelings for any man other than Isaac?”

This was not Marie’s question, but Cecily’s. Her question was filled with curiosity, as she shared many similarities with Kate.

She considered me both the savior of the demons and a grace bestowed by the gods.

Now, she treats me as myself, but everyone knows she still thinks that way inwardly.

Even though I felt burdened by such feelings, I accepted them gracefully. Unlike Kate, she didn’t openly worship me.

“That’s an excessive question, Princess Cecily. My body is only permitted for Lord Luminous and Sir Isaac. No one else can defile it.”

“Lord Luminous aside, why Isaac?”

“Because he is the one who will spread light in this world, a saint blessed not only by Lord Luminous but also by the gods.”

Kate answered with a crumpled expression, seemingly offended. She frowned as if she didn’t even want to imagine it.

Now that I think about it, didn’t she make me touch her cheek with my hand during the identity announcement? At that time, Kate had a look as if something dirty was being washed away.

Cecily thought for a moment after hearing Kate’s answer, then nodded and asked her next question.

“Then, what if, by some chance, another saint who accomplishes feats similar to Isaac appears? What would you do then? Surely...”

“Princess Cecily, when do you think a saint like Sir Isaac will appear again?”

“.....”

For once, Kate presented a highly persuasive argument. Cecily’s mouth shut like a clam at that single point.

And rightly so, since my achievements have changed the entire world and made it safe from the dangers of the demon war.

Kate glared coldly at her for a moment, then turned her gaze back to me.

As soon as our eyes met, the cold expression vanished. Only the flushed face of a maiden awaiting her first night remained.

Then she placed her hand on her chest and, with a mixture of anticipation and excitement, declared.

“I swear to Sir Isaac. My body is entirely yours.”

“.....”

“You don’t have to give me your seed right away. I can wait. However, I judge that we need to perform the act to make it easier to receive your seed, so I request once again.”

“*Sigh*.....”

How did she end up like this? I rubbed my face dryly in frustration.

It’s so typical of Kate to make such a request out of the blue. She hasn’t changed at all.

The problem is that she has awakened too late. My first thought is to reject her.

“...I’m sorry, Kate. Not yet.”

“When you say ‘not yet’...”

“There are others besides you...”

I was embarrassed to say this, but I had no choice because it was Kate. It’s better to tell her to wait for her turn rather than making various excuses.

Kate, upon hearing my answer, seemed disappointed but nodded in understanding.

“I see. If only I had known a little earlier... It’s a bit regretful.”

If you had known a little earlier, I would have already withered away. As soon as I thought of that, I felt a chill run down my spine.

Now that I think about it, Kate is a cardinal. She is a cleric with the strongest influence and favored by Luminous.

She has possessed a high level of divine power since birth. What would happen if I had intercourse with such a person?

It's not an exaggeration to say that it would be like doing it with someone who possesses the stamina of both Adelia and Cecily at her peak during her cycle.

Moreover, she has strong recovery abilities based on her immense divine power...

'...I'm really screwed, aren't I?'

I glanced at Kate while seriously pondering. She was still waiting quietly, her face flushed with anticipation.

In erotic novels or light novels, most of the saints depicted quickly fall into corruption. Afterward, their saintly image completely disappears, and they are reborn as succubi.

Could Kate be one of those cases? And she even wants it herself, not being forced.

'But what kind of teaching method led her to become so unhinged like this?'

So I asked Luminous directly. What kind of teachings turned Kate into a saint in a different sense?

I had Kate stay at the mansion for a while and went to the temple alone.

'Lord Luminous.'

[I'm sorry.]

'Is "sorry" enough for this?'

After hearing the whole story, I had to argue. If you're going to teach, teach properly. I don't understand why you made it even worse.

Of course, Luminous also felt a bit of unfairness in this. The direct cause of Kate's condition lies with the church.

If the church had taught her in more detail and restrained her piety a bit more, her beliefs wouldn't have become so twisted.

'Let's say I loaded the bullet... no, drew the bowstring. At the very least, Lord Luminous, you should have adjusted it to hit the target accurately.'

[That's right.]

'But the arrow flew in a completely wrong direction, and now you've even passed the bow onto me?'

[.....]

Luminous couldn't respond to my detailed grievances. Honestly, it's okay that the arrow flew in the wrong direction.

The act of passing the bow to me, in other words, dumping the already tainted Kate onto me, was the main point here.

At the very least, if they had taught her what not to do, it would have been different. But they handed her over because it was too troublesome to explain everything in detail.

That's why I'm so irritated. Though I do have some responsibility in this, and Luminous also has some unfairness in the situation, that's why I only argued. Otherwise, I would have been much angrier.

'Sigh... Lord Luminous.'

[Speak.]

'Honestly, if Kate and I were to be together, it would benefit you as well, wouldn't it?'

[I can't deny that.]

A child born between Kate and me would grow up to be a wonderful clergyman. Becoming a cardinal would be a given.

If the number of clergy increases and their quality improves, it would significantly impact the gods. And the gods could bestow even greater divine power upon them.

It's practically a virtuous cycle. That's why Kate was so insistent on getting the seed from the beginning.

I sighed deeply, then ran my hand down my face and quietly spoke.

'...Since things have already turned out this way, I won't say much. But please give me as much divine power as possible, because I might really wither away.'

[Speaking of which...]

'What? Don't tell me you can't give it to me?'

If so, I would really die. Not just Kate, but Leona and Arwen are also scheduled.

Especially Leona, who has robust hardware as a beastman, and if it coincides with her mating season, who knows what will happen.

[It's quite the opposite. I can give you much more divine power than before. This applies not only to me but also to Mora.]

'Why?'

Luminous answered my question with a voice filled with inexplicable satisfaction.

[It's also thanks to your book. The population is expected to increase. This means there will be more children for us to bless.]

'Was it really true? I couldn't believe it.'

[Of course. Just following it increases satisfaction, and naturally, the bond between lovers and married couples would strengthen. You don't have to look far, you can see it around you.]

'.....Seriously?'

Two people come to mind when thinking about who might be nearby. The ones who were most passionate when Marie and I had our first night.

[You might see another sibling soon. I won't say more.]

'Aigoo...'

I could only genuinely sigh. No wonder Father looked more exhausted.

So, after finishing my conversation with Luminous and returning to the mansion, it happened.

“So, the confirmed ones so far are me, Cecily, Adelia, Arwen, and Kate. Five people, right?”

“What about Leona?”

“She isn’t completely confirmed yet. Let’s include her as a maybe. So then...”

“Include Cherry as well. So the remaining ones are Leona, Rina, and Cherry.”

“Even if we do it once a day, the cycle is too long. We wouldn’t even do it once a week?”

The women, except for Kate, were huddled together, making a plan that wasn’t quite a plan.

It seemed like they were arranging the schedule for nights with me, including those who hadn’t been confirmed yet.

“This won’t work. Exclude me. Since I’m the main wife, I can do as I please, right?”

“Wow... You’re only saying you’re the main wife at times like this. Isn’t that too much?”

“If you’re upset, you should have confessed to Isaac first.”

“Tch.”

“Uh... Aren’t you going to ask for my opinion?”

When I asked timidly,

“The guilty public good should stay out of it. Just focus on exercising if you don’t want to wither away.”

“Yes.”

I only got a counterattack from Marie.

This is quite sad.

“Don’t pretend to be sad. It’s your own fault, isn’t it?”

It was truly my own fault, so I had nothing to say.

Translators note:

Chapter 324: Opening (4)

A storm ensued due to Kate awakening to her sexuality, but fortunately, it passed without much trouble.

This was partly because Kate conceded and agreed to wait her turn. There was no resistance from the other women.

In fact, it wasn't just my fault but also Luminous' who pulled the trigger, so it's hard to blame anyone. It was fortunate that for me, who would dare to challenge a god?

Of course, as a result, I couldn't avoid being treated as a public good for a while. I thought they were joking, but it turned out to be true.

Marie was especially harsh. She was already agitated because of Arwen, and Kate's sudden intrusion made her jealousy explode.

She expressed her jealousy and affection by biting my neck hard enough to leave teeth marks, giving me hickeys, or occasionally nibbling on my cheeks.

I humbly accepted these expressions of her love and jealousy. The fact that it ended at this showed Marie's considerable tolerance.

In any case, all of Kate's sexual concerns were resolved, and we returned to our normal routine. At that time, more people had arrived, so I spent my days reading fan letters and opening gifts.

However, there were still countless tasks remaining. Most notably, there was Leona at the academy.

According to Marie, she was eagerly looking for me. I heard that her mother had also arrived at the academy.

If I left things as they were, it could hurt Leona's feelings, and her mother might view me negatively.

Knowing that I'm Xenon should count for something, but to gain her favor, I must go there.

With that in mind, I contacted the empire to inform them of my return to the academy. It was better to give advance notice rather than causing a fuss by showing up unannounced.

How did I inform them? I contacted them through the wizard dispatched to our mansion. Although not capable of teleportation, small items could be sent and received.

Thinking that the wizard was almost omnipotent, if not entirely, I received a reply. The first concern was about the dormitory.

The academy ostensibly promotes equality, but that's not entirely true. It's more about 'fairness' than equality.

Although each student is assigned one dormitory room, security and protection vary slightly according to status.

There's not much difference up to the count level, but from the marquess level up, they are assigned to dormitories with strict security. For royalty like Leort and Rina, the level is different altogether.

Though it's highly unlikely, what if, just what if, someone manages to infiltrate? If they manage to harm the royal family?

The academy's honor would be tarnished, and there would be international chaos. Especially, the Ters Kingdom would be under suspicion.

To prevent such incidents, students of royal status and above are assigned to dormitories with double or triple security measures. This applies to students from other countries as well.

'I wonder if Hiriya will come to the academy?'

I'm quite curious about that. It would be interesting if she continues her studies here.

Anyway, the dormitory assignment went smoothly. They'll probably add extra guards as well.

Speaking of guards, the next issue is related to them. There's a significant challenge here.

Adelia, being my personal maid, will naturally stay by my side, so there's no issue there. The problem is whom to assign and how many.

I prefer to travel with a small entourage, but that's difficult. With the real threat of devil worshippers, it would be akin to courting death.

I can't move around quietly either. This red hair makes me stand out wherever I go.

However, using disguise magic could help mask my appearance to some extent. Many people around me are skilled in magic, so it's a plausible idea.

Especially the 'Reapers' who will be dispatched from Helium will be a great help. They will cut off all potential dangers around me rather than providing direct protection.

'It wouldn't hurt to give Gartz an autograph while I'm at it.'

I feel a bit sorry for him, but let's move on. Since I've received a lot of help from him, including the typewriter, I can give him as many autographs as he wants.

Anyway, I only have one request. I don't mind being noticeable, but I don't want it to be too excessive.

It's called the Streisand effect. No matter how famous Xenon is, having too many guards could backfire.

This means I need the elite of the elite as my guards, but would such forces just be sitting idle?

In a world where 'people' are weapons and military assets themselves, it's inevitable to have many concerns.

Of course, the Empire isn't foolish and has considered this. They anticipated this issue and completed the personnel selection a long time ago.

However, the complication arose from an unexpected place. Other countries, apart from the Minerva Empire, also expressed their intent to dispatch their own guards.

With the involvement of international politics, the Empire must have been facing a headache.

Thus, apart from Adelia, there were no other personnel who could directly guard me.

I have no doubts about Adelia's abilities, but my concern is for her safety.

The fortunate part is that Marie is a full citizen of the Empire, which means the Empire is directly protecting her. This is the reason nothing has happened so far.

The problem lies with me. I was considering delaying my return to the academy due to this dilemma.

"Then, wouldn't it be fine if I acted as your guard until then?"

"Pardon?"

"I am not affiliated with any country, and I am loyal only to Lord Luminous and you, Sir Isaac."

While I was pondering over the unexpected problem, I heard someone's voice. I looked up to see who it was.

It was Kate, who must have come to our mansion without my noticing. She was smiling at me.

"When did you come... No, before that, how did you know about my dilemma?"

"Lord Luminous informed me. He said you might need me. I heard about the guard issue from someone else."

"Oh."

This person... I wanted to say something but ended up letting out a dry laugh as I looked at Kate's face.

It seemed that Luminous had noticed my dilemma and sent her, unlike last time.

'Fortunately, her eyes are normal.'

I gazed intently at Kate's eyes. They were normal now, unlike that time.

Back then, her eyes seemed sticky yet mixed with Kate's unique purity.

Fortunately, she seemed calm now, but you never know. She might request my seed at any moment.

Anyway, let's move on from this and get back to the issue of the guards.

“...So, you are saying you will act as my guard, Kate?”

“Yes.”

“Hmm...”

I glanced at Adelia upon hearing that Kate would be my guard. She seemed uneasy, possibly because she saw Kate as an unexpected competitor.

Additionally, Adelia even cleared her throat. However, Adelia is not just a simple guard knight but my dedicated maid who assists me to the end, so there shouldn't be any overlap.

I carefully considered Kate's offer to act as my guard. Since it was Luminous who sent her, other countries would likely accept it.

Of course, this needs to be practical as well.

'Combat ability...'

Considering she's the person who's been smashing the heads of devil worshippers, questioning this is absurd. Let's skip this part.

Secondly, political neutrality. Xavier, along with the Duchy of Belua, maintains neutrality, so there's no issue here.

Lastly, justification. Kate holds the highest rank as the Grand Inquisitor in Xavier, making her overqualified to be a guard knight.

However, if she is guarding me, the situation is different. With the threat of devil worshippers, there's no better guard than her.

Moreover, she can temporarily declare a 'Sanctuary,' making her an ideal candidate for this role.

In summary, she is perfect in every way, with nothing lacking or concerning, making her the ideal guard knight.

“...It seems fine. Indeed, there are hardly any individuals as qualified as Kate. I will accept the offer.”

“Thank you.”

“But keep in mind that you are not a dedicated maid like Adelia. When I enter the dormitory, you cannot enter without my permission. Understood?”

“.....Yes.”

Why was there a delay in her response? And she even pursed her lips, openly showing her disappointment.

Surely, she won't sneak into my dormitory unable to control her desires. Even Kate would be crossing a line if she did that.

I hoped her patience was much stronger than I anticipated as I quietly spoke.

“Have you already informed the church about this?”

“I haven't, but it won't matter.”

“Why not?”

“Whatever I ask for, they grant.”

“.....”

“Besides, since Sir Isaac has given permission, they will gladly accept it.”

Does she have no idea how much influence she wields within Xavier?

It's doubtful because, apart from her devotion to Luminous, Kate doesn't care about anything else.

She dealt with the corrupt Cardinal Bark because he sullied the name of Luminous, nothing more, nothing less.

If there's anyone in Xavier with the most freedom, it's probably Kate. If she desired, she could have become the Pope.

'It's a huge relief she's on my side.'

If she were an enemy, it would have been troublesome. I sighed with relief, then a question occurred to me, so I asked Kate.

“But is it alright for you to neglect your main duties? There are still demon worshippers out there.”

“That’s not something to worry about.”

“Why not?”

“Just as insects are drawn to sweet fruit, those vermin will also come after you, Sir Isaac. Even the hidden ones will come out targeting you.”

“.....”

“I can protect you, exterminate the vermin, and be ready to receive the seed anytime. Isn’t that excellent?”

I would have agreed if she hadn’t mentioned the last part.

I let out a dry laugh and shook my head. Regardless, I couldn’t deny that I now had a reliable shield.

With that, I stood up and extended my hand forward, signaling a handshake to signify our cooperation.

“Then, please take care of me, Kate.”

“.....”

Even as I offered my hand for a handshake, Kate just stared blankly at it. Her gaze shifted between my face and my hand.

Rather than feeling embarrassed, I looked at Kate with curiosity.

Gulp

Why is she suddenly swallowing?

“*Haa... Haa...*”

What’s with those perverted breaths? And why is her face red?

As I subtly withdrew my hand, sensing that her switch had somehow turned on, Kate suddenly grabbed my hand with a somewhat urgent expression.

Not with one hand but with both, and she began to squeeze it rather uncomfortably.

Even though I tried to pull my hand away in embarrassment, she refused to let go. Instead, she greeted me while holding on.

“Oh, please take care of me, Sir Isaac...”

“Uh... Yes.”

“Sir Isaac’s hand... it’s really soft. One day, with this hand...”

Feeling increasingly alarmed, I forcibly pulled my hand away. It seemed dangerous to leave it like this.

As I pulled my hand away, Kate briefly showed a disappointed expression, then brought her hands close to her face.

And then...

“*Ssss... Haa...*”

“... ..”

She inhaled deeply, like a drug addict inhaling deeply, with an exhalation that sounded vaguely erotic.

I stared at Kate with a bewildered expression. She caressed her face with both hands for a while before lowering one hand.

Neck, collarbone, chest, and stomach, finally reaching...

“J-Just a moment... Excuse me.”

Did she finally come to her senses? Kate hurriedly fled just as her hand was about to reach a dangerous place.

I stared blankly at her retreating figure, then looked at my hand.

“...It’s not like I’m catnip.”

Even physical contact with Kate seems risky. At least, it wasn’t this severe before she awakened.

“You’re right. Human catnip.”

“...”

I decided to ignore Adelia’s blunt but true statement.

With the guard issue resolved, I prepared to depart for the academy.

“...Kate?”

“Yes, Sir Isaac. Please speak.”

“...Never mind.”

I ended up with the most dangerous ticking time bomb by my side.

Translators note:

Chapter 325: Changed Life (1)

Like leaving a fish in the care of a cat. It means entrusting something important to someone unreliable. That's my current situation.

The bigger problem is that the fish isn't something else, it's me. Moreover, I can't get rid of the cat. I must keep it by my side.

At least I have a loyal dog protecting me, diligently guarding me without leaving my side.

The cat won't always try to steal the fish, except under certain circumstances. Now that I know I'm like human catnip, I'll have to avoid physical contact as much as possible.

By now, it's clear: Kate is the cat, I'm the fish, and Adelia is the dog.

Until each country sorts out the guard issues, temporary knights are protecting me. Though temporary, there's no one as reliable and suitable as Kate.

Even though she holds the position of Grand Inquisitor, since I'm the one being guarded, it's not excessive. She's also the biggest threat to devil worshippers.

Moreover, the Luminous Church, which maintains a globally neutral stance, ensures there are no political entanglements.

Xavier? They are very busy after the Cardinal Bark incident, having declared a holy war. They are still fervently purging devil worshippers.

Anyway, there's no one more suitable as a guard knight than Kate. When I informed my other acquaintances, they were surprised but understanding.

So, the next step is to depart for the academy. I had informed the academy in advance, so they should be somewhat prepared.

“Greetings, everyone. I am Gartz Balak, and I will be assisting Sir Isaac.”

Before that, I didn't forget to introduce the loyal AS... no, the guard knight dispatched from Helium, Gartz.

Originally, he was Cecily's guard knight, but after the typewriter gift, he was assigned to me.

Strictly speaking, he is the leader of the guard team dispatched from Helium. I will receive updates regarding Helium through him.

I greeted Gartz lightly and introduced him to the group.

"Gartz will teleport us to the academy. I could ask Cecily, but we have our pride, right?"

Adelia, being pre-informed, was unfazed, but Kate was not.

She looked at Gartz intently and then, with her characteristic gentle smile, bowed her head.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Kate Louise Angelica. I am a faithful servant of Lord Luminous. It is an honor to meet a child of Lady Mora."

Most demons worship Mora, and Gartz is no exception.

There are many sensitivities around religion, but if Kate greeted him like this, there should be no problems.

Moreover, Kate didn't mention her ranks, such as Cardinal or Grand Inquisitor. It was an unspoken indication to treat her comfortably.

"So you are the famous Cardinal Kate. I have heard much about your reputation."

"You flatter me. Compared to Sir Isaac, I am still far from being worthy."

"It's hard to disagree. Still, it is reassuring to know that our benefactor has a reliable shield."

Gartz said this and began preparing for teleportation. While it might be quick for one person, transporting multiple people takes some time.

Cecily, on the other hand, doesn't need this, she can easily move a large group with a simple spell.

It's not that Gartz lacks skill. Cecily is just extraordinarily powerful. Besides, Gartz excels more in martial arts than in magic.

As I quietly watched Gartz prepare, I glanced to the side. Kate was waiting with her usual serene expression.

"Kate."

"Yes, please speak."

"What did you think of demons before Xenon's Biography was published?"

I asked out of curiosity. Xavier had a history of massacring demons in the past.

Since then, they have been extremely wary of fanaticism, but they still regarded demons as devils.

Although this view has softened considerably now, I wondered if Kate held a similar perspective.

Hearing my question, Kate blinked her blue eyes and then responded with a gentle smile.

"I didn't care."

"You didn't care?"

"Yes. I only follow the revelations of Lord Luminous. If anyone posed a threat to Him, I would strike them down, no matter who they were."

I'm not sure whether to say she's closed-minded or open-minded in a different way.

Still, it was a very Kate-like answer. I couldn't help but chuckle.

"All preparations are complete."

We were ready to head to the academy. As soon as I heard Gartz's words, I turned my attention back.

I won't say that I hope nothing happens. Saying such a thing now would mean I have no sense of reality.

Instead, I hope that at least the things I worry about don't happen. While I can handle annoying incidents, I don't want anyone around me to get hurt.

'Please.'

Even if not happiness, I hope at least peace continues.

Correction: I'll add "not overwhelming" to the list.

I couldn't help but gape at the sight before me.

The place Gartz's teleport had transported us to was the main gate of the academy. Standing there, I looked toward the entrance.

"...What a grand reception."

Like Adelia's incredulous reaction, the scene beyond the gate was astonishing.

Both sides of the path were swarming with people, with knights forming a human barrier instead of using ropes.

The only relief was that there wasn't a red carpet. However, the fact remained that I had to pass through there.

'Even Leort and Rina didn't get this kind of treatment.'

Recalling the entrance ceremony, even though people had gathered for Rina and Leort, it wasn't to this extent.

Why are they going to such lengths to welcome me instead of their own royalty? Although my prestige isn't limited to the Minerva Empire, it's still understandable.

Is it too much? What if someone, like a devil worshiper, managed to sneak in and harm me?

Thinking this way, I could see their reasoning, but it was still overwhelming. And I had to walk through there.

"...Gartz?"

“I’m sorry, but as you know, magic use is strictly prohibited inside the academy, except in certain areas.”

When I quietly called Gartz, he brought bad news. Now that I think about it, I recall there being such a regulation.

This meant I had no choice but to walk down that path. I had given the academy advance notice to avoid startling them, but this was the result.

‘Next time, I’ll just come secretly.’

Even if my red hair makes me noticeable, there’s no need for such a grand “reception.”

I should ask later if it’s possible to teleport directly to the dormitory.

After Gartz left, only Adelia and Kate remained by my side. We had to pass through that crowd together.

I sighed deeply as I looked at the crowd gathered on both sides of the path created by the knights.

“...I feel nauseous.”

“And yet, you made your identity public?”

“That’s different from this.”

There’s a saying, “If you can’t avoid it, enjoy it.” If I can’t pass through there, I won’t be able to reach the dormitory.

So, I decided to take a deep breath and get it over with. I took a deep breath again to calm my pounding heart.

“Hoo... Kate.”

“Yes.”

“Do you feel overwhelmed or anything like that?”

“Not at all.”

“... ..”

I wanted to peek into Kate's mind at least once. Surely, her mind is filled with nothing but thoughts of Luminous.

I laughed helplessly, then looked at the academy's main gate and started walking slowly.

As I said before, just once. If I get through this once, there will be no more problems.

"Is that really him?"

"Yes, with red hair and golden eyes. It's definitely Xenon."

"It really is."

"Is he a prophet or someone from the future? He said he wasn't."

"Who would believe that? If there were books predicting the future, would you dismiss them all as coincidences? The rumors must be true that the gods have placed some restrictions on him. Otherwise, it doesn't make sense."

I once thought like that too. As I walked along the path the academy had kindly made for me, I overheard various comments.

Just listening to them made me blush with embarrassment, making it hard to hold my head up.

How did celebrities in my previous life handle this kind of pressure while walking the red carpet? I can understand why panic disorders occur.

"He's handsome and has a great physique. I can't believe he's Xenon... I wish he would hold me just once."

"Stop it. His fiancée is Lady Marie. Do you think he would pay any attention to you?"

"I heard he's also close to Princess Cecily and Princess Rina? Many people have seen them together."

"Maybe he's more into women than we thought?"

Even if I didn't want to, the stories about me kept reaching my ears. It wouldn't take much for my everyday life at the academy to become the subject of rumors.

The problem is that, while Rina isn't my lover, Cecily undeniably is. It hasn't been officially announced yet, but annoying issues will arise soon.

Moreover, with Arwen planning to confess, I can foresee how people will evaluate me.

As someone mentioned, I might be seen as a womanizer who is unexpectedly fond of women. The future looks very clear.

“The brown-haired woman next to him. Is she the one...?”

“The illegitimate child of the Ters royal family?”

“Isn’t she the reason Princess Hiriya got slapped?”

“Shh! Keep it down. What if you get on her bad side?”

It seems the rumors about Adelia have also spread widely. This reaction was expected the moment I slapped Hiriya.

I glanced sideways to see Adelia walking silently with a calm expression. Her disciplined stride was very impressive, befitting a knight.

However, she seemed slightly tense, focusing on guarding me rather than reacting to the surroundings.

“And that person is...”

“Is that Cardinal Kate? Judging by her appearance, it certainly looks like her...”

“Is she also acting as his guard?”

“I think I’ve heard that Cardinal Kate is the most suitable.”

Lastly, there was the reaction to Kate. Since the news of Kate becoming my guard hadn’t spread yet, people were busy speculating.

As I listened to the murmurs around me, I kept my eyes straight ahead. But one question arose.

‘Where does this path lead?’

My original plan was simple: meet with the academy principal before being assigned a new dormitory.

I planned to discuss my future schedule at the academy through a conversation with him. But I wasn’t sure where this path would lead.

Halo Academy is quite large, thanks to the Empire's lavish spending. There's even a bustling shopping district within the academy and plenty of facilities.

The only consolation is that the dormitories and lecture halls are close. However, the department buildings are quite far from the dormitories.

The administrative building where the principal stays is ridiculously far from the main gate. I worry that this path might lead there.

“Xenon! Xenon!”

“Hey! Catch that guy!”

Crash!

As I was walking aimlessly, a commotion pierced my ears.

At the same time, Adelia reached out her arm to protect me.

I turned my gaze to the source of the disturbance and saw a somewhat surprising scene.

A strange man was being restrained by knights, struggling on the ground.

Given the large crowd, it's no surprise that there would be gaps. This man probably broke through one of those gaps but was quickly subdued.

“I just want to talk to you once!”

“Take him away quickly!”

“I've been reading Xenon's Biography since it was first published! So just once...!!”

I don't know how he managed to break through, but even as he was being dragged away by the knights, the man pleaded with me.

Looking closely, I noticed he was holding a book tightly, which I easily deduced to be Xenon's Biography.

I silently watched him being dragged away and then quietly asked Kate.

“Kate, can you instinctively tell who is a devil worshiper?”

“Of course. Devil worshippers possess an indescribable filth. Unless they are exceptions like Cardinal Bark, I can sense their vile nature.”

“And what about that man?”

“I don’t feel anything from him.”

In that case, it’s fine. I called out to the knights dragging the man away.

“Excuse me.”

“Yes?”

“Can you bring that man here for a moment?”

The knights looked puzzled at my request. When I nodded to indicate it was okay, they seemed to hesitate.

If they didn’t take him away and something happened, they would be responsible, yet they couldn’t simply ignore my words.

However, I had two reliable guards. Especially with Kate personally testifying that he wasn’t a devil worshiper.

And I’m not a fool. I planned to keep a reasonable distance just in case.

“It’s okay, bring him here. I’ll keep my distance.”

“……Understood.”

Eventually, the knights brought the man in front of me. I hadn’t noticed while he was being dragged away, but up close, he looked surprisingly normal.

He seemed to be in his early to mid-twenties, with skin that was nicely tanned, suggesting he spent a lot of time under the sun.

Lastly, there was the book he was holding tightly. Before the man could speak, I pointed to the book and said,

“Is that book Xenon’s Biography by any chance?”

“Pardon? Yes?”

The man widened his eyes in surprise. It seemed that meeting me in person made him nervous.

“I asked if that book is Xenon’s Biography.”

“Yes, yes! It is!”

“Was it necessary to rush towards me like that? You could have put your life in danger.”

It’s no exaggeration to say that his life was indeed at risk. He could have been branded a threat and disappeared without a trace.

However, the man, undeterred by such concerns, exclaimed with sparkling eyes.

He stuttered slightly, probably due to nervousness, but it wasn’t too bothersome.

“Of course! Xenon’s Biography is worth that risk!”

“Is that all?”

“Yes!! It’s thanks to this book that I learned to read and even got to experience the wider world!”

“Are you perhaps an adventurer?”

“Yes, I am!”

So, he’s an adventurer. Now that I look closely, I can see small scars on his face.

It seemed that the number of people taking up adventurer-related jobs had increased because of Xenon’s Biography, and this man was one of them.

“Xenon’s Biography and reality must be completely different...”

“It doesn’t matter if they’re different! It’s the driving force of my life!”

As I confirmed these reactions one by one, I realized that this person was a true fan.

I shook my head at his recklessness, then smiled gently and spoke.

“But it was dangerous, wasn’t it? Don’t do this again. Understand?”

“I will remember!”

“And give me the book.”

“Yes! I will... uh?”

The man, who had been cheerful and energetic, now looked puzzled when I asked for the book. Seeing his face, I repeated myself.

“Give me the book. Didn’t you bring it for me to sign?”

“Oh... that’s not it.”

“Then why?”

“I brought it to show you how much I love Xenon’s Biography. I’ve memorized all of Volume 1.”

He scratched his head and smiled like a boy. He was more extraordinary than I had initially thought.

Regardless, he was still my fan, so I extended my hand. Perhaps understanding my intention, he hesitated before handing over the book.

The book was in terrible condition from being read so many times. It was worn out, and there were finger marks in various places.

I flipped to the first page of the book and pulled out the magical pen my father had given me from my pocket.

Scribble ScribbleScribble

I then elegantly moved my hand to sign the book and handed it back to the man. He took the book with a bewildered expression.

“Please continue to read it a lot. Thank you.”

After a simple greeting, I moved on. I heard the man’s voice shouting in gratitude behind me, but I ignored it.

“You say you don’t like attention.”

Adelia, who had watched the whole process, remarked bluntly. I shrugged and joked.

“I like getting attention from fans. They’re the ones who read my book.”

“Good excuse.”

“Would you like an autograph too?”

“No thanks. I already have something better.”

We continued walking forward while making small talk.

I later found out that the man who got my autograph was quite a famous adventurer. There was a reason he had broken through the knights.

“Spreading light again today, I see. Wonderful.”

“Kate, if you want an autograph, just let me know. I’ll give it to you anytime.”

“The seed, you mean?”

“... ..”

“Just kidding.”

It didn’t sound like a joke.

Translators note:

Chapter 326: Changed Life (2)

The path, whose destination I didn't know, thankfully had an end. At the end waited none other than the principal of Halo Academy.

Aside from the entrance ceremony, I had never seen him before, and this was the first time we were face to face.

He must have quickly arranged the knights as soon as he heard I was coming. The knights dispatched to the academy, the security personnel, were all under the principal's jurisdiction.

The person who created the path almost like a red carpet was the principal. Though it was one of the rare experiences in my life, I could understand the situation.

“Please have a seat here, Sir Xenon.”

And so, I arrived at the principal's office. Following the principal's guidance, I sat down on the guest sofa.

My guards, Adelia and Kate, also took their seats on either side. While sitting down, I didn't forget to look around.

As expected of the principal's office, some luxury items caught my eye, but it wasn't excessive. It seemed appropriate for someone of the principal's rank.

It's a private office for personal work, so unnecessary clutter wasn't needed.

More striking than the luxury items were the portraits of the previous principals. Since Halo Academy was established relatively recently, there weren't many portraits.

On the other hand, the Ters Academy in the Kingdom of Ters, a cultural nation, was established over 100 years ago.

‘Indeed, they have a lot of money.’

While history and time can't be bought with money, most other things can.

What if I were included in this? The Kingdom of Ters, despite its reputation, might gradually enter a period of decline.

Of course, with Maria currently on the throne, the future is uncertain. I also have no ill feelings toward her.

“Please, help yourself, though it isn't much.”

While I was looking around, the principal appeared with refreshments. I turned my attention to the refreshments placed on the table.

There were cookies to soothe a bored palate and steaming coffee. I wasn't sure what ingredients were used, but it was distinctly different from what you find in a café.

“This coffee is made from beans from the Basos region. The unique aroma is exquisite.”

“I see.”

I took a sip of the coffee after hearing his explanation. To be honest, I didn't know what was so special about it, but I drank it anyway.

I could certainly tell it was different from ordinary coffee. Even without added sugar, it had a blend of sweetness and acidity.

Additionally, the rich caffeine aroma filled my nose, making me feel refreshed.

“It feels like my mind is clearing up.”

“Right?”

The principal responded with a smile to my impression. I took another sip and observed his face.

He had a clean-shaven head that looked cool, a well-groomed gray beard, and crow's feet around his eyes with a robust build similar to a musketeer.

Overall, he looked like an older man working in a pawnshop, someone who would cut the offered price in half.

His name was Richard Nelson Girid. His rank was baron, and his administrative abilities were well-known throughout the empire. This was something I had heard from

Rina.

As his appearance suggested, he was not a person skilled in combat.

'He needs to establish a foundation first.'

As mentioned before, Halo Academy was established not long ago. Therefore, they must have placed someone with exceptional administrative skills in the principal's position.

Moreover, Richard maintained political neutrality. Considering the academy's nature, they had no choice but to appoint someone neutral.

Of course, things might change once he steps down from the principal position, but that's not my concern right now.

"So, is the dormitory issue all resolved?"

"Yes. Princess Rina will be arriving shortly."

I nodded while drinking my coffee. As expected, it seemed Rina would be handling the dormitory tour.

There's no one more suitable than Rina to guide me through the dormitory. Still, having a princess personally show me around underscored my unique position.

So, how should I navigate my life at the academy going forward? This was precisely why I wanted to meet the principal.

"How will my daily life be handled? I'd like to graduate if possible."

Even as Xenon, I'm fundamentally a student who loves history. Thus, I want to major in history under Elena's guidance.

But I also know that this might be difficult. It could even negatively impact Elena and Cindy.

If it would harm them, I'm prepared to give up, albeit reluctantly.

"Hmm... Can I be frank with you?"

The principal seemed to find the decision quite challenging, clasping his hands together as he quietly asked. I immediately gave a positive response.

“Yes.”

“If you can manage it, continuing your studies is possible. However, the likelihood of unforeseen incidents occurring will increase.”

“Are you referring to issues related to devil worshippers?”

So, it is that issue. It's the biggest problem currently looming over me, even though nothing has happened yet.

Even if they don't target me directly, they could go after those around me. Elena and Cindy, in particular, are scholars, not warriors.

But contrary to my expectations, Richard was concerned about a different aspect.

“No. You don't need to worry about that. You've been studying under Professor Elena, correct?”

“Yes.”

“Professor Elena, while specializing in history, also has a background in archaeology. She has traveled the world extensively.”

“With Cindy?”

“Yes.”

So, she's like Indiana Jones. But from the principal's words, it seems I don't need to worry about Elena and Cindy.

Having explored the world, they should at least be able to take care of themselves. Moreover, being elves, they can likely use basic magic.

“So, what issues will I need to handle?”

“Very trivial ones. Things like stalkers, or missing items. Especially, even a scrap of paper you casually discard will be taken by someone. At worst, even a strand of your hair might be taken.”

“... ..”

Why does Cherry come to mind when I hear that? She was the one who confirmed I was Xenon just from my handwriting and a strand of hair.

Of course, at that time, Cherry was in a serious state, practically halfway to confessing. Nonetheless, her obsession was quite formidable.

If more people like that appeared here? As the principal said, I would have to handle it all.

It could be worse than Cherry, as she didn't cause me direct harm. In fact, she's now working diligently as a co-author.

“If you can still manage to deal with such issues, you may attend classes. However, please understand that preventing all such incidents is practically impossible.”

“...I understand. Hearing this, I realize such incidents could indeed occur. Thank you. Has anyone else experienced similar incidents?”

“Many. Particularly, it often happens to royalty and high-ranking nobles. Recently, it happened to Prince Leort.”

“Prince Leort?”

I widened my eyes in surprise. I hadn't heard of such incidents from Lina either.

Looking to the side, I saw Adelia was also surprised. As a teaching assistant, she would have heard various rumors, but she seemed unaware of this one, indicating it must have happened very recently.

The principal, noticing our reactions, nodded and spoke in a rather serious tone.

“While Prince Leort's personal belongings were not stolen, items he used were taken. For example, the utensils he used in the dining hall or the teacups he used in the café. The prince noticed something was off and quickly took action.”

“Did they catch the culprit?”

“Yes. The culprit's name is Sophia Alain Berdo. She had apparently been infatuated with Prince Leort. She has since been expelled and sent back to her family.”

The name sounds vaguely familiar, but I'm not sure. In any case, if it happened to Leort, it could easily happen to me as well.

No, it will probably be worse. Unlike Leort, I'm clumsy and tend to leave things lying around.

If I leave an item somewhere even for a ‘moment,’ it will likely disappear. Especially if that item is a notebook for my writings, the situation could become serious.

“...This is more troublesome than I thought.”

“Yes. You’ll need to be more cautious in your daily life than usual. Just that alone can increase stress, which is why I expressed my concern.”

“*Sigh*... I understand. I will think about this gradually, but for now, I will continue my studies. I think that would be best.”

“I will respect your decision, Sir Xenon. If you change your mind, feel free to come to me anytime. Oh, and...”

It seemed the principal had something else to say. His demeanor changed to one of great caution.

He clasped his hands together and hesitated to speak. I waited patiently to see what he had to say.

“This may be an impertinent question, but do you have any plans to share your knowledge, Sir Xenon?”

“My knowledge?”

“Yes.”

“About future events?”

At first, I thought the principal was asking because he considered me a reincarnator or a prophet.

However, I quickly realized that was a wrong assumption.

“No, no, not at all. I was simply wondering if you could teach the students how to write.”

“How to write? You mean composition?”

“Yes. If it was an inappropriate question, I apologize.”

“There’s no need to apologize...”

I wasn't bothered at all. In fact, I felt a bit flattered.

It seemed the principal regarded my writing techniques as a kind of secret skill, akin to the secret techniques martial artists pass down to their disciples.

But there's no secret technique, writing is just about mastering the basics. It just takes time to refine it and develop one's own style.

'Come to think of it...'

I recalled the books published in this world. While the techniques of papermaking and printing were as advanced as those on Earth, the quality of writing was often lacking.

For example, writing excessively long sentences without breaks, repeating words, or using unnecessary phrases.

This was similar to web novels from my previous life. A strong foundation in the basics is essential before one can delve into literary fiction or web novels.

Cherry was an exceptional case. She had a natural talent for writing, to the extent of creating her own unique style.

'Is he suggesting I establish a creative writing department?'

It's not a bad idea. However, realistically, it would be very challenging.

If I established it, the lecture hall would be overflowing, and my personal time would be significantly reduced. This is something to consider later.

"It's a good idea, but I'll have to decline. Not because I don't want to teach, but because I don't have the time."

"Hmm... I understand. I apologize for overstepping."

"No need to apologize. Your suggestion actually makes me happy. If I become more accustomed to my schedule, I'll consider it."

Knock knock knock

"Principal Richard, it's Rina. May I come in?"

Just as I finished speaking, Rina arrived with impeccable timing. As I stood up, my guards and the principal stood up as well.

Now, all that's left is to head to the dormitory where I'll be staying. I thanked the principal.

“Thank you for your advice.”

“The pleasure is mine. If you ever decide to take up the offer, feel free to come to me.”

“Yes.”

Honestly, it's an appealing option. While I might not have the capacity to be a full professor, I could certainly teach someone, like I did Cindy.

‘And as for the stalker problem...’

That's something I need to think about gradually.

‘I should probably tell everyone not to mess with the pink-haired girl.’

Let's make an exception for Cherry. Like with Hiriya, she might end up being a stalker who helps me.

‘But why does Cherry only follow me?’

It might be a good idea to have a counseling session with her soon.

‘And I still need to find Leona...’

There were still too many things left to resolve.

Translators note:

Chapter 327: Changed Life (3)

After the conversation with the principal, we followed Rina's lead to the dormitory where I would be staying.

On the way to the dormitory, there were no other guards besides Adelia and Kate. However, we frequently saw personnel patrolling and keeping watch around us.

I was relieved that they didn't create a path like at the main gate, but a curious thought crossed my mind.

"Rina."

"Yes?"

Rina, who was walking ahead, turned back with a curious expression when I called her. I looked at her face in silence for a moment.

As always, I thought Rina's beauty was as dazzling as Marie's.

Her serene blue eyes, like a calm lake, her golden hair reflecting the sunlight, her eyes that held a blend of innocence and maturity, and her straight nose. Lastly, her pink lips.

She radiated a unique elegance that made her even more captivating.

'Is Rina really coming to me as well?'

That thought crossed my mind briefly, but it wasn't important right now. I quickly brushed it aside and spoke.

"You might think this is a silly question, but don't you have any bodyguards?"

"Bodyguards?"

"Yes. Even if not bodyguards, shouldn't you at least have attendants?"

This had been on my mind for a while. Previously, she always moved with us, so she probably didn't bring any bodyguards or attendants.

But in this situation, she should have bodyguards. Currently, besides Adelia and Kate, there's no one else with us.

As I mentioned earlier, there were only knights patrolling around. Knowing my personality, Rina's consideration was likely the best she could offer, but it still raised questions.

Lina blinked slowly at my question before responding.

"Right now, I'm attending the academy. Attendants are only with me when I'm in the palace. The policy is that for academic matters, not official duties, we handle things ourselves."

"Policy?"

"Yes. After becoming an adult, our royal family has a principle that we should handle things on our own without relying on others' help. So, I don't have attendants, although I do have bodyguards. Of course, it would be different if I returned to the palace."

It was the first time I had heard this, but it made sense. Rina is indeed the type to solve things herself rather than delegating to others.

Her direct apology during the hiatus announcement without sending someone else is evidence of that.

"Isn't it inconvenient?"

"It's a bit lonely without someone to talk to, but that will change now with you and Marie moving into the dormitory. Oh, by the way, are you going to live in the same dormitory as Marie?"

"She wants to live together after the wedding."

"Oh... really?"

For some reason, Rina seemed disappointed. I raised an eyebrow in curiosity.

"Why are you disappointed? Don't tell me..."

"No, no! I'm not a pervert, okay? Do you think my mind only goes there?"

I hadn't even said anything yet, but Rina vehemently denied it. I looked at her with an incredulous expression.

I only hinted at it, and she had self-destructed on her own.

“Ahem. Anyway, do you have any questions about the dormitory?”

Seeing my skeptical look, Rina awkwardly changed the subject.

I wanted to dig deeper, but there were people listening around us, so I let it go.

Besides, I did have some questions.

“Even if Adelia is staying in the same room as me, I'm curious about where Kate will be staying.”

“I also wish to stay in Isaac's room...”

“No, you can't.”

Kate had subtly requested to stay with me, but I flatly refused. It was already like leaving a fish with a cat.

Living together would be like putting the fish directly into the cat's mouth.

Kate pouted when I refused her outright. Her expression stayed the same, which made her look rather cute.

“Cardinal Kate, wouldn't it be better for you to stay at the temple rather than in the dormitory? I think that would be the best.”

“That would be fine, but not right now. We never know when those filthy devil worshippers might threaten Isaac. I need to stay as close as possible.”

Kate's reasoning was sound. Rina seemed to agree, nodding her head.

“Okay. Then we'll assign you to the room next to his...”

Rina trailed off mid-sentence, thinking deeply for a moment before looking at us cautiously.

I started to worry that there might not be any available rooms left in the dormitory, but Rina then spoke in a careful tone.

“...On second thought, there aren't many suitable rooms available. Cardinal Kate will be assigned a room one space away from Isaac. Isaac needs to be in a room close to Marie.”

“What room is Marie in?”

“Room 4. Leort and I are in rooms 1 and 2, respectively. Room 3 was originally used by Princess Hiriya, but it has been left vacant.”

“Oh. Has she returned?”

“Not completely. Her condition isn't very good, so she's gone to recuperate.”

Given her near-broken state, recovery is essential. Especially since her body is her most valuable asset as a warrior, she needs thorough care.

If I move into Room 3, Kate will naturally be assigned a room one space away.

Hearing Lina's words, Kate seemed to think deeply before addressing her.

“Princess Rina.”

“Yes?”

“I sense a hint of something sinister in your words. Is it just my imagination?”

“... ..”

Kate, with an innocent expression, asked Rina if she felt something odd in her words. Rina couldn't respond immediately.

Honestly, it's a bit funny that Kate would ask such a question. Having awakened to her sexuality, Kate was quite cunning in her own way.

I listened quietly to their conversation before directing a question to Rina.

“Rina.”

“Y-yes?”

“You can let someone else into the dormitory, right? Adelia is my personal maid, so she'll be staying with me.”

“Dame Cross?”

Rina seemed momentarily confused, turning her head toward Adelia. Adelia bowed her head in greeting when their eyes met.

Rina stared at Adelia for a moment before exclaiming, as if she had just realized.

“Oh! That’s right, Dame Cross is here!”

Rina seemed genuinely happy about the idea of me living with Adelia, smiling brightly for some reason. But soon, her expression froze.

Knowing I was suspicious, her reaction only solidified my doubts.

Seeing her stop in her tracks, it was clear. When she halted, we all followed suit.

Swish

Rina then turned her head slowly, cautiously looking at me. Her usual elegant demeanor was gone, replaced by a child caught red-handed.

I chuckled at her and put a hand on her shoulder.

I felt Rina flinch vividly as I did.

“It’s okay. It happens. I understand. Everyone has their own tastes.”

“... ..”

“So, is this the ‘sinister’ feeling Kate was talking about?”

Rina couldn’t respond. She probably wished she could disappear into a hole right then.

I patted her shoulder a few times, signaling that it was all right. It was a moment of realization that Rina, too, was human, with her own quirks, despite being an elegant princess.

“Are you going to stay still forever?”

“...Please don’t tell anyone. I beg you.”

Rina’s face turned bright red as she spoke softly, unable to meet my eyes. I found her embarrassed demeanor quite endearing.

Luckily, only we knew about her preferences. Thanks to the guards, there were no other people around.

'Though it seems like quite a few people already know...'

I didn't voice this thought. People's preferences should be respected.

"Princess Rina, there's no need to be so embarrassed. As Lord Luminous said, feeling sexual desire for someone like Isaac is perfectly natural. I felt the same way."

"... .."

"So, there's no need to suffer in silence."

Of course, Kate, with her oblivious tendencies, didn't understand the concept of discretion. She probably thought she was offering comfort by sharing her own experience.

Kate's words were like driving a nail into Rina, who was already on the verge of breaking down.

As soon as I heard her, I looked at Rina to gauge her reaction. I couldn't see her face because she was facing away, but I could see her ears turning bright red through her hair. It was very noticeable.

'She's earning herself a new embarrassing memory.'

In my mind, Rina's elegance was gradually fading away.

(TL: A fucking execution LMAO~)

Following Rina, who had just earned herself a new chapter of dark history, we arrived at the dormitory. At first glance, it looked like an ordinary dormitory.

However, the exterior was deceiving. From the entrance, armed knights were guarding the place, patrolling the area at regular intervals.

The patrols included not only knights but also mages and well-trained guard dogs. The security was like that of a fortress, fitting for a VIP residence.

The interior was no different. Surveillance magic was installed in the hallways, and even the simple doors had security measures.

It was similar to the door locks I often saw in my previous life. While ordinary dormitories used keys, the VIP ones required crystal orbs.

These crystal orbs acted as key cards and were difficult to reissue, so I was advised not to lose them.

“...If you have any questions, feel free to ask.”

Rina, who couldn't even meet my gaze anymore, said this before hastily leaving. Understanding her situation, I gave her a simple wave and entered the dormitory.

Before entering, she gave me a strange look, but I chose to ignore it. Right now, it was best to give her time to collect herself.

Meanwhile, I decided to explore the dormitory's interior. My belongings would arrive soon, so I planned to look around until then.

“This is more like a villa than a dormitory.”

“Indeed.”

As Adelia remarked in awe, the sight was vastly different from the dormitory I used to live in.

The floor was marble, and there was a small chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

A bit away from the entrance was a large bed, big enough for at least three people.

Unlike the single-room student dormitories, this one had several rooms. As I looked around the living room, I picked one of the many rooms to check out.

“There's even a training room?”

“Really?”

Surprisingly, there was a personal training room equipped with various exercise machines. It seemed I wouldn't need to go to the training grounds unless I wanted to do cardio workouts.

Even just with the visible equipment, I could handle 90% of my training needs. While Adelia examined each piece of equipment, I explored the other rooms.

'Adelia can stay in this room.'

There was a room set up for attendants. It wasn't small, it was about the size of the dormitory I used to live in.

Additionally, there were rooms for office work, laundry, and more. Despite being a VIP dormitory, it seemed excessive.

'This really is a villa.'

It wasn't just like a villa, it truly was one. There was even a kitchen, so with the right ingredients, I could prepare meals.

The lack of windows to view the outside was a downside, but it was understandable for security purposes.

Until now, I hadn't felt much difference in treatment after revealing my identity, but the dormitory made it very clear.

Buzz

"Huh?"

As I was looking around the rooms, I suddenly heard a strange noise. It came from the entrance.

Particles of light began to gather in the empty space next to the entrance. I watched the scene in amazement.

The particles slowly began to form a shape and soon materialized into a solid object.

".....Is this teleportation?"

What was happening before my eyes was teleportation, a top-tier magic that defies spatial constraints.

Though Cecily and Gartz used it frequently, making it seem a bit less impressive, having a teleportation device installed in a personal dormitory was astonishing.

Of course, given the space, it could only handle simple objects. But even that was impressive.

Consider the enormous cost of installing such a device, as opposed to having a mage cast the spell each time.

Swish

I inspected the items transported through the teleportation device. It likely contained the typewriter and manuscripts.

As expected, when I opened the box, familiar items came into view, along with a small letter.

Setting everything else aside, I decided to read the letter first. It seemed to be from home.

[To my dear Isaac. If you're reading this letter, it means the teleportation has been used. Each dormitory has fixed coordinates, so you can send items anytime you need to.]

As expected, it was a letter from my mother. According to the letter, the dormitory's teleportation system has fixed coordinates, allowing items to be sent at any time.

Previously, sending and receiving letters took several days, but now that time would be greatly reduced.

'How much money did they spend on this?'

I looked at the letter and then at the space where the teleportation had just occurred. It was impressive, even by the empire's standards.

Nevertheless, this provided me with incredible convenience, which I intended to use fully.

[However, it's difficult to send things back to the estate from your end. The coordinates for the estate haven't been properly established yet. So, for now, please send items through Sir Balak. I don't know what kind of life you'll lead from now on, but your mother always supports you. With love, your mother.]

A short but loving letter from my mother. I read the final part with a gentle smile.

[P.S. Since you're still in the adjustment period, take your time with Xenon's Biography. Your mother can wait.]

Though she said that, she loves Xenon's Biography more than anyone else. She probably meant I should adapt quickly and start writing again.

Of course, once the adjustment period is over, I plan to pick up the pen again. It shouldn't take long.

'So, the only thing left is to adjust?'

Barely two days had passed since I thought that.

"...So, what exactly happened?"

"We caught a student who was constantly following you, Sir Isaac. She was apprehended based on a report from another student."

"... .."

A guard who had been watching over me had brought someone in. The problem was...

"Hehe..."

"... .."

That person wasn't Cherry, but Leona.

"What should we do?"

"...Just let her be."

It was an unexpected twist, to say the least.

Translators note:

New league in poe just deleted a week from my life

Chapter 328: Leona (1)

It wasn't Cherry but Leona who had been reported as a stalker. Whoever reported her, Leona was now in front of me, apprehended by the knights.

The fact that they brought her to me instead of handling it themselves suggested they wanted me to decide her punishment.

Actually, it was fortunate that Leona was the first to be caught. If it had been someone else, I would have reprimanded them harshly, and Leona, caught later, would have faced a similar punishment.

Luckily, Leona was someone I knew, and we already had plans. It was my fault for not reaching out to her sooner.

So, I explained the situation to the knights. I told them she was a friend I had arranged to meet, but I had forgotten. Being Xenon, she couldn't approach me freely and had to loiter around.

Since I was telling the truth, the knights released Leona. This mishap was my responsibility to resolve.

"I'm sorry. I should have paid more attention to you."

Although the issue was resolved, my mistake remained. I bowed my head and sincerely apologized.

Leona, despite her strong physique, was rubbing her shoulder, likely from the forceful apprehension.

Her identity could have been exposed, and she might not have been able to attend the academy properly. I had almost committed an unforgivable error.

"Huh? No, it's okay. I was a bit startled, but I'm fine. I should have waited quietly instead of approaching recklessly."

Leona waved her hand dismissively, indicating she was fine.

“If you really feel sorry, treat me to a steak sometime. Okay?”

She was quite bold. I chuckled at Leona, who grinned playfully.

Her tail wagged cheerfully, showing she was genuinely okay.

We were currently in my new dormitory. Unlike the student dormitories, the VIP dormitories allowed entry to others with the owner’s permission.

“I’ll treat you to as much steak as you want. Want to go now?”

“Not right now. I just had a meal with my mother.”

Now that I think about it, Marie mentioned that Leona’s mother was also at the academy, waiting to meet me.

To finalize things properly, I needed to meet Leona’s mother, even if it was just an informal meeting. Otherwise, the matter would remain unresolved.

As I stared at Leona, who was smiling slyly, I returned a gentle smile and asked,

“How has life at the academy been? No problems, right?”

“It was chaotic. After the news spread that you were Xenon, that was all anyone talked about for a while.”

“Anything else?”

“I mostly studied, so I’m not sure. Oh! When Marie arrived, people flocked to her, but they all got knocked back by her guards. The security was tight.”

Marie had mentioned this as well. It was expected, but she had a tiring time for a while.

I listened to Leona’s updates, then clasped my hands together. After some hesitation, I asked her in a cautious voice,

“Is your mother still firm in her decision?”

As everyone knows, Leona’s mother wasn’t keen on Leona becoming my wife.

She wished for Leona's genuine happiness, wanting her to follow her personal feelings rather than cultural obligations.

"Yes. She was already firm, but after you revealed your identity, she became even more resolute."

Upon hearing my question, Leona's wagging tail stopped, and she spoke gloomily. Her ears, which had been perked up, drooped down.

It seemed the situation had worsened rather than improved. I slowly nodded.

Honestly, I thought that revealing I was Xenon would make Leona's mother more likely to give her blessing, but that wasn't the case.

As the third wife of the chieftain and the only human, she must have had a tumultuous life.

Better to live a normal life than to be protected by a massive shield. That was my guess.

"Hmm... I guess I'll have to meet her in person to understand."

"That's part of it, but she also said this: If I become your wife, how will that benefit you?"

"She said that?"

"Yes."

Leona nodded with a dejected expression when I asked in surprise. I crossed my arms and thought for a moment.

As a parent, it's something she shouldn't have said, but it was also a direct statement meant to make her realize the reality.

In truth, Leona had very little to offer me in terms of benefit. At most, petting her head helped relieve my stress.

However, her mother made a significant mistake. Just making that statement contradicted her desire for Leona's personal happiness.

'I can use this to my advantage.'

It seemed maternal instincts led to that mistake. It was clear she genuinely wanted Leona to find true happiness.

So, I just needed to respond with sincerity. I reached out to the depressed Leona.

Swish

“.....Huh?”

When I placed my hand on her head, Leona’s ears perked up, and she looked at me. I smiled gently, looking into her golden eyes similar to mine.

Pat pat

“Mrrr...”

Without saying anything, I petted her head, and Leona made a cute sound. Her ears, which had been upright, relaxed and drooped to the side, making it easier to pet her.

She truly was like a lion, but being from the feline family, she even purred softly. It was hard to believe that she was considered unattractive by other beastkin.

For a long time, I petted her head, played with her ears, pinched her cheeks, and did everything a beastkin would love.

Beastkin have a high frequency and importance of physical affection compared to other races. Just like how felines groom their young and canines nip each other’s cheeks.

While grooming is well-known, the cheek-nipping by canines might seem strange, but it holds special significance.

It’s a sign of trust, indicating, “I will never harm you.” Sometimes you might see a big dog gently biting a smaller animal’s head and then letting go.

Swish

“Uh?”

Then something surprising happened. As I was petting her, Leona’s tail, which had been swaying, wrapped around my arm.

While the affectionate behaviors I mentioned earlier apply to family, this particular act is reserved strictly for a partner.

Allowing someone to touch your tail or wrapping your tail around someone's body. It was surprising.

Leona genuinely liked me. Her tail wrapping around my arm while she was immersed in my touch confirmed it.

“Purr. Purr. Purr.”

Perhaps she wasn't aware of what she was doing. Leona pushed her head forward, asking for more pets.

She kept inching closer until she eventually got up and slowly moved to my side.

I was taken aback for a moment, but when she sat on my lap and leaned into me, I held her without saying a word.

“Ahem. Ahem.”

Adelia cleared her throat and quietly left the room when she saw Leona and I showing affection. The unnecessary throat-clearing was probably a silent signal to keep things in check.

I let out a small chuckle but continued the physical affection with Leona. She seemed more starved for attention and affection than I realized.

‘Well, the stress must be immense.’

She probably doesn't get many chances to show her true self. Having to hide her identity while navigating a dangerous tightrope is something I've experienced.

Unlike me, who can now freely reveal my identity, Leona still has to hide hers.

Thinking about this, an idea came to mind, and I spoke up.

“Leona.”

“Purr. Purr.”

“Leona?”

“Purr. Hmm?”

Leona, with a loving expression, was nuzzling her face against my chest. She lifted her head when I called her name.

I resisted the urge to touch her perky ears. How could they be so addictive?

“Isn’t it hard to keep hiding your identity?”

“It would be a lie to say it’s not.”

“Then, shall I help you?”

“What?”

Leona’s eyes widened at the offer of help. I felt the grip of her tail around my hand loosen.

I met Leona’s puzzled expression and spoke softly.

“I can help you so you won’t have to hide your identity anymore.”

“How... how would you do that?”

“You know Cain from Xenon’s Biography, right?”

“It’d be weird if I didn’t.”

Cain was the brother of Wrath, Satan, and the character who dismantled the old traditions of his nation to become the new chieftain.

Born physically weak, he stabilized the country politically with his extraordinary intellect.

“If I reveal that Cain’s inspiration was you, wouldn’t everyone accept it?”

Readers already firmly believe that Lilith was inspired by Cecily and Elisha by Arwen.

Because of this, readers often wonder who inspired other characters.

This has led to impostors causing trouble, but Kate’s efforts have dealt with them.

So, if I spread the word that Kind’s inspiration was Leona, she wouldn’t have to hide her identity.

Leona thought deeply about my suggestion, then tilted her head and responded.

“It doesn’t really appeal to me.”

“Doesn’t appeal to you?”

“Yeah. It would feel like I’m just relying on your help.”

At first, I didn’t understand, but knowing Leona’s personality, it made sense.

By hiding her identity and enrolling in the academy, it’s clear that Leona is somewhat independent and proactive.

Unlike her current affectionate demeanor, Leona is quite fierce and cynical towards others. This indicates she has a strong sense of pride.

“My mother hates politics. Right now, Jinai is the chieftain, but there are still internal dissatisfactions. It means that Animers could use me. If it’s revealed that I’m the inspiration for Cain, what do you think will happen?”

“Hmm... You have a point. I hadn’t thought about that. We should put this idea on hold.”

“Good decision. Besides, I’m not that uncomfortable right now. If I hadn’t met you, I’d be even more stressed. I prefer things as they are now.”

With that, Leona hugged me tightly. The pressure conveyed through her embrace was unique, given her beastkin strength.

I responded by patting her head again, causing her to make happy sounds.

Then, she started licking my neck, a grooming behavior indicating that her instinct had taken over.

If I hadn’t experienced this before, I would have been startled. But knowing Leona’s patterns, I stayed still.

It wasn’t unpleasant. Who would dislike being groomed by a beautiful woman who likes them? I didn’t find it dirty at all.

“Leona.”

“*Lick*. Hmm?”

“Could I meet your mother tomorrow?”

The final hurdle was Leona’s mother. To win her approval, I needed to succeed in our conversation.

Originally, I had reluctantly accepted this because of beastkin culture, but now those feelings had vanished.

Who could refuse such a cute and lovely girl? If she left, it would leave a significant scar on my heart.

“It’s possible, but could we have steak first?”

“... ..”

“I’m already hungry.”

“Didn’t you just have a meal with your mother?”

When I asked in disbelief, Leona laughed awkwardly and gave a ridiculous excuse.

“I have a separate stomach for steak...”

“... ..”

“Hehe.”

The roaring lion was gone, replaced by a kitten chirping for food.

Translators note:

Hi everyone, it’s been a while!

What I initially intended to be a short break ended up taking almost a month due to life stuff but I finally have some leeway to translate and go back to my lifestyle before the break.

Also there will be daily releases for about a month! then about 5/week.

Good to be back!

Chapter 329: Leona (2)

The informal meeting with Leona's mother was scheduled for the weekend. Since Leona was also a student and had to focus on her studies, that was the only available time.

As expected, the meeting place was my dormitory. Ideally, I would have preferred a quiet restaurant, but that wasn't feasible.

The moment I step outside, I would attract all kinds of attention.

While I could disguise myself with the help of others, I didn't see the need for that. It didn't seem worth the effort for such a meeting.

So, I waited outside for her mother to arrive. Leona, who had met me beforehand, was waiting quietly by my side.

“Do you usually dress like that on weekends?”

“Yeah. I don't wear my uniform all the time.”

“Isn't that outfit a bit too breezy?”

I looked at Leona's rather revealing outfit. The current weather was a hot summer day.

So, wearing breathable and cool clothes was expected, but Leona's attire was quite noticeable.

A short sleeveless top paired with short brown shorts, showing her midriff with a cropped tee.

Although it's a somewhat modern outfit, with training clothes being common, it wasn't anything out of the ordinary. It was just new to see the 'model student' Leona in such clothes.

Thanks to this, her figure was fully revealed, making for a nice visual treat. I glanced at her, enjoying the ice cream I had bought her.

Even in her school uniform, I could tell, but her body was surprisingly voluptuous. She had a well-proportioned figure with curves in all the right places.

'Come to think of it, beastkin are generally known for having good figures, right?'

Specifically, they have exceptional physical characteristics. Leona, with her seemingly slender frame, weighed over 80kg due to her muscles.

Additionally, their species is characterized by high fertility and large babies by human standards. This naturally leads to larger breasts and hips.

The difference from demons is that while demons follow a survival of the fittest principle, for beastkin, it's simply ingrained in their genes.

Even Jinai, the new chieftain, was taller than me, which shows how exceptional the physical attributes of beastkin are.

'Yet, humans hunted these beastkin mercilessly.'

It's hard to fathom how such a thing was possible. However, under the guise of civilization, such barbarity was justified.

I watched Leona munching on the ice cream cone and called her quietly.

"Leona."

"Yes?"

Leona, who was chewing on the cone, turned to look at me. Her blue eyes, not the usual golden ones, stared directly at me.

She had hidden her ears and tail, and I wondered how she managed to hide her tail. Maybe it was coiled up inside those short shorts.

"Why did you call me?"

"Just felt like it."

"How boring. But this ice cream is really good."

Leona licked her lips, clearly enjoying the ice cream I bought her. I smiled at the sight.

Ice cream is an expensive treat in this world. Even though magic exists, it's not accessible to commoners.

Even if they used freezing magic, the maintenance cost would be outrageous. Hence, ice cream is a luxury enjoyed by nobles or the wealthy.

“If you want, I can buy more for you.”

“Really?”

“Yes. But if you eat too much, you might get a stomach ache, so you have to eat in moderation.”

“Awesome.”

But I have more than enough money. I have a mountain of gold bars at home, so this kind of indulgence is fine.

Even I love ice cream, so there's no reason to be frugal about it.

I watched Leona, who was genuinely happy, with a warm feeling. I extended my hand but then retracted it, realizing we were outside.

Although there were no people around at the moment, one can never be too careful. As the headmaster warned, there might be stalkers I was unaware of.

The same goes for devil worshippers. While having Kate as a reliable shield is reassuring, we would become vulnerable if something happened to her.

'There's a lot to be mindful of.'

Of course, given Kate's personality, she wouldn't think of leaving my side. I looked at the steadfast figures of Adelia and Kate guarding ahead of me.

Behind us was the entrance to the dormitory, with guards posted, so there were no issues there. All that remained was to wait for Leona's mother.

After some time had passed,

“It's been a while, Isaac. Our second meeting since the exhibition.”

I had my second meeting with Lucia, Leona's mother and the third wife of the previous chieftain.

She looked very much like Leona, with the same striking blue eyes and golden hair, though Lucia's was a more muted shade.

While Leona's hair resembled a lion's mane, Lucia's was a calm, straight flow, giving her a wise and serene appearance.

She greeted me politely, and I reciprocated with equal respect.

"It's nice to see you, Mother Lucia. Has it been two months since the exhibition? I hope you've been well."

"As long as my daughter is well, that's enough for me."

Lucia answered with a warm smile. Even from what Leona had mentioned, it was clear she deeply loved her daughter.

This made me more nervous. How would Lucia challenge me?

Mentioning the misstep Leona had spoken of might suffice to overcome this, but Lucia had become the chieftain's wife in Animers purely because of her wisdom.

While she didn't wield significant power herself, considering the culture of the beastkin, it's undeniable she was a great asset to the chieftain.

"Shall we go inside?"

"Yes."

As we moved to enter, the guards at the door opened it without a word.

They were known to be discreet, so there was no concern about rumors spreading. Even if they did, facing it head-on would suffice.

After this, Kate returned to her room, and Adelia left briefly to prepare some simple refreshments in the kitchen.

"By the way, I was quite surprised. To think that Isaac is actually Xenon... I spent some time pondering whether it was true or false when I heard the news."

Seated, Lucia spoke in a calm voice. I maintained my smile and replied to her.

"It might be hard to believe, but I am indeed Xenon. I'm not a prophet or someone from the future, though."

“Given your achievements, it would be hard to deny it. I myself believe it.”

“Just to be clear, I absolutely am not.”

Lucia laughed softly, covering her mouth with her hand. If judged solely by this, she seemed like an ordinary woman.

However, those well-versed in politics often carry a metaphorical knife within. As I took a bite of the cookie Adelia had prepared, I observed Lucia.

The rich flavor and aroma of the cookie filled my mouth, and without hesitation, Lucia also picked one up.

And Leona...

“Munch munch munch munch.”

“Is it good?”

“Yes!”

Leona had already revealed her ears and tail and was eating happily. I took the opportunity to gently stroke her head.

Her ears drooped to the sides, and her tail wagged, expressing her pleasure.

If she had no affection for me or if someone else had petted her, she would have rejected it fiercely. This showed the strong bond between us.

“...You seem to have a good relationship, just as I heard.”

Lucia, having observed our interaction, spoke in a slightly subdued voice. There was a hint of complexity in her tone.

Leaving the busy-eating Leona for a moment, I turned to Lucia. While my smile remained, her face mirrored the complexity of her voice.

“Yes, as you can see, Leona and I have a very close relationship. It started by chance, but as we helped each other, it naturally grew this way.”

“Leona has told me. She said it was you who resolved the political turmoil within Animers. Initially, I was skeptical, but understanding your true identity clarified things.”

“Contrary to what you might think, I am not particularly wise.”

“Your humility is excessive. Then, let me ask just one thing.”

It seemed she was finally getting to the main point. This was her original purpose, so I leaned slightly forward.

As Lucia’s words trailed off and the atmosphere grew heavier, Leona subtly put down her cookie. I used a napkin to wipe the crumbs off her mouth. Her ears twitched, but she entrusted herself to my touch.

Lucia, watching us with a curious gaze, then looked directly at me and spoke.

“Isaac, do you like Leona? As a woman, not just out of obligation?”

Anticipating this question, I answered without hesitation.

“Yes, I do.”

“Not because you feel ‘obliged’ by the beastkin culture?”

Lucia emphasized the term ‘obliged.’ This is the crux of the issue. If Leona hadn’t been influenced by beastkin culture, she might not have chosen to become my wife.

Initially, I had no such feelings. I helped Leona and mediated the conflicts within Animers purely out of goodwill.

The cultural obligations caused this situation and led to much hesitation, but that’s no longer the case.

“At first, it was like that. I was quite taken aback when I heard she wanted to become my wife suddenly. I already had a fiancée at that time.”

“I’ve heard from Leona that you don’t just have one fiancée. She mentioned becoming your third wife. The second wife is a princess from Helium, correct?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

As I answered, I glanced at Adelia. She is not only my personal maid but also one of my women. Leona knew this but chose not to mention it, as bringing it up might only complicate the situation.

“But I don’t think they will be the only ones. I expect more women will come into Isaac’s life soon.”

“...Why do you think that?”

“Because that’s politics and the world we live in. When a central figure emerges, others naturally gravitate towards them. This is the world as I’ve experienced it.”

Lucia accurately grasped the political dynamics. Such an insight is not something an ordinary person would easily conceive.

While I was left speechless by her prediction, Lucia continued to speak calmly.

“I felt it at Animers. A person with power, especially a male... no, no.”

She quickly corrected herself after a brief slip of the tongue.

“...It’s natural for women to be attracted to men with power. This applies not just to beastmen, but to all races. Especially you, Xenon, who has bestowed blessings upon each race. You saved the demons, rescued the World Tree from danger, and further exposed the existence of devil worshippers hiding in the shadows. There’s no one in this world who can surpass you in power.”

“...”

“Leona may have formed a bond with you before knowing your true identity, but... I’m worried. Living as a powerless concubine, being treated as a ‘prize’ and living passively, needing to prove your ‘usefulness’ to avoid being discarded. I want to prevent that.”

Lucia indirectly expressed her own troubled life. Leona and I listened to her story in silence.

She then looked at Leona with sorrowful eyes and spoke gently.

“Leona’s father, the previous great chieftain of Animers, was a man deeply ingrained in the culture of the beastmen. He treated me as a third wife and regarded even the birth of Leona as a ‘prize’. I wanted to avoid passing that mindset onto my daughter... but I only half succeeded.”

“...”

“I want Leona to be treated as a person, not as a ‘prize’. When I heard that Lord Isaac had refused, I was rather pleased. At least he seems to know how to treat people like people. So, I will say this to you, Lord Isaac.”

After a long speech, she slowly took a deep breath, opened her eyes wide, and said what she wanted to say to me.

“Leona will not be of much help to you, Lord Isaac. She might even become a hindrance.”

“...”

“I won’t oppose your choice, Lord Isaac. My daughter also likes you, so as a parent, I must accept that.”

“I appreciate that, but... Mother Lucia.”

“Yes. Please go ahead.”

Lucia won’t stop Leona from coming to me. She just wants to understand what kind of person I am.

So, I clasped my hands together and smiled. There is a very fitting thing to say in this situation.

“My Noona once asked me this: Do you want to be a scoundrel or a piece of trash?”

“Pardon?”

“And I decided to be a scoundrel.”

It was a resolution I made when I accepted Adelia.

“Rather than being a piece of trash that hurts women’s hearts, I’d rather be a scoundrel who accepts one woman after another.”

Better to be a scoundrel than a piece of trash. It’s an inevitable phenomenon now that the water has already been spilled and my identity as Xenon has been revealed.

However, I will never cause harm. I repeat, I am not that kind of trash.

“Leona is the same. I will never hurt her feelings.”

“...”

“I will act according to my heart, not based on usefulness.”

Hearing my answer, did Lucia realize something? She opened her mouth slightly and stared blankly before lowering her head. Just before she lowered her head, I caught a glimpse of her face breaking into a smile.

“Pfft...”

As soon as she lowered her head, Lucia trembled slightly, trying to suppress her laughter. I patiently waited until she had laughed enough.

Finally, Lucia looked up at me, still covering her mouth with her fist. Judging by the tears in the corners of her eyes, she must have found it quite amusing.

“Really...”

The words that followed from Lucia’s mouth were:

“Lord Isaac, you are truly an incorrigible scoundrel. I should have realized it sooner.”

It was a compliment, albeit a backhanded one. I shrugged and responded playfully to her compliment.

“Thank you for the praise.”

“Then, won’t it be difficult for you, Lord Isaac?”

The biggest problem is exactly that. It’s hard for me to handle.

With a slightly ambiguous smile, I opened my mouth.

“That’s why I’m working hard on my writing.”

I don’t want to die young.

Translators note:

Immediately forgot to upload KEKW

3 chapters tomorrow

Chapter 330: Leona (3)

After my declaration of being a scoundrel, Lucia began to reveal her true feelings one by one.

What she was worried about was me discriminating against Leona and only showing affection to other women. She didn't care how many women I embraced, as long as Leona wasn't lonely and didn't regret choosing me.

It seems that, as the third wife of the previous great chieftain and being human, she received less affection. Given that beastmen are known for having many children, it's telling that she only had Leona.

It was fortunate that Leona maintained good relationships with her other siblings; otherwise, her life would have been quite difficult.

“But Mother Lucia, how did you come to be connected with the previous great chieftain?”

This was the part I was most curious about. What kind of wisdom did she lend to become the chieftain's wife? As you know, humans and beastmen have very poor relations.

The racial war 300 years ago and the current situation still reflect this. Although the rivalry between elves and demons is gradually increasing, humans and beastmen have been at each other's throats for ages.

Dwarves, well... as long as they get to sell their weapons, they don't care much. They do have close relations with humans due to humans' reliance on tools.

In any case, for Lucia to become the wife of the previous great chieftain in such circumstances meant she provided considerable help. Even from the beastmen's perspective, Leona is considered unattractive, so one can only imagine how Lucia, a human, must have been perceived. My curiosity was piqued.

“There wasn’t much advice to give. Animers was continuously developing at the time. I merely emphasized the importance of food. Other than that, nothing. In times of drought, they rely on shamanistic rituals, but how long can Lady Harte continue to support them? So, I advised focusing on food preservation. It just so happened that the following year, there was a severe drought.”

“Even that alone would be sufficient. Beastmen consume several times more food than humans.”

As I said this, I glanced at Leona. No need to be subtle anymore, Leona was happily devouring the cookies Adelia had baked. Judging by her wagging tail, the cookies were to her liking. I poured milk into her empty cup, telling her to eat slowly.

Lucia elegantly smiled as she watched our affectionate scene and shared some information.

“It’s surprising that Leona likes it so much. Her taste is quite picky, inherited from the beastmen side.”

“Picky?”

“Yes. You know that among the beastmen, there are carnivores and herbivores, right?”

“I know.”

“For some reason, carnivorous beastmen have duller taste, whereas herbivorous beastmen have a more sensitive palate.”

I nodded. It was information I had heard somewhere before. It might be because the distribution of taste cells is different. In any case, it means Leona’s taste is closer to that of a carnivore.

There was a reason she loved steak smothered in seasoning. The academy’s meals are rather bland, so it must have felt like chewing rubber to her.

The same goes for the cookies she’s eating now. With chunks of chocolate embedded, she can enjoy both the sweetness and the savory taste at the same time.

“That’s useful information. If she lives in the mansion, we must exclude vegetables completely.”

“Huh? What did you say?”

Leona, too focused on eating to hear our conversation, blinked and asked. Her blue eyes had already returned to their golden color. It seems her eye color changes only when she shows her true nature. I patted Leona's head, finding her more cute than fierce.

“Is it tasty?”

“It's incredibly tasty! Could you make more?”

I silently looked at Adelia, meeting Leona's sparkling eyes. It wasn't me who made them, it was Adelia who baked them.

Adelia seemed pleased and went straight back to the kitchen. The peaceful atmosphere brought a satisfied smile to my face.

However, aside from the mood, there's still something to be cautious about. Leona is going to be my wife, which means she is at a higher risk of exposure to devil worshippers.

However, unlike Marie, it has not been officially announced, so it might not pose an immediate threat. But they could still attack just because she is an associate.

“Mother Lucia.”

“Yes, please speak.”

“If you wish, we can provide accommodations for you to stay in our territory.”

“I would be grateful for that.”

Lucia accepted my offer without any suspicion. Currently, she resides in a small village near the capital. She doesn't have much to pack, and with support from our family, she could live comfortably.

She wouldn't be in danger from demon worshippers either. With not only the Temple of Luminous but also the Temple of Mora established, who would dare to intrude?

Furthermore, with Helium and Alvenheim also sending personnel, it would be impossible for anyone to infiltrate.

“Leona...”

“You don't need to worry about Leona. Despite appearances, she is strong.”

“Strong?”

I looked at Leona in surprise as Lucia vouched for her strength. Leona raised her nose proudly, wearing a smug expression.

I knew she had the formidable physical abilities unique to beastmen, but many beastmen live ordinary lives without leveraging those abilities. Seeing my questioning look, Leona confidently spoke up, her tail wagging behind her.

“Our Lion clan undergoes rigorous training from a young age. And because I’m a hybrid, I had to work even harder to be recognized.”

“Then how strong are you?”

“I’m not sure. After being recognized by the clan and growing to a certain extent, I only focused on studying. I still do basic physical training, though.”

“Hmm...”

I considered whether Leona could be used as a guard. However, this was a suggestion to consider for the distant future. She is still a student, and soon she will become an assistant for a historical exploration with me. She has already caught the eye of Professor Elena.

There’s no need for her to have a guard. Instead, it might be better for her to stay fit just in case.

Of course, if she loosens up at the academy, it will draw attention, so I plan to do it intermittently during each vacation.

‘I also need to start building my own strength.’

Adelia and Kate are reliable bodyguards, but I can’t always rely on them. Devil worshippers won’t try to break through the bodyguards but will certainly try to lure me out. Rushing in recklessly would only lead to a senseless death. However, I shouldn’t rule out the possibility of a suicide attack.

“Alright. It’s not something we need to think about immediately, so let’s put it off for now. Leona, just focus on your studies. Understood?”

“Yes.”

“So, that’s it for devil worshippers. Is there anything else we should be cautious about? Not just threats, but lifestyle habits or anything like that would be helpful to know in advance.”

Everyone has their own preferences and sore points, and there are often things that are hard to understand. Just as I had difficulty understanding beastmen culture, lifestyle differences can be stark.

It’s better to know these things in advance to make living together easier in the future.

“Leona is a hybrid, so her lifestyle is similar to humans. Unlike the past, she’s now focused on her studies and isn’t aggressive. The only thing might be fur care?”

“Fur care?”

“Yes. Unlike other species, beastmen have a lot of fur on their bodies. Depending on the season, their fur can either become very thick or shed a lot. It seems like it’s shedding season now. Do you have a brush?”

Lucia paused her explanation to look for a brush. I glanced at Adelia, who promptly went to find one. She returned with a brush and handed it to me as Lucia continued.

“Try brushing Leona’s hair.”

“Should I untie her hair?”

“Yes.”

Leona usually wore her hair in a ponytail. Following Lucia’s instructions, I untied her hair.

As soon as I untied her hair, her abundant chestnut brown hair cascaded down like a waterfall. I hadn’t realized how long her hair was since she always wore it in a ponytail. And it was quite coarse, which is characteristic of lion beastmen.

Brush

“...What?”

“It falls out a lot, doesn’t it?”

As Lucia said, just one brush stroke resulted in a handful of hair coming out. With a sense of disbelief, I brushed her hair a few more times, and an incredible amount of hair

got caught in the brush. It's like a cat shedding fur.

"It's called molting, a trait specific to beastmen. The hair grows back as much as it falls out, but the problem is the large amount of hair that sheds. You'll need to manage it well."

"That, I see. But it's not a major concern."

"Molting is manageable, but the biggest concern is the... estrus period."

"..."

"...You roughly know what it is, right?"

Of course, I do. Leona had mentioned it confidently without any shame, so who wouldn't know?

Like a human menstrual cycle, beastmen have an estrus period about once a month, during which their instincts are hard to control.

I listened to Lucia and then looked at Leona, who tilted her head, seemingly indifferent.

"Is there anything specific to watch out for during that period?"

"Not really, but it will be very challenging. The physical strength of beastmen is extremely difficult for humans to handle. Fortunately, Leona is a hybrid, so it's less intense, but you should be well-prepared. The bigger issue is that we don't know much beyond that."

"I'll take care of it. But before that... Leona?"

"Yes?"

"When was your last estrus period?"

This is the most crucial part. Now that we have Lucia's approval, there's no reason to delay further. I had planned to proceed after resolving my relationship with Adelia, but it was delayed because I needed Lucia's permission.

Leona blinked her golden eyes at my question, then placed her index finger on her chin. Looking upward, she quietly replied.

"Maybe... about a week ago? Around that time."

“Then there’s about three weeks left?”

“Yes. Do you need anything?”

“No, nothing.”

I need to be prepared. I don’t know how strong Leona’s stamina is, but it will undoubtedly be a tough challenge.

On top of all this, I have to meet with other women, and there is the huge variable of Arwen. In the worst-case scenario, Arwen’s gift and Leona’s heat period will coincide. It’s a situation where I can’t avoid either one.

‘...Come to think of it, there’s Kate too?’

Including Kate, the lustful priestess who has awakened to desire. Kate enters a state of arousal just by holding hands, which is quite troublesome. Recently, Marie teased me half-jokingly, calling me a public resource, but now I think it wasn’t a joke.

“Really? Then that’s a relief. I’ll be looking forward to it.”

“Uh... there’s no need to look forward to it...”

“Why? Are you scared?”

“...”

This girl! Leona’s remark, which struck directly at my male pride, made me raise an eyebrow.

I looked at Leona, who had a mischievous smile, with one corner of her mouth turned up in a cute expression. There was a hint of mockery beneath that smile.

I let out a helpless laugh at her smile. Even though Lucia was right in front of me, I couldn’t let this slide.

“Let’s see how long that smile lasts. Just wait three weeks.”

“Mm. Mm. That’s more like the male I chose. I’ll be fully prepared too, so just let me know anytime.”

Leona nodded with her arms crossed. Seeing her like that somehow sparked a desire for conquest within me. She once said she would make me possessive, and she’s following

through with it.

I looked at Leona with a smile, then noticed her wagging tail. I'd always wanted to grab that tail, and now seemed like a good time.

Squeeze!

“Eeek?!”

As I grabbed her tail suddenly, Leona was startled. Like a cat with its fur standing on end, her hair amusingly puffed up.

As expected, her reaction was quite delightful. I chuckled as I fiddled with Leona's stiffened tail.

“Now that you're my wife, it's okay if I touch it, right?”

“Uh, well... that's true, but...”

Leona, who had been so confident, was now blushing with embarrassment. She looked at me with a flushed face and then turned her head to Lucia. While playing with Leona's tail, I also glanced at Lucia. She, watching our little skit with a strangely reddened face, cleared her throat.

Then, as if she remembered something, she opened her mouth with one eye closed.

“Uh... Sir Isaac? There's something I forgot to mention.”

“Is it about beastmen's tails? I heard that married couples can touch them.”

“If you're aware, then it's fine, but... please refrain from such pranks. It could startle her, and she might scratch you.”

“Understood.”

Hearing this, I let go of Leona's tail. She then glared at me with a pouty expression.

Swoosh, swoosh

“...Purr.”

I immediately patted her head, and Leona purred in her characteristic way. With permission granted, she now even leaned her head on my shoulder.

Smiling at her adorable pet-like demeanor, I turned to Lucia and spoke.

“Mother Lucia.”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

“I will definitely make Leona happy.”

Perhaps my declaration pleased her.

“Thank you.”

Lucia bowed her head in gratitude. I also bowed in return and then called Leona.

“Leona.”

“*Purr*. Yes?”

“Is there anything you want?”

“Meat!”

“...”

I’m glad I’ve made a lot of money.

After accepting Leona, I moved according to schedule. Of course, this schedule included the release of the 25th volume of ‘Xenon’s Biography’. Although the release was delayed due to my recent busy schedule, the readers waited patiently.

And then...

[The ancestors of the elves were not exiled, but they tore off their own wings and descended!]

[The truth revealed in Xenon’s Biography. Could this be true?]

[Considering the characteristics of the elves blessed by the gods, it seems highly credible...]

As expected, the reaction was explosive. The hypothesis that the ancestors of the elves were not banished but tore off their own wings and descended to the ground.

From my perspective, it was just a cliché borrowed from my past life, but it coincidentally matched many aspects, leading numerous scholars to engage in heated debates.

However, since it was deeply related to mythology, many people directly questioned the gods. I was among them.

Even if chaos ensued, it didn't matter much, but I was personally curious.

[What do you think?]

'Honestly, the idea that they tore off their own wings and descended seems more convincing.'

[Then let's go with that.]

'Pardon?'

What on earth is he talking about?

Translators note:

Chapter 331: Book 25 (1)

Even when I write stories that could be plausible, I base them on history, ensuring thorough research. The continuous uproar caused by ‘possible’ stories is understandable to some extent.

The problem is that all these stories turned out to be true, and I ended up facing baseless accusations, such as after Cecily’s devilization. So, I wrote freely with a detached mindset.

However, ‘myth’ is a bit different. Myth is, as the word suggests, a myth and is an ancient story beyond the imagination of mortals. Greek and Roman myths, Norse myths, the Book of Revelation, and so on.

Myth is the first philosophy and the oldest philosophy that has been passed down to later generations. It has been interpreted in various ways and used in numerous creative works.

Of course, this explanation is limited to the myths of my past life. Myth is just folklore and not ‘history’ that actually existed. On the other hand, the myths of this world are closer to ‘history.’

The past of Luminous, the God of Light, and Mora, the Goddess of Darkness, is recorded, as is their mother, Harte, the Goddess of Nature. Although there is room for various interpretations like in my past life, their history is clearly real.

Thus, denying the myth is equivalent to denying their very existence. However, because it is such ancient history, scholars often have differing opinions. This is similar to actual history. History is objective but is recorded subjectively, and myths are no different.

In that sense, let’s examine the origins of each race, specifically the elves. Elves are a race blessed by the gods, with immense potential from birth. They can freely use magic and have several times higher mana affinity than other races. Truly living up to the phrase ‘blessed by the gods,’ they established the first civilization in a world overrun by monsters.

So, how did the origin of the elves come to be? Unlike the demons, whose origin is the devils, the origin of the elves is the angels. Known for their white wings and beautiful appearance, angels, according to myth, serve by the side of the gods and sometimes become mighty warriors on the front lines.

However, as expected from a myth, there are no records of angels ever appearing, even when digging into the past. Even during the 3000-year Demon War, angels did not appear, instead, the gods helped directly and indirectly.

So if the origin of the elves is angels, why do they not exist? The reason is also contained in the myth. They were all banished to the earth for rebelling against the gods. It seems that no matter how pure and innocent the angels were, they still coveted divine power. This could be seen as a very human trait.

Thus, they lost their proud and symbolic wings and fell to the earth, becoming a new race—the elves. It's a myth that suits the prideful nature of the elves, which is why the majority of people firmly believe in it.

'Did they really tear off their own wings and descend to the earth?'

However, hearing Luminous's non-denial made my head spin. It was hard to grasp what the correct myth was when he suggested going with that version. Surely, a god wouldn't lie, so what did he mean by saying that?

[I cannot give you a definitive answer.]

'Why not?'

[Because both are true.]

'...Excuse me?'

What an absurd statement. He said that both the rebellion and tearing off their wings were true. Luminous, sensing my bewilderment, continued in his uniquely graceful voice.

[It is true that the angels rebelled against us. However, all the angels who led the rebellion were destroyed.]

'Then what about the remaining angels...'

[They tore off their own wings and descended to the earth. We tried to stop them, but they refused, seeing it as a punishment for themselves. They fell to the earth to make it more prosperous and to purify the land that was almost tainted by their siblings' greed.]

'Oh...'

Hearing it directly from a god certainly made it sound more majestic... but why is this true? I was momentarily impressed but then left utterly astonished.

As I always say, Luminous and Mora never lie. If they were to lie, their divinity would be significantly diminished. Even if the worst outcome is inevitable, they must not lie.

'You're not lying, right?'

[I'm not.]

Still, I can't help but be suspicious. Then why is there only a record in the myth that the angels were banished?

Sensing my doubt, Luminous explained in a gentle voice.

[That's simple. To the eyes of mortals, it had to appear that way. All the angels who tore off their wings and descended to the earth lost their memories. They only remember falling from the sky.]

'Oh, I think I've seen something like that.'

The angels who fell to the earth were the first 'mortals.' Back then, there were no other races, only elves and monsters. They might have been similar to the humans of my past life. The difference was their incredibly long lifespan and their much greater abilities compared to the first humans.

As time passed, various races emerged, and the elves, who had increased their numbers, established the first civilization. Due to their 1,000-year lifespan, they increased their population slowly while other races evolved.

[However, the mission remained deeply embedded in their hearts despite the passage of time. Make the world they observe better. That was the punishment for the sin they committed and the price of their pride.]

'That's truly elf-like... wait a minute.'

That's exactly what I wrote in the 25th volume. I was so startled that I flinched visibly.

In the meantime, Luminous chuckled lightly in a voice filled with satisfaction.

[It's a truly wonderful phrase. Whether they actually had such a mission or not, it makes sense given their lack of interest in 'domination.']

'But isn't it reckless to handle myths written by mere mortals so carelessly?'

[It seems more honorable that way. Besides, myths are written by you mortals, not by me. I have no authority over them.]

'You said that denying myths would bring divine punishment.'

[That's because it would be akin to denying our very existence. As you know, history is subjective, isn't it? Myths are no different.]

Hmm. As expected of a god, no argument works against him. Each of his points is so logical that I can't find a way to counter them.

Of course, if a myth were completely nonsensical, the gods, including Luminous, would immediately deny it. But I am different. In a way, it's true that 'this is why it happened'. It's half true, but the problem is that it's a 'hidden history.'

Moreover, explaining why the elves received the gods' blessings could cause a significant stir.

'...They won't actually grow wings like Lucifer, will they?'

After pondering for a while, I asked about my biggest concern. While volume 25 explains the origin of the elves alongside the prelude to war, volume 26 features Lucifer appearing with wings. Although his wings are not white as in the myths but rather black as if painted with black ink, they are still wings.

The reason for my worry is Cecily's demonization. The level of 'this is why it happened' has reached a point where it feels like directly creating fiction, which is quite terrifying.

Lucifer, with his spread wings, declares that he will elevate the elves back to angels and ascend to overthrow the gods.

[You don't need to worry about that. Unlike demons, whose blood and mana are mixed with devils power, elves do not have such traits. Moreover, wings are a 'body(??)' part granted only to transcendents like us.]

By ‘body (신체),’ he means the physical form of a god. In other words, as mortals, we can never have wings. Fortunately, the Lucifer in the book obtained his wings through a kind of loophole, and even that was only partially successful.

‘Then, is there no possibility for a mortal to become a transcendent?’

[It’s virtually impossible. There is an extremely slim chance for someone to become a transcendent, but at least in our world, it has never happened. Although it was more common on Earth, where you lived.]

‘It was common on Earth?’

[Yes. The most notable examples would be Buddha and Jesus.]

His answer made immediate sense. I didn’t know that Buddha and Jesus actually existed on Earth.

Anyway, unless one accomplishes achievements or gains enlightenment comparable to those figures, becoming a transcendent is impossible. This information alone is sufficient.

‘I’ll also get some good material out of this.’

A mortal who achieves great deeds and attains enlightenment to become a transcendent. It reminds me of the ‘immortals’ often seen in martial arts novels, which might be a similar concept.

After getting various confirmations from Luminous, I felt somewhat relieved. However, I couldn’t afford to be complacent. Just like Cecily’s devilization, there was a case where something was forcefully made even though Mora said it wouldn’t happen.

Of course, it’s somewhat understandable that Mora was speaking based on the situation at that time. Still, it doesn’t hurt to be cautious.

[Even if you are cautious, what can you do? Just accept whatever happens.]

‘You’re harsh. But you’ll still grant me divine power, right?’

[Of course. By the way, would you consider becoming my official follower...]

Just as Luminous was about to subtly bring up his request, Mora’s voice suddenly echoed in my mind, cutting him off.

[Hey! How dare you...]

Mora's voice abruptly interrupted, and the connection was severed simultaneously. I immediately opened my eyes and looked ahead. The statue, which should have been glowing with a golden light, was now dark.

It seemed that Luminous had quickly disconnected as soon as Mora tried to intervene. As Luminous had mentioned before, trying to connect with both him and Mora simultaneously would strain my mind.

'But surprisingly, I feel okay...'

Drip

As soon as I had that thought, I felt something flowing from my nose. Wiping it with the back of my hand, I saw that it was bright red blood, like paint smeared on my hand. Even though it lasted less than a second, it meant my brain had been strained.

'...It seems I really am just an ordinary person.'

First, I needed to find some tissues.

About an hour later.

"Ugh... *Cough, cough.*"

"Are you alright? Why do you have a fever all of a sudden? What happened?"

"I don't know. Except for visiting the temple, I didn't do anything..."

"Could it be because of stress?"

In a short time, my fever had rapidly increased, and I started groaning in pain. This must be what they call being possessed by a holy spirit.

'I've never been sick until now...'

I have accomplished something greater than dealing with devil worshippers.

Translators note:

Chapter 332: Book 25 (2)

Compared to my family, my physical growth was slower, but I was far from being ‘weak.’ I had never experienced a dangerously high fever, nor did I suffer from minor illnesses.

Although this world has divine power, it still lacks advanced medical science, making it vulnerable to diseases. I’ve heard that there was a time when the empire was threatened by a plague.

The concept of ‘hygiene’ was understood early on, but biological sciences lag behind. However, aside from my mother, my family is generally healthy. Neither Dave, Nicole, nor my father have ever been seriously ill.

In fact, my father, due to his profession, often got injured by cold weapons or beastmen’s claws, exposing him to tetanus and other diseases. When he occasionally trains shirtless, his upper body is covered in scars, the most notable being claw marks from a beast.

Of course, as the captain of the Navy Knights, he would have had access to medical supplies. But the border areas where he served were literal frontlines. In my previous life, they could be compared to Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine, or even Stalingrad—hellish places where soldiers were constantly being swept away.

Even with a solid supply line, such places often lacked sufficient supplies, including medicine. Despite this, my father never contracted tetanus or even a mild cold. In such entrenched battlefields, more people die slowly from disease and poor hygiene than from fighting.

Whether it’s due to inheriting a hero’s bloodline, our family’s physical constitution is exceptionally strong compared to others, in terms of immunity and potential. Even as my body grew robustly, I never fell ill. Furthermore, now that I receive plenty of divine power, I’m even further from being sick.

“*Cough, cough. Ugh...*”

But today, I have to retract that statement. After simultaneously connecting with Luminous and Mora at the temple, I collapsed as soon as I returned to the dormitory. Within less than an hour, my fever spiked rapidly, leaving me unable to move. The persistent cough that hurt my throat was a bonus.

Perhaps because I haven't been sick since reincarnating, this feels even more painful.

“Are you alright?”

In a situation where even moving a finger was difficult, a beautiful voice pierced my ears. Struggling, I opened my eyes and turned my head.

Her hair as white as snow and her eyes as blue as sapphires. If she had wings on her back, she would truly look like an angel. I forced a smile as I looked at my fiancée, Marie, who was looking at me with a worried expression.

Despite feeling dizzy as if someone was messing with my head and my body burning like a furnace, I managed to smile.

“It's tough, but I'm... *cough!*“

I tried to say I was fine, but a cough burst out. I had coughed so much that my throat was sore.

Swoosh

After finishing the bout of coughing, something was placed on my forehead. The cold sensation spread across my feverish forehead. Struggling, I opened my eyes and shifted my gaze to see Adelia in her maid uniform. It seemed she had placed a wet towel on my forehead to try to lower my fever with dedication and effort.

She was also looking at me with her sky-blue eyes full of concern. Her love for me was unrivaled, making her even more distressed.

Unfortunately, this fever wouldn't go down easily. It wasn't a simple fever caused by illness.

“Is he really okay?”

Marie asked again about my condition, but this time she directed the question to someone else, not me. The person she asked wasn't Adelia, who was nursing me, but

Kate, who had rushed over as soon as she heard I was ill. She had looked as if the world had collapsed when she saw me lying in bed, suffering.

“Yes. It’s just ‘divine fever’ caused by the clash of divine powers from Luminous and Mora. It’s definitely not an illness.”

Being a priestess, Kate had diagnosed my condition faster than anyone else. The diagnosis was divine fever. It’s similar to the spiritual afflictions that shamans experience.

However, here, divine fever occurs when one receives an excessive amount of divine power.

Even during divine revelations, not everyone receives them; only specific devotees, like priestesses, do. If an ordinary priest receives a revelation, they will suffer from divine fever. Even the Pope or Cardinals can receive revelations without much trouble, but even they sometimes receive vague revelations.

In other words, it is extremely rare for someone to have direct conversations and even be able to foresee the future like me.

“I also suffered from divine fever when Luminous bestowed his grace upon me. The traces of it remain on my body as stigmata.”

“I think I’ve heard about that. Don’t the incarnations also have stigmata?”

“That’s correct. However, that doesn’t mean I am an incarnation. An incarnation is literally when the gods borrow a mortal’s body to perform powers and miracles. Other than during the Devil War, there have been no recorded instances of incarnations.”

As Kate explained, incarnations only manifest when the world is on the brink of destruction. Historically, they have only appeared during the Devil War.

I wanted to say something in response to her explanation, but I was too exhausted to do so and could only listen quietly. Even sleeping was difficult because of my dizziness.

“Isaac mentioned that the divine powers of Luminous and Mora collided. What does that mean?”

“It’s simple. For some unknown reason, Isaac managed to connect with both of them simultaneously. It’s hard enough to handle one deity, let alone two at the same time, so it’s no wonder he is suffering from divine fever.”

“Both at the same time...”

“If it weren’t Isaac, any other person would have been consumed by holy fire. They probably wouldn’t even feel the pain.”

Would the fire be so quick that it would be painless? Burns are one of the most painful injuries, so not feeling pain seems impossible...

“Before that, their mind would collapse, leaving them in a vegetative state. They wouldn’t feel pain because they’d be incapable of it.”

That’s truly frightening. I ended up like this in less than a second. No wonder I had nosebleeds and dizziness.

Kate’s terrifying explanation gave me chills. If Luminous had delayed disconnecting even a bit longer, I can’t imagine what would have happened. Passing out would have been preferable.

“Then, will he recover?”

“There’s no need to worry. Although the divine powers of Luminous and Mora repel each other, they are descendants of Harte. Soon, they will gradually merge and stabilize.”

“Thank goodness...”

Marie sighed in relief at Kate’s explanation. Glancing to the side, I saw Adelia also had a similar expression of relief.

So, the only remaining question is whether to inform others about my current condition or keep it a secret. While I can handle all my basic needs within the dormitory, I cannot participate in any external activities. If my condition were to leak out, it would cause an enormous commotion, which is a bit concerning.

“Uh... Kate.”

“Yes, go ahead.”

“When will I recover from this? *Cough.*”

I asked with difficulty. Given the severe fever and body aches, I didn’t expect a quick recovery. To make matters worse, I was also experiencing a sore throat, one of the symptoms of the flu. I hope it doesn’t get to the point where I start coughing up blood.

Kate pondered my question for a moment, then tilted her head as she replied.

“I’m not sure. I recovered in three days, but in your case, it’s a mix of divine powers from Luminous and Mora...”

“Three days? That long?”

“There’s no need to worry. I was in so much pain that I fainted, and three days just passed by.”

I wish she wouldn’t talk about it with a smile. I was about to voice that thought, but the pain made me swallow it back down. Still, it seems that fainting might be the best option for now, given how intense the pain is.

‘Once I recover...’

I’ll have to go to the temple and confront Luminous. More than confronting, I’ll demand an explanation. Actually, Mora’s interference caused more problems, but since Luminous provided the opportunity, both are to blame.

Perhaps they were scolded by Harte like last time. After all, their mistake nearly cost them a devoted follower.

But for now, the important issue is whether to inform others about my condition.

“So, should I... *cough*... inform others about my illness?”

“Let’s decide based on your condition. If you’re still the same tomorrow, we’ll have to let people know. It’s better than disappearing without a trace.”

“Before that, what you need is absolute rest. Don’t even think about getting out of bed for the time being.”

“Okay...”

I smiled faintly at their concern. My body felt hot enough to make me faint at any moment, but their genuine love and care made me feel a little more at ease.

Through my past life, I know well that being alone when you’re sick is the most sorrowful thing. The memories of feeling depressed because there was no one to complain to about my pain are deeply etched in my mind.

I wish I could reach out and touch their faces. The problem is, I don't even have the strength to move a single finger.

'After I sleep...'

I'll probably feel better. I slowly closed my eyes, feeling my consciousness fade rather than the usual sleepiness. If I sleep deeply and wake up, I'll probably feel better. As Kate mentioned, it might be better to faint for a few days until I fully recover.

Rumble rumble rumble—

“Huh? What's that?”

“Something is vibrating...”

Just as I was about to fall asleep, a sudden vibration occurred.

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

If only it weren't an earthquake.

“What, what is this? Why is this happening all of a sudden?”

“I-it's an earthquake! Quickly, we need to protect young master!”

Marie and Adelia, in a panic, fumbled around helplessly, unable to do anything in the face of the sudden quake. They tried their best to protect me, but I was unable to move a single finger.

Moreover, they had never experienced an earthquake before and didn't know how to respond, focusing only on shielding me.

Rumble, rumble—

Fortunately, the earthquake lasted less than ten seconds before subsiding.

It seemed to be a light aftershock, but there were still some puzzling aspects.

In the nearly 500-year history of the Minerva Empire's capital, earthquakes have been extremely rare.

'Could it be that Harte is angry...'

Luminous and Mora had explained before that Harte, the goddess of nature, could cause natural disasters based on her emotional state. The recent earthquake felt like ‘anger.’ It wasn’t at the level of a volcanic eruption, which would signify ‘rage,’ but more like mild anger.

I chuckled at the memory of Mora being scolded by Hirt last time. I couldn’t help but imagine the twin siblings kneeling side by side, getting scolded by Hirt.

‘I’ll have to ask about it later...’

For now, I just wanted to sleep. As soon as the earthquake stopped, I quietly closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep.

Unlike Kate, who had fainted for three days, I only slept all day and woke up feeling better the next day. However, I experienced mild dehydration from sweating excessively.

Thankfully, thanks to the people taking care of me by my side, I was able to recover quickly. After being diagnosed again by Kate, I immediately headed to Luminous’s temple.

Of course, it was partly to question him about the recent events and also because I had some curious questions.

‘Don’t you have something to say to me?’

[...I apologize.]

‘The earthquake yesterday was because Harte was angry, right?’

[Mora and I were kneeling side by side, getting scolded.]

So it was true.

After the release of Volume 25, which country experienced the biggest reaction? Scholars of anthropology and theology would certainly cause a commotion regardless of the nation. However, it was undoubtedly Alvenheim, or more precisely, the elven race itself, that faced a significant upheaval.

Originally, the myth surrounding the origin of the elves involved banishment due to pride, but Xenon’s Biography completely overturned this narrative. Instead of being

banished, the elves tore off their own wings to make the world a better place—a deeply self-sacrificial and righteous mindset.

This new interpretation also explained the elves' characteristic pride and why they were blessed by the gods. There were concerns that this could lead to increased nationalism and a resurgence of arrogance similar to the period before the race wars.

The newly established myth from Xenon's Biography was enough to instill a sense of pride. The old myth, which depicted the elves as banished, was negative in many ways. Although it had always seemed somewhat contradictory, people had believed in it firmly.

But now, there's a new, impressive myth: the elves were not banished; they tore off their own wings and descended. Even scholars, after several analyses, nodded in agreement, and the gods did not object in any way. If it were a completely unfounded myth, the gods would have directly refuted it.

Since myths are more sensitive than regular history, their silence implied tacit approval. In other words, the act of tearing off their wings and descending was indeed true.

[There was a reason we were blessed by the gods!]

[We are not banished! We are descendants of the great angels!]

Consequently, such voices began to grow louder within Alvenheim. If things had continued without any restraint, many problems could have arisen, but...

[Have you truly learned nothing from the race wars?]

[Distinguish clearly between arrogance and pride.]

[Our greatest enemy is none other than our own pride.]

Arwen's warnings like the above helped to gradually quell the flames. Her words were undeniably correct.

However, even Arwen could do nothing about the pride instilled in the elves. That pride, or sense of superiority, was something even Arwen, being an elf herself, couldn't completely escape.

Although she was a half-blood rather than a pureblood, she was practically the same as a pureblood. Elven traits manifest at least up to a quarter of their lineage.

Just as Cecily's devilization followed the myth, Arwen wondered if she might also grow wings according to the myth...

"It's not happening. I give up."

After several attempts with no sign of wings or any change, she quickly gave up. The myth had changed, but unlike the devilization described in Xenon's Biography, it didn't mention anything about growing wings.

Unless the next volume features Lucifer with wings, a myth is just a myth. So, she let go of that idea and focused on state affairs. Being a half-blood made it easier for her to give up.

Knock, knock, knock—

At that moment, Arwen heard someone knocking on the office door. Without lifting her head, she spoke.

"Come in."

With Arwen's characteristic tone granting permission, the door opened cautiously, and an elf appeared. It was Keir, the bodyguard and chief secretary Arwen had selected. He stood quietly, waiting for her to lift her head.

"So, what brings you here?"

Arwen asked as she put down her quill. Given the busy situation caused by the hidden elven myth revealed in Volume 25, she intended to handle things quickly.

Keir, meeting Arwen's silver-gray eyes, cleared his throat before speaking in a gentle voice.

"The item you requested has arrived."

With those words,

"Is this really true!"

Arwen jumped up from her seat, shouting loudly. Her silver-gray eyes were wide open, and her expression was filled with surprise.

Keir, watching Arwen's reaction in real-time, gave a subtle smile and nodded in affirmation.

“Yes. It’s on its way here right now.”

“Ah, understood. Finally...!”

Arwen clasped her hands together at her chest, her face filled with anticipation, like a child receiving a new toy. Seeing her reaction, Keir smiled softly before his expression turned curious.

“But what kind of item requires such materials? Silk made from the cocoons of silkworms that fed on the leaves of the World Tree? It’s hard to imagine what it could be.”

“Th-that doesn’t matter! More importantly...! Ahem.”

For some reason, Arwen’s face turned red. She hastily cleared her throat to change the subject.

After calming herself by tapping her chest, she gave Keir a resolute look and issued her instructions.

“...It’s time to make the announcement.”

“Announcement?”

“Yes.”

Only one task remained.

“It’s time to give Xenon a gift.”

It was time to give Isaac a special gift.

Translators note:

Chapter 333: Book 25 (3)

Although I spent a day in vain due to the unexpected divine fever, it didn't cause any significant disruption to my daily routine.

In fact, Luminous apologized sincerely and promised to be more careful in the future, granting me an abundance of divine power.

Thanks to that, I felt completely healthy and energetic, a stark contrast to the previous day when I felt like I was dying from the fever. I felt no fatigue, and others were even concerned about how energetic I was.

Anyway, after returning to my daily routine, the first thing I had to do was visit Elena's research lab. I intended to continue attending the academy, but I didn't want to continue in a way that inconvenienced those around me.

So if Elena found it difficult to continue working with me, I planned to resign from the assistant position, even if I felt regretful about it. It would be better to return to being a student and attend her lectures.

“Not at all? Why would I do that?”

But Elena's reaction was one of complete incomprehension. Her light green eyes behind her glasses were filled with curiosity. Cindy, who was quietly reading a book beside her, had a similar reaction. Her eyes were still dark and weary, but they now held a question.

Seeing their reactions, I spoke in a hesitant voice.

“I might cause you trouble. And there's also the threat from devil worshippers...”

“Let them come. I'd like to catch one and do some research.”

Elena answered confidently, and Cindy nodded in agreement. I looked at them, initially bewildered, but then I couldn't help but chuckle.

Come to think of it, the headmaster mentioned that Elena and Cindy were once explorers who traveled the world. They likely possess enough strength to protect themselves, so it's not something I need to worry about.

“Besides, I can't miss this opportunity. Being the professor who taught Xenon—my reputation is going to soar.”

“Was that your original goal?”

“Half of it, maybe? The other half is that it's hard to find someone as capable as you. While Leona is going to join as an assistant, the more, the merrier, right?”

“With you around, organizing papers and documents won't be a problem...”

Elena and Cindy each stated what they wanted. Especially Cindy, who has been writing various papers with my help in composition.

I am helping them and living a life not much different from that of a graduate student. Still, regarding history, I have much to learn from them.

“I understand your thoughts. So, should I continue working as an assistant?”

“That's up to you. If you decide to leave, we can't stop you. Just make sure to tell us if any major event is going to happen in the future.”

“It's not like that.”

“Or you could inform us about forgotten histories or significant events, like the newly interpreted myth of the elves.”

I gave a wry smile at the half-joking suggestion. Elena glanced at my face and then smiled faintly.

It seems she doesn't want to miss out on the big catch. After all, opportunities to legally exploit Xenon's knowledge are rare.

Anyway, it seems settled that I'll continue as an assistant. Now, there's one more thing left: introducing my bodyguards.

Since I plan to bring Adelia and Kate along to classes in the future, it's best to familiarize them now.

“This is Adelia Cross, Isaac's loyal servant. Please take care of her.”

Adelia introduced herself first. She was dressed in comfortable clothes suitable for activities, not her usual maid uniform.

Although the maid outfit suits her, with her figure, she can pull off anything. If the maid outfit combined sexiness and cuteness, right now she looked dignified.

“Adelia Cross... You used to be a teaching assistant in the liberal arts department, right? I’ve heard of you. You were considered one of the most promising talents along with a student named Nicole.”

Elena said, pushing up her glasses that had slightly slipped down. It seems that Adelia’s reputation is not limited to the liberal arts department alone.

This is also true for Nicole. Given that even a literature professor, who is far from martial arts, knows about her, it is likely that the entire academy was aware of them.

Adelia responded to her words modestly with her characteristic husky voice.

“You’re too kind. Nicole was a more outstanding student than I was.”

“Hmm... I understand. I look forward to working with you. And...”

Elena’s gaze shifted sideways. There stood Kate, dressed in a white nun’s habit, with a gentle smile.

“Is that Cardinal Kate?”

“Yes, I am Kate Louise Angelica, serving under Luminous and Isaac.”

“I have heard of your great name. Not only did you expel the fallen cardinal, but I’ve also heard rumors that you might be the next pope...”

“It wasn’t me who expelled that worm, but Lord Isaac. I merely acted according to his will.”

As expected, Kate is relentless towards those associated with devils. Her tone is exceedingly polite, but her words are chilling.

Elena, hearing Kate’s somewhat fierce words, looked slightly taken aback. Cindy blinked her eyes with her characteristic weary expression.

Regardless, Kate continued speaking with a saintly smile.

“And I have no intention of becoming the pope. My duty is to strike down the evil that pollutes the world and to protect Lord Isaac, who spreads the light.”

“Oh... I see. Understood. My name is Elena Heavensinger. I am a professor of history at Halo Academy.”

“I’m Cindy Skywalker... I look forward to working with you...”

Following Elena, Cindy introduced herself in an utterly exhausted tone. Her voice alone sounded extremely tired.

Perhaps it was Cindy’s voice and condition that caught Kate’s attention. She stared at Cindy for a moment and then slowly walked over to her.

Cindy, meanwhile, blinked her eyes and looked at Kate with a puzzled expression, not making any moves.

“Did you say your name was Cindy?”

“Yes...”

“Could you please hold out your hand for a moment?”

“My hand?”

“Yes.”

At Kate’s sudden request, Cindy looked at her with a curious gaze. Kate waited silently for her response.

Eventually, Cindy cautiously extended her hand, indicating her consent. Although her face looked somewhat worn due to severe lack of sleep, her hand was white and delicate.

As Cindy extended her hand, Kate gently placed her own hand on Cindy’s palm. As the two beautiful hands overlapped, a delicate atmosphere began to form.

Shaaa—

From Kate’s hand, a golden halo of light began to emanate and soon transferred to Cindy’s hand. It then gradually flowed up her arm, eventually enveloping her entire body.

Having seen this phenomenon a few times before, I wasn't surprised, but Cindy, witnessing it for the first time, looked astonished with wide eyes.

Elena, who was also watching, had the same reaction, her light green eyes widened in surprise.

Sssss—

The golden light that had been wrapping around Cindy's body began to slowly fade. As it dimmed, it was only natural to check if there were any changes in her appearance.

And I quickly noticed the difference. First of all, the dark circles under Cindy's eyes, which were practically her trademark, had completely disappeared.

The light returned to her face, which had been marred by fatigue, and her skin looked much more firm and resilient than before. Although it was unmistakably Cindy's appearance, she seemed like a completely different person.

“Your condition was quite deteriorated due to lack of sleep. Have you been unable to sleep at night?”

Kate, who had quickly restored Cindy's condition, asked with a gentle smile. Cindy looked at her in bewilderment.

“Well... yes. For some reason, I'm scared at night...”

Cindy replied in a shaky voice. Although her mind was clear, it seemed difficult to change the speech pattern she had developed over the years.

Indeed, if it's hard to change ingrained habits, how much harder would it be to alter one's manner of speaking? I thought it was somehow fortunate that her unique characteristic remained intact.

“You seem to be sensitive to even the slightest sounds.”

“Yes...”

“Hmm... it seems to be a stress-related illness you acquired during your exploration with Professor Elena. While I can improve your condition, it would be better to consult Mora for this area.”

So, it wasn't just that she was buried in papers and research every day; she simply couldn't sleep. I had overlooked the fact that post-traumatic stress isn't something only

soldiers like my father can suffer from.

If I had paid even a little attention, I might have been able to help her earlier. I realized I had dismissed her as merely a colleague with a unique personality.

“...How do you feel now?”

“I feel like I could fly. I think I could stay up for several nights and still be fine.”

In response to Elena’s cautious question, Cindy smiled brightly and looked at her own hands. She seemed like a different person just by losing the dark circles under her eyes.

Although her comment about staying up for several nights didn’t sound entirely positive, it clearly indicated how good she felt.

Hearing her words, Elena made a subtle expression and spoke in an admiring tone.

“Even after visiting the temple, I never felt any better... I guess it’s different with a cardinal.”

“This is nothing. If you want more, you can ask Lord Isaac.”

“Isaac? Are you saying you’re a clergyman?”

“What?”

Why is she pointing to me all of a sudden? I’m someone who only knows how to receive, not use these powers.

While both Elena and I were bewildered, Kate spoke with a warm smile.

“Lord Isaac is the one who spreads light in this world. Elena, you may not know, but there are already people who have received light from Lord Isaac. Not only his fiancée, Lady Marie, but also the princess of Helium, and lastly, the knight here, Lady Adelia.”

“... ..”

Ah, right.

This woman, she may have been by my side all this time, but she has zero social skills.

Specifically, she has a peculiar focus and can’t distinguish between what should and shouldn’t be said.

“So if you both wish, he can plant the seed...”

“That’s enough.”

So, I hurriedly covered Kate’s mouth. I’ve worked hard to make a good impression; it would be meaningless if she ruined it.

But what I overlooked was that by doing this, I had covered her mouth with my own hand.

Looking at Kate, wondering if it could be true...

“*Sniff. Sniff.* Ha...”

“... ..”

“Lord Isaac’s hand scent... Ah. I shouldn’t be doing this...”

She sniffed on her own and her face quickly turned red. Her eyes, now looking intoxicated, were a bonus.

I sighed deeply at the thought of managing Kate, who was difficult in many ways, and then slowly removed my hand.

“Ah, Lord Isaac? I’m sorry but...”

“...I’ll wait here until you return, so please go quickly.”

“T-thank you.”

And so, with a somewhat urgent expression, Kate left the lab. She probably returned to her quarters to have some alone time.

Considering that just holding hands with her can make her as aroused as Cecily in heat, covering her mouth must have made it worse. That’s what I was thinking.

“She... is quite a unique person.”

Elena spoke, trying to break the awkward atmosphere with a positive spin. Cindy, on the other hand, was busy checking her own condition.

Adelia... just stood there calmly, as if she was used to it. However, she did clear her throat with a solemn expression, suggesting she was a bit embarrassed too.

Naturally, the embarrassment fell on me. Covering my face with one hand, I spoke sincerely.

“Thank you for putting it that way... Please forget everything Kate said earlier.”

“Don’t worry. I may not look like it, but I’m married.”

“What?”

This was news to me. As I looked at her with a surprised expression, Elena tilted her head and questioned.

“Didn’t I tell you? The reason I sometimes go back to Alvenheim is to see my husband. I also do some research while I’m there.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“Really? Well, now you know.”

“... ..”

Fortunately, it seemed like my activities as a history assistant would continue smoothly.

Translators note:

Sorry for the delay, but I picked up a new series and will be uploading it soon!

Chapter 334: Legal Stalking (1)

Now that my conversation with Elena is over, the only thing left is the class schedule.

As you know, Elena's classes are quite numerous.

First-year literature classes are just the basics, and in the second year, her lectures expand beyond the Literature Department to include the Undeclared Studies as well.

The tasks I perform during these classes are limited to assisting Elena or engaging in discussions with the students, but even those can be mentally exhausting.

After all, there isn't just one class—there are multiple.

In other words, I have to prepare myself for a barrage of questions every time I step into a lecture.

On top of that, since my identity has been revealed, it's only natural for the intensity to increase.

So, I braced myself and entered the lecture.

“Before asking questions, let me make this clear: any personal stories or unrelated remarks will immediately result in a penalty. Please stick strictly to lecture-related questions during class.”

“””Ah...””””

However, Elena preemptively blocked any issues.

Her firm warning left most of the students visibly disappointed.

Although I expected my role as a teaching assistant to become more challenging, her considerate gesture made me feel nothing but gratitude.

I nodded deeply in appreciation, and Elena responded with a gentle smile.

Then, she adjusted her glasses, signaling it was time for the class to officially begin.

Ah, by the way, Adelia was standing next to me, while Kate stood near the door, ready to act if anything were to happen.

Thanks to their presence, I felt at ease to focus on the class.

“History is always open to interpretation from various perspectives.

A person celebrated as a hero by some may be recorded as a ruthless butcher by others. For example, take Jace Miracha from the Tribal Wars.

While the elves remember him as a dishonorable villain who lacked integrity, humans revere him as a hero.

Thus, while history itself might appear objective, it often lends itself to subjective interpretations depending on the context...”

Thanks to Elena’s forewarning, the lecture proceeded smoothly.

Occasionally, or rather blatantly, a few students stared at me, but I ignored them all.

Surely, they must have many things they want to say, but losing marks for it would be too great a loss.

Even more so since Elena is known among students for being generous with grades, and her exams are based on an absolute grading system rather than a relative one, making it practically a gift of a lecture.

That said, receiving deductions would still be a bitter mistake, so the students exercised patience.

‘Except for one.’

I made eye contact with a student who had been glaring at me intently since earlier.

Her sinister gaze remained as unsettling as ever, but her strikingly vivid pink eyes stood out.

As everyone might have guessed, it was Cherry.

She wasn’t focusing on the class at all, wasting time staring only at me.

Her pink hair had grown longer since the last time I saw her, and her expression seemed brighter too.

– If not for those unnervingly grim eyes.

Moreover, her unique aura seemed to create a slight distance between her and the other students around her.

With her looks alone, Cherry should have been incredibly popular among her peers, but her presence seemed to dominate everything else.

‘But...’

If I wasn’t mistaken, her chest seemed larger than the last time I saw her.

And no, I’m not being a pervert—it was a noticeable difference.

Her uniform, which already struggled to contain her like Cecily’s, now seemed on the verge of giving up entirely.

It was so tight that the buttons looked ready to pop off any second.

If her uniform were personified, it might only be able to choke out a helpless gasp.

Cherry, who usually pays attention to her attire, seemed to be growing rapidly, judging by the state of her uniform.

Admirable growth, to say the least.

“Ahem. Ahem.”

“... ..”

Adelia, noticing my gaze, cleared her throat to snap me back to focus.

Only then did I manage to redirect my attention back to the lecture.

Still, it was hard to ignore Cherry.

Sitting right in the front row, she continued to watch me with unwavering focus.

What concerned me more was the students sitting beside her, who were subtly keeping their distance.

As I've said before, Cherry is incredibly beautiful with an excellent figure and an impressive background.

Yet, no one seemed interested in her, and some even appeared uneasy.

I couldn't help but wonder if there had been some issue with her relationships.

She does have a gloomy demeanor, but her charm more than makes up for it.

'Did something happen while I was away?'

Anyway, I planned to meet with Cherry separately later, so I could take my time figuring it out.

For now, I had to send the manuscripts she hadn't delivered yet to the publisher.

Since only the first volume had been published and the second hadn't been released, I wondered how much material had piled up in the meantime.

I couldn't help but feel a little excited.

Of course, I wasn't expecting too much, as I still didn't know Cherry's writing speed.

I had heard, however, that she had completed the manuscript for the second volume.

It was only my busyness that delayed its submission.

While assisting Elena's lecture, I began planning my next steps.

"Professor, may I ask a question?"

"Yes. Your name is...?"

"My name is Hasir Kellik."

"Ah, Hasir. Go ahead."

During the lecture, a student with slightly curly blonde hair and deep blue eyes stood up to ask a question.

He briefly glanced at me before voicing his curiosity.

“You mentioned that history is objective but can be interpreted subjectively. Doesn’t that also mean records different from the original history might exist?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

“Then, to uncover such histories, even those unknown to their participants, what steps should one take?”

It was quite a sharp question.

And I immediately realized that it was aimed at me.

As soon as Hasir posed the question, all eyes in the room turned toward me.

Even Elena’s gaze settled on me, making me feel rather uncomfortable.

There wasn’t much I could say in response, though, since Hasir’s question itself was an excellent one.

It perfectly embodied the mindset of a scholar.

The issue was my presence in this lecture hall. After some thought, Elena began to explain.

“That’s a fascinating question. But uncovering such histories often involves taking great risks.

History is written by the victors, but that doesn’t mean the records of the defeated vanish entirely. If history is lost or erased entirely, it’s usually because someone powerful intentionally made it so.

For example, the reinterpreted myths of the elves remain myths—open to diverse interpretations—but they were not erased.”

“Can you provide an example?”

“The most representative examples would be the exile of the dark elves and the forbidden magic of fusion.”

Hidden histories are called hidden for a reason.

They are stories that must not be revealed—ones that could shake the very foundations of nations and races.

The dark elf exile, like the Tribal Wars, was a tragedy born of elven arrogance, and fusion was a dangerous magic that was ultimately discarded.

“However, even more dangerous than hidden history is the act of distorting the flow of history.”

“Distorting history, you say?”

“Yes. Recently, demon worshippers who dominated the dark world were known for such acts. They even had a fallen cardinal among them...”

While speaking, Elena glanced toward Kate by the door.

Fortunately, Kate seemed uninterested and remained impassive.

“Ahem. Ahem. They had the power to rewrite history. If you dig deep enough into history, you’ll find inconsistencies—things that don’t quite add up.

For instance, nobles or heroes who seemed fine suddenly committing suicide or being imprisoned for treason.

If you’re willing to take on the mission of unraveling such mysteries and saving the world, I won’t stop you. But... it will put your life at considerable risk.”

“.....”

The atmosphere instantly turned heavy following Elena’s explanation.

Having a living witness present certainly made it hit home.

Of course, I’ve never been directly threatened by demon worshippers before.

But if I let my guard down, they would undoubtedly pounce immediately.

Completely.

Until the demon worshippers are eradicated, I’ll have to live my entire life under threat.

“Well, I can give some advice, at least. Don’t you think so, Isaac?”

“I don’t know anything.”

The real trick is that I genuinely don't know anything. The frustrating part is that no one believes that.

Elena seemed to take my response as a joke, letting out a faint laugh.

As expected, she didn't believe me.

“Come on, just some light advice will do. I asked for advice, not a glimpse into the future.”

“Phew...”

I let out a sigh tinged with complexity.

Thankfully, I had anticipated this to some extent, so I wasn't flustered.

I slowly scanned the students in the lecture hall.

Most of them were looking at me with bright, eager eyes.

Except for one.

Cherry was the only one whose eyes were devoid of any light. Instead, she replaced it with a smile.

‘...This is scary.’

Her eyes were dead, but her lips were smiling—it was chilling.

Could this be why her peers avoided her?

Regardless, I had to speak.

Feeling awkward under the students' gaze, I scratched my head.

Honestly, the so-called advice I could give wasn't anything special.

“As Professor Elena said, uncovering hidden history is like walking an unknown path where nothing is visible.

There's no telling what kind of records you'll find; it could be something trivial.

In the worst-case scenario, it could be a truth you're better off not knowing.”

Not that it applies to me.

I didn't exactly tread an unknown path—it's more like I pulled the imagination in my head into reality.

It just so happened that everything aligned perfectly and became the present.

I didn't dig into history separately. I simply relied on my vivid imagination.

“Even so, if you're determined to walk that path, I won't stop you.

Research is a scholar's fundamental duty. However, I must emphasize this point: once you start, it's difficult to get out.”

It's true.

Scholars are often accused of being obsessed or eccentric for a reason.

Most scholars dive into their field because they love it, sometimes going to extremes to gain knowledge.

I'm no different. Although *The Xenon Chronicles* is a fictional tale, it was based on the history of this world.

Mixing in various clichés I encountered in my past life led to the current situation.

“There's no such thing as truly hidden history. If any of you become scholars in the future and study a specific field, countless discoveries will emerge. That's what it means to be a scholar.”

“Then how did you uncover the truth, Lord Xenon?”

One student interjected. However, I had no intention of answering.

To be precise, I couldn't. I made it clear when I revealed my identity.

I stated that every story in *The Xenon Chronicles* came from my imagination and that all of this was a coincidence.

The student who asked the question didn't seem to believe me.

It's up to them whether they believe or not, but I couldn't help but give a wry smile.

“That’s a difficult question to answer. Would you believe me if I said I simply wrote down the stories in my head?”

“No.”

“Then I’ll pass on answering. This is all I’ll say. Thank you.”

The sudden declaration of the session’s end startled the students, but they quickly responded with enthusiastic applause that almost hurt my ears.

I bowed politely in response to the applause.

I’m gradually getting used to these awkward situations.

“Well then, let’s end the class here for today. Great job, everyone.”

After Elena announced the end of the lecture, the students began to rise from their seats.

I stayed put, planning to leave with Elena.

As I casually met the eyes of each student, my gaze eventually landed on Cherry.

She made no move to leave her seat and was just staring at me.

For some reason, her gaze felt burdensome, making me give an awkward smile as I waved my hand lightly.

Finally, she responded.

Grin—

It was that same creepy smile I’d seen earlier.

Even though she was smiling, it didn’t feel like a smile at all.

‘What... why does this feel even worse than before?’

Later, in a different class...

“...Cherry?”

“Yes...”

“Didn’t you attend the history lecture earlier?”

I couldn’t ignore Cherry sitting in the front row again.

“I wanted to see you, senior...”

“...”

“You said you wouldn’t abandon me...”

This is my fault.

Chapter 335: Legal Stalking (2)

Once a damaged mind breaks, it cannot be fixed.

Looking at soldiers suffering from PTSD or certain individuals, it's clear what that means.

Just as physical wounds leave scars when not treated promptly or when healed poorly, the same applies to the mind.

Especially if scars are etched onto the mind, they won't disappear unless fully covered.

While some relief can be found through something like Mora instead of Luminous, if it becomes part of one's 'personality,' there's no saving it.

This also applies to Cherry.

She's someone who has already fallen into despair and barely clawed her way out.

Her crushed dreams were nurtured once again, and the fundamental issue—the pressure from Count Letish—was resolved.

There's nothing binding her anymore.

The problem now is her self-esteem, which hit rock bottom and has only slightly risen.

During the exhibition, she told me:

“I'll do anything, just please don't abandon me.”

A phrase that instantly conveyed her psyche and her feelings toward me.

I couldn't ignore Cherry's desperate plea, so I accepted her with an open heart. Fortunately, Marie and the other women didn't mind much.

But perhaps because I've been so busy, since I slapped Hiriya on the cheek, my interactions with Cherry have naturally decreased.

This has understandably made her feel more insecure.

Currently, Cherry is like a piece of porcelain that was shattered and carefully glued back together.

One drop to the floor, and it will shatter irreparably.

And I'm the one holding that porcelain delicately.

A single mistake, and it's as though her life depends on it.

She's even been auditing every class I attend.

At least the symptoms aren't severe yet, thankfully.

If it worsens, she might resort to self-harm to grab attention.

"Does it taste good?"

"Yes....."

To discuss future plans and retrieve her manuscript, I decided to meet her separately.

Of course, I finished all my classes first.

We're currently at a café we've often visited before.

Visiting a café isn't an issue since academy bodyguards follow me wherever I go.

Not direct escorts like Adelia and Kate, but other guards.

They're probably checking for suspicious individuals outside the café right now.

And with a Reaper dispatched from Helium, like Gartz, observing from afar, I feel reassured.

"What were you doing while I was away?"

I took a sip of coffee with a round ice cube floating in it and asked Cherry.

With all the sugar I added, the sweetness lingered more than the bitterness.

In the meantime, Cherry slowly raised her lowered head in response to my question.

Her eyes remain as dark as ever.

Is there no way to fix that gaze?

I wonder if it's because Count Leticia shattered her self-esteem or if she's always been this way.

“...I was just waiting for you, senpai.”

Cherry's pink lips, which had been tightly closed, opened.

Her response was filled with such a deep sense of apology that it stabbed at my heart.

I wanted to make excuses about being busy recently, but it felt too petty, so I didn't say anything.

What I need to do now is apologize.

“I'm sorry. I can't make any excuses. No matter how busy I was, I should have paid attention to you...”

“I-It's okay. I understand.”

Cherry, startled, waved both hands as if my sincerity reached her.

Even with her gloomy eyes, she could make such expressions.

She's somehow cute.

“Even if you drift away, senpai, I can just follow behind. Hehe...”

“...”

Cherry said that with a goofy smile.

If it were anyone else, it might've sounded like a confession, but coming from Cherry, it sounded eerie.

As if she were confidently declaring her intent to stalk me.

I quickly scanned my surroundings after hearing her words.

First, Adelia.

Surprisingly, she was looking at Cherry with a face full of sympathy and pity.

I'd already told her who Cherry was and her circumstances.

Since learning about her tragic family history, Adelia must feel a sense of kinship.

Perhaps that's why she's genuinely feeling sorry for Cherry rather than being wary.

'And Kate...'

I then shifted my gaze to Kate.

Unlike Adelia, I hadn't told her much about Cherry, and she seemed indifferent, wearing a calm expression.

Maybe she didn't sense anything unusual.

The act of stalking itself is a problem, but Cherry's feelings for me are pure.

'...It is pure, right?'

It should be.

If it weren't, she would've done something outrageous by now.

The real issue is her extremely low self-esteem, but she still harbors purity in her heart.

The real villain here is Count Leticia, who almost tainted that purity with a strange hue.

'I wonder what that man is up to these days.'

Now that I've revealed I'm Xenon, he must have figured out Cherry's identity as well.

It'd be strange if he didn't notice, considering how much I protected her.

However, he hasn't pressured Cherry, nor has he approached me.

Maybe my brutal honesty had a lasting impact, as he seems to respect Cherry's autonomy now.

“Hmm. Cherry?”

“Yes. Please, go ahead...”

“How far have you written in the manuscript?”

For now, I decided to set aside the stalking issue and address her work first.

Cherry’s debut novel, *Crimson Sunset*, is the next big trend following *The Xenon Chronicles*.

It made a stormy debut months ago but hasn’t released any volumes in recent months because I’ve been too busy.

But that’s going to change now.

I plan to give her the attention I couldn’t before and make future plans as well.

With Cherry’s personality, even if her identity isn’t revealed, it’s now known that she’s my collaborator, so no one will mess with her easily.

“I’ve finished up to volume three and written about half of volume four...”

“That’s fast.”

It wasn’t just flattery; she was genuinely quick.

She reminds me of myself before receiving a typewriter.

As everyone knows, books in this world are handwritten, making it almost impossible to release one per month.

Moreover, Cherry is a student, and as a first-year, her schedule must be hectic.

Even I released new volumes only every two to three months during my first year.

“By the way, are you eating well?”

“Yes.”

Well, she wouldn’t be growing that much in the chest area if she weren’t eating properly.

As soon as I glanced at her well-developed figure, I nodded in understanding.

“Are you getting enough sleep?”

“Yes.”

Even though her eyes lack vitality, she doesn't have dark circles like Cindy.

Her skin is also pale and radiant, showing no signs of fatigue.

“How about studying?”

“I'm not failing, at least.”

It might sound a bit smug, but as long as she's not failing, studying isn't necessary.

Especially since she's making a living as an author and has even gained fame.

Everything about her writing is perfect.

Given that she wrote two volumes in such a short time, it makes sense.

“That's good to hear. Nothing bad has happened while I was gone, right?”

“Just that you weren't here, senpai.”

“... ..”

“Other than that, everything's been great. Hehe.”

I'm sorry.

So please don't smile at me like that with such an expression.

As guilt piled up in my chest, I awkwardly smiled back.

Meeting Cherry sooner rather than later was definitely the right decision.

“Isaac, could I speak with Cherry for a moment?”

As I was rubbing my face in frustration, Kate made a request.

Lowering my hands, I turned to look at her.

Kate maintained her usual gentle expression. It seemed she had picked up on something from our conversation.

“Yes. Please go ahead.”

“Thank you. You said your name was Cherry, right?”

“Yes... I’m Cherry Blossom Rosemary.”

“Nice to meet you. I’m Kate Louise Angelica, a loyal servant of Lord Luminous. By any chance, do you also have feelings for Sir Isaac?”

Kate dove straight to the point immediately after introductions.

Whatever Cherry’s circumstances or identity were, Kate didn’t seem to care in the slightest.

As Kate bulldozed past any buildup, Cherry blinked slowly.

That slow blink of hers was either a sign of interest or confusion.

In this case, it clearly meant she was startled by Kate’s question.

She blinked again, even slower this time, before speaking softly.

“Yes... I do like him...”

“I thought as much. In that case...”

“If you start spouting weird nonsense to Cherry, I’ll send you back to Savior.”

I quickly cut Kate off before she could start her usual talk about seeds.

The embarrassment I’d felt after she brought that up with Elena and Cindy was still fresh in my memory.

But contrary to my expectations, Kate shook her head.

It seemed she wasn’t about to go down the “seed” route this time and had another topic in mind.

“That’s not it. Sir Isaac is a man of great generosity.

Lady Rosemary, you might not know, but Sir Isaac has welcomed not just his fiancée, but also the Princess of Helium and even Lord Cross, who is currently by his side.”

“...”

How could she dress up the word “womanizer” so elegantly?

Hearing it from Kate somehow made it sound mystifying.

Even though I knew exactly what she meant, I couldn’t help but feel a bit flustered.

I just avoided Adelia’s sharp gaze by looking away.

While I struggled to process Kate’s words, she continued speaking without pause, saying only what she wanted to.

“However, Lady Rosemary, you seem to be hovering around him rather than approaching directly. Sir Isaac seems to have an interest in you as well.”

She trailed off, but her meaning was clear enough.

Stop lurking like a stalker and step forward confidently.

It’s obvious he’ll accept you, so why not just make a move already? T

hat’s essentially what Kate was telling Cherry.

And Cherry...

“Someone like me?”

“Excuse me?”

“How could I possibly?”

Cherry’s response startled not just Kate, but also Adelia and me.

What was even more concerning was that Cherry genuinely seemed confused, tilting her head as if she truly didn’t understand.

“As long as Sir Isaac doesn’t abandon me, that’s more than enough. Like a pine caterpillar eating only pine needles, I have no intention of asking for more.”

“...”

“I don’t care if he uses my body as he pleases or enslaves me. It’s far better than being abandoned. Being abandoned is worse than death.”

While everyone else was at a loss for words, Cherry smiled faintly.

It was a smile so genuine that it made her look even gloomier.

“I’ll be content with this.”

No one dared to speak.

No, it was more like no one could. Cherry’s mental state was that severe.

I could understand why, given how her self-esteem had already hit rock bottom and barely managed to climb back up.

The problem was that I had become her “center.”

This showed all too well how people with low self-esteem operate.

They base their worth entirely on someone else, rather than themselves.

This wasn’t something even Mora could fix.

Short of completely destroying her personality, it would be impossible to restore her mind.

Even for a normal person, her words would have been impossible to respond to. Yet...

“So, to Lady Rosemary—or rather, Cherry—Sir Isaac is light itself?”

Our dear Kate was completely oblivious, or perhaps she understood all too well. Either way, she made such a remark.

And if that wasn’t enough, Cherry fully agreed, nodding emphatically and clasping her hands together as if in prayer.

“Yes. He is my light, my hope, and the one I wish to give everything to. He helped me realize my shattered dreams and even granted me true freedom.”

“That’s wonderful. But you need to build a little more confidence. Why not try getting closer to him?”

“If you get too close to light, you’ll go blind. So I’ll just watch from afar.”

The two of them had a conversation that was incomprehensible to me.

Their words flowed naturally as if they were on the same wavelength, leaving me completely out of the loop.

Kate, slightly off-key as always, tried to persuade Cherry to regain her self-esteem, while Cherry firmly rejected the idea.

The two seemed caught in an infinite loop.

And yet, I remained the central figure in this mess.

I had no idea what was even happening anymore.

“It seems you lack faith. Cherry... may I call you that?”

“Of course, Your Eminence. You may call me whatever you like.”

“Then, I must help you build confidence. Until then, feel free to continue following Sir Isaac.”

Kate outright encouraged stalking.

Dumbfounded, I confronted her.

“And what about my opinion?”

“Are you going to reject her?”

If I said no, she’d probably break down completely.

I glanced at Cherry, whose pleading eyes silently begged me not to reject her.

Unable to refuse, I sighed and shook my head. Kate smiled brightly at my reluctant acceptance.

‘Why does this feel like everything’s falling perfectly into place...?’

What a bizarre combination.

Chapter 336: Legal Stalking (3)

The meeting between Cherry and Kate felt almost like a nuclear fusion about to happen.

It's impossible not to think of the saying, "opposites attract."

I even found myself wondering if the two of them might conspire together and try something against me.

Fortunately, the chances of that happening were quite low.

As terrifying as their madness could be, it wasn't directed at me.

Kate, while prone to getting aroused even from holding hands, had a strong professional ethic

otherwise. Cherry, on the other hand, was so crushed in self-esteem that she wouldn't even think of coming near me.

Above all, if they ever did try something, the other women around would surely deliver punishment themselves, so I could relax.

"Cherry, how did you come to know Isaac? I heard it was through something like a Mary Sue situation."

"Before that, we were exchanging letters. And then, by coincidence, a strand of your hair was in one of the letters... Plus, the handwriting was exactly the same."

"Ah, so it was a giveaway."

No, don't accept that explanation! I only approached her as a way to save someone, plain and simple.

Watching Kate nod as though she understood, I let out a dry laugh.

This is exactly why people with criminal tendencies could never predict the thought process of someone like her.

“And you, Cardinal, how did you know?”

“You can just call me Kate. In my case, Lord Luminous directly delivered an oracle. That’s how I ended up meeting him.”

“I see. So, do you also like Isaac?”

“Yes. I love Isaac, who spreads light and hope throughout the world, just like Lord Luminous.”

It was a nice confession, but coming from Kate, it sounded oddly ominous.

There was an undertone of madness that I couldn’t quite shake off.

It was pure, yes—but in a disturbing, twisted kind of way.

After all, I’d dealt with a crazed cardinal with similar purity before.

Cherry, hearing Kate’s words, nodded and then gazed intently at me.

Her dark eyes were the same as always, but now they held a faint sadness.

Even with her self-esteem in tatters, Cherry wasn’t immune to jealousy.

In situations like this, though, she was more likely to blame herself than anyone else.

Just as I opened my mouth to cheer her up, Kate spoke first.

“Perhaps I’m in a similar position as Cherry. I, too, am waiting for Isaac’s choice.”

“Choice...?”

“Yes, choice. If Isaac chooses me, then I can bear his seed—”

“Let’s stop there.”

The moment the conversation started to drift into dangerous territory, I cut it off.

Staying around Kate too long made me feel like a cult leader.

Letting out a deep sigh, I glanced to the side at Cherry and Kate, whose dynamic felt like a nuclear reaction waiting to happen.

Beside them, Adelia's lips were trembling as if holding back laughter.

If Mari had witnessed this, she would have been seething.

"Sis."

"Hmm? What's up?"

"...Nothing."

It felt too awkward to ask if she found this amusing.

Unlike Mari, Adelia was observing from a safe distance, unaffected by the precarious positioning of her status.

Maybe Adelia had the most peace of mind among us.

I wasn't someone who discriminated in love, and I'd already freed her from past burdens.

Watching her stifle laughter so hard that even her nose twitched, I cast her a bitter glance before turning forward.

Since the conversation seemed to have ended, I decided to ask something that had been on my mind.

"Cherry, are you planning to continue living like this?"

"Yes. I'll keep following you, Senpai."

Cherry casually confessed her intent to keep stalking me.

I froze for a moment but quickly regained my composure.

Though I felt bad for her, it wasn't going to be possible to keep stalking me anymore.

Not because it was a crime, but because of issues related to her safety.

If it were before I revealed my identity, it might have been fine.

But now, with demon worshippers lurking around, it was a different story.

There was no telling when or how they might pose a threat.

“Cherry, can I be honest with you?”

“Yes.”

“Following me might not be possible anymore.”

“...?”

Cherry’s eyes widened in response to my frank words, and her small mouth opened slightly.

At the same time, her eyes darkened, like a deep abyss.

Sensing danger if I left this unattended, I hastily opened my mouth again.

“It’s not that I don’t want you around. It’s that you could be in danger. I’m Zenon, remember?”

The one who’s dealt a major blow to the demon worshippers. You understand what that means, right?”

“Do you mean I could be in danger just for being close to you?”

“Exactly.”

“They’re likely to go for those around you first rather than targeting you directly?”

Cherry tilted her head slightly, offering her take.

And she was right—targeting those around me was the most likely strategy.

Without any formal writing training, Cherry was smart enough to write things that revealed her sharp intellect.

“Exactly. That’s why, instead of following me, it might be better to stay by my side.”

“...Are you saying I might be a burden to you?”

“Wait, no!”

That wasn't what I meant! Seeing Cherry's eyes grow darker, I froze.

What I had intended as a request for her to stay near me had failed to consider her fragile self-esteem.

From her perspective, it likely sounded like she was just a hindrance.

She might even be thinking that if she were attacked by demon worshippers, it would only bring harm to me.

For someone like her, it wouldn't be strange to believe it would be better for her to disappear altogether.

Panicked, I quickly tried to clear up the misunderstanding.

"That's not it at all! Why would you be a burden to me? If anything, it's the opposite."

"Opposite...?"

"Yeah. I'm a fan of your writing, you know? Even though I've been too busy to show it lately, I've been looking forward to seeing how your story turns out."

This wasn't a lie—I genuinely enjoyed her writing. Her debut piece, *Crimson Sunset*, was precisely my type of novel.

If I hadn't been so busy, I might have even acted as her manager, helping her refine her work.

It wasn't an excuse, just the truth—I hadn't had the bandwidth to focus on her.

"Hehe..."

Hearing my sincerity, Cherry smiled bashfully.

It wasn't the eerie grin she had before but a warm, genuine smile that even softened her gaze.

Relieved, I sighed internally.

If there was one thing that could boost her self-esteem, it was her dream—writing.

However, the problem wasn't entirely resolved.

Though she'd successfully stalked me without getting caught, the dangers around us made things too precarious.

"Cherry."

"Yes?"

"Are you really not willing to stay by my side?"

So I asked her outright.

If she cared for me, being by my side would be much safer.

But Cherry, firm in her resolve, shook her head.

"It's fine. I don't think someone like me has a place by your side."

"And what if I forced you to stay by my side?"

"Huh...?"

That caught her off guard. Blinking slowly, she looked at me, startled.

Her pale cheeks flushed softly, as though she had just entertained a rosy fantasy.

Seeing the gap in her composure, I decided to push forward before she could regain her footing.

"You said earlier that you'd do whatever I asked, right? You'd even give me your body or become my slave."

"T-that's true, but..."

"I don't want you to be in danger. That's why I need you by my side. Will you still refuse?"

"..."

Cherry hesitated, clearly conflicted.

The thought of standing beside me might have been unthinkable, but my request had shifted the dynamics.

She was likely experiencing a deep internal struggle.

I stayed quiet, waiting for her answer.

“Mari will probably understand to some extent, right?”

I wasn't asking Cherry to spend the night with me.

My concern was entirely for her safety.

Though she had feelings for me, and things could potentially develop further, that wasn't my immediate focus.

So, how long would her deliberation take?

“Sorry.”

It seemed the current situation was difficult, as Cherry expressed her refusal.

Her voice carried a hint of deep regret, as if she felt the same disappointment.

“Not yet... I don't think it's the right time yet.”

“Not yet?”

“Yes. But I promise I'll never cause any trouble for you, senior. I'm not the type of person who stands out anyway...”

“...Not the type who stands out?”

That wasn't me speaking—it was Adelia's muttering.

I also understood how she felt.

Cherry's hair and eyes, resembling cherry blossoms, were striking.

Though her subdued gaze could be seen as a drawback, she was overall a radiant beauty.

Moreover, her figure, which the school uniform couldn't entirely conceal, was enough to evoke desire from men and jealousy from women.

Just as my red hair makes me noticeable from a distance, Cherry's appearance was impossible to ignore.

Her background also stood out—she hailed from the Roseberry family, known for their philosophical pursuits.

People were bound to approach her for that alone, which made the situation peculiar.

Yet, claiming she wasn't someone who stood out seemed to stem from her low self-esteem and lack of self-awareness.

“Cherry... do you really think so? That you're not someone who stands out?”

“Yes... Other than you, senior, no one approaches me or talks to me.”

“What about group projects? Surely there must have been group activities?”

“They included me, but they didn't assign me any roles. Just my name.”

“...What?”

I couldn't understand it.

Cherry, a beauty comparable to Cecily, and yet no one paid attention to her?

Even Adelia seemed confused, her expression matching mine.

How did Cherry become so overlooked?

Setting that aside for now, it seemed best to share my thoughts.

“Alright, I understand. But if anything suspicious or dangerous happens, let me know immediately. That's the only way I can protect you. Got it?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, by the way, this might be a sensitive topic, but could you tell me what happened with Count Leticia?”

“They didn't say much. Just suggested I try reading books other than philosophy.”

That was a relief.

It seemed the blunt truth I delivered to Count Leticia had a positive effect.

“Your manuscript is in your dorm, right?”

“Yes. Should I bring it?”

“No, take your time. You’ll be following me around tomorrow anyway, won’t you?”

“Yes.”

She didn’t even deny it. I should probably notify others not to report a girl with cherry blossom-colored hair and eyes.

It was a bit funny to call it “legal stalking,” but I decided to wait quietly until she grew more confident.

“Let’s wrap up here... Kate, do you have anything to say to Cherry? Other than the seed stuff.”

“No.”

“Adel, anything from you?”

“Nope.”

“Alright, then that’s it—oh, wait, Cherry. Did you happen to report Leona?”

The memory of Leona being dragged before me recently came to mind.

She had been wandering around my area, likely looking for me, and someone had reported her.

Normally, she would have been punished immediately, but as it was her first offense, she ended up in front of me instead.

That incident had turned into an opportunity for a productive conversation with Lucia.

Given the circumstances, it was reasonable to suspect Cherry was the one who reported her.

Even if she had, I wouldn’t scold her.

Leona and Cherry weren't even acquaintances at the time. I intended to introduce them gradually later.

"Leona... The girl with brown hair?"

"That's right."

"She didn't seem like a bad person. I left her alone because she appeared to know you, senior."

"I see."

So someone else must have reported her.

It wasn't worth worrying about, so I quickly moved on.

"Um... senior."

"Hm?"

"There's just... one thing... just one thing I'd like to ask. Is that okay?"

Just as I was about to wrap up the conversation, Cherry hesitantly made a request, her face flushed with embarrassment.

My curiosity was piqued, as she rarely asked me for anything.

Finally, after some hesitation, Cherry spoke.

"A strand of your hair..."

"Huh?"

"Or maybe a fingernail... if that's possible..."

Cherry was Cherry, after all. Some things never change, and I was oddly relieved by that.

"Oh, and if possible, I'd like one too," Kate chimed in.

"Kate, why you?"

"To make a charm, of course."

“...”

These people were a peculiar mix of terrifying and eccentric.

“Cherry, have you ever held Sir Isaac’s hand before?”

“Yes. It was so soft and comforting.”

“By any chance, did your lower stomach feel strange or tingly afterward?”

“Huh? How did you know?”

“So it wasn’t just me...”

Stop. Just stop, you people.

Chapter 337: Safety insensitivity (1)

Kate and Cherry.

Like Marvel's Thanos and DC's Joker, they're a combination rivaling nuclear fusion.

One is too bright, and the other is too dark.

The one thing they have in common is that both have incredibly low self-esteem.

It's easy to see that Cherry has a dangerously low sense of self-worth, but it's surprising for Kate.

However, with a closer look, you'll notice it too.

From her past words and actions, it's clear that Kate would even give up her life if ordered by Luminous or me.

She has never once prioritized herself.

Of course, Luminous is a god who personally bestowed blessings, so it's understandable to revere him.

The problem is that her reverence is so extreme it erodes her self-esteem.

Even if I advised her to live her own life, Kate would undoubtedly reply: that living for Luminous and me is the same as living for herself.

Perhaps that's why she gets along so well with Cherry.

In a way, Kate could be seen as an energetic version of Cherry.

Like light and darkness, they're opposites, but they share a strange similarity.

If Kate hadn't been a guard knight, perhaps she and Cherry would have spent more time together.

Considering they had no friends to begin with, this might actually be for the best.

Occasionally, when there's some downtime, Kate might invite Cherry to her dorm for a chat.

Looking at this duo, one might think there couldn't be a more dangerous pair—but they're not truly a threat.

Unless there's a series of catastrophic mistakes akin to Chernobyl or I commit a grave error, no disaster will unfold.

'As long as we do what needs to be done until then.'

With familiar keystrokes, I continued typing, working on the 26th volume of *The Chronicles of Xenon*.

There had been too many loose ends to tie up, causing some delays.

But after my meeting with Cherry, apart from my teaching assistant duties, I'd have free time.

Since Elena discovered my true identity, I've had more free time than before.

That doesn't mean I take my duties as a teaching assistant lightly.

I do have a conscience, and being Xenon isn't an excuse to slack off.

Still, I'm not entirely used to the mix of awe and curiosity directed at me every time I teach, especially during second-year classes—Mari's class in particular.

One of their classmates turned out to be Xenon.

If someone who didn't know the context heard that, they'd probably dismiss it as nonsense.

It's that unbelievable.

'That Jackson guy was quite amusing, though.'

I paused my typing for a moment, recalling what had happened earlier—specifically, how quiet Jackson had been lately.

If you don't remember, Jackson made a humiliating impression upon enrolling by hitting on Rina and Cecily, only to be harshly rejected.

When those same girls began showing interest in me, he picked unnecessary fights and even made absurd remarks during events.

One infamous claim was that Lily would end up with Xenon, not Jin.

Hearing such nonsense in front of the original creator himself naturally made me furious, and I calmly put him in his place.

His face turned red as he fled.

'And then came the group project...'

Mari, Rina, Cecily, and Jackson.

That lineup alone is enough to evoke strong feelings.

I almost got stuck dealing with the mess caused by a certain troublemaker, but Jackson truly bore the brunt of it.

Honestly, the first three weren't the type to properly contribute to a group project.

Mari might manage to some extent, but Rina's a princess, and Cecily is a demon just beginning to assimilate into human society.

From what I know, Jackson was thoroughly disillusioned back then.

'Now he doesn't even make eye contact.'

Time passed, and after my identity was revealed, Jackson's reaction during my first second-year class was quite entertaining.

When I deliberately glanced at him, he quickly averted his gaze.

Watching him do everything possible to avoid eye contact was amusing.

It made me think about teasing him, but I quickly abandoned the idea.

It felt petty, and there hadn't been any significant interaction between us since the group project.

Besides, there's no way Jackson would dare provoke me.

The moment he does, he's done for, and he knows it.

I also heard that while he's still arrogant, he's stopped hitting on women.

They say he learned life's harsh lessons during that group project.

'Speaking of which, I'm curious about Ayla's situation.'

Ayla was the troublemaker during that group project, even earning a scolding from me and being called a "wench."

Coming from a military family herself, she had made disrespectful remarks about soldiers, showing a complete lack of awareness.

As punishment, she wasn't made a knight but a common soldier.

I have no idea how she's doing now, but by imperial law, even members of high-ranking families must serve for two years.

That means she has about six months left before her discharge.

I haven't cared enough to follow up, but maybe I'll ask Dave or Nicole about her.

'Not much has changed, really.'

I haven't attended every class yet, but almost everything remains the same.

I continue my teaching assistant duties as usual and write The Chronicles of Xenon whenever I find time.

The only difference is that I now have more time to write.

Other than that, there's nothing significant.

I let my thoughts wander for a moment and glanced down.

The holographic screen displayed everything I had typed.

As mentioned before, the 26th volume of The Chronicles of Xenon revolves around the battle against Lucifer, representing pride.

Although only half-formed, Lucifer spreads his wings and sets foot on the path of transcendence.

While I've mapped out the entire battle with Lucifer, what concerns me more is what comes afterward.

Starting with Wrath, followed by Gluttony, Lust, Envy, and now Pride—the Seven Deadly Sins will have been defeated by the 26th volume.

This leaves Greed and Sloth. In this story, Greed is a dwarf, while Sloth serves as the vessel for the soul of the archdemon Diabolus.

As for their names: Greed is Mammon, and Sloth is Belphegor.

'Mammon's character is modeled entirely after a dwarf.'

Mammon, representing Greed, turned to the demon side for a simple reason.

Once someone gets a taste of money, it's hard to turn back, and Mammon exemplifies this perfectly.

During the racial wars, the dwarves amassed enormous wealth.

Their craftsmanship, whether for weapons or construction, was unmatched.

However, this also led to a negative stereotype: dwarves would make any weapon for the right price.

Though dwarves are naturally inclined toward crafting, it inevitably requires money.

As one unfortunate inventor once said, the most important things in creation are budget and time.

Without one or the other, it's impossible to produce quality results.

This is why dwarves have an exceptional sense of money management.

Occasionally, this obsession creates friction.

“Isn't it telling that Machina is the most hated nation among merchants?

The Dwarf Empire might guarantee quality, but their trading practices are extremely rigid.”

‘And their pride in their creations is unmatched.’

Mammon can be described as a being that embodies the extremes of greed and creative passion among the Seven Deadly Sins.

His magnum opus was none other than Sloth.

A vessel capable of containing the soul of a transcendent being—just that one creation was enough to spark the desire of any dwarf.

However, as with all things, excessive greed can be toxic.

Mammon’s end was tragic, as he was fated to be consumed by his own creation, Sloth.

As the name suggests, Sloth never moves on its own. But when it absorbs Diabolos’s soul, it slowly begins to awaken.

The first words it utters upon awakening are “I’m hungry,” leading it to devour Greed, who was standing nearby.

‘Up to this point, everything works fine. It’s what comes next that’s the real challenge...’

Although the story’s end is approaching, ironically, the critical details of Jin’s transformation into the true final boss are still underdeveloped.

As I’ve said before, the final boss of *The Chronicles of Xenon* isn’t Diabolos—it’s Jin.

Diabolos is more of a decoy boss.

To prevent Diabolos’s soul from scattering into the world, Jin absorbs it.

In doing so, he consumes the soul of his own father, much like Gluttony devours souls.

‘But I need a compelling justification for Jin to absorb Sloth. Something solid and convincing.’

The decoy final boss battle is straightforward: the protagonist and their party fight Sloth, which holds Diabolos’s soul.

That’s the end.

The fight will be deliberately anticlimactic compared to the previous battles, but it's a necessary setup for the twist that follows.

That means I need a solid justification for Jin's transformation into the final boss.

'Honestly, who else but Lily could serve this purpose?'

Lily falls after being struck by a critical attack from Diabolos.

This causes her to be afflicted with a fatal curse.

The curse ensures her inevitable death unless Diabolos's soul is completely destroyed.

No, that alone isn't enough.

Knowing Lily, she'd willingly sacrifice herself, so it has to be something more malicious.

For instance... perhaps the Seed of a Demon.

If the Demon Seed were to germinate, she wouldn't just become a demon; she'd transform into a full-fledged devil.

It's only because Lily is a saint that she hasn't succumbed already.

If it were anyone else, they'd have turned into a devil long ago.

'The reason it's incurable is because the curse stems from a demon as powerful as a god.'

Hmm.

Yes, this justification works. It's a story that would shred the readers' emotions to pieces.

Excited, I jotted down my ideas in my notebook instead of on the typewriter.

However, this will inevitably delay the completion of the story.

Jin will now roam the world in search of Diabolos's soul, while Xenon and Mary take care of Lily.

Eventually, after much deliberation, Xenon and Mary, following Lily's request, will pursue Jin.

Jin, anticipating their actions, will leave messages for them along the way.

After a long journey, Xenon and Mary will finally reach...

'Where should it be?'

I can't decide.

I also need to explain how Jin tracked down Diabolos.

If Sloth were still intact, it'd make sense, but since the vessel is destroyed, Diabolos's soul would be wandering the world.

The method of tracking it down is crucial.

Fortunately, there's someone perfect for this task.

'I should ask Luminous directly.'

I'll need to consult the gods.

After all, Luminous, who experienced the Demon War, should know something.

After finishing my rough notes, I stretched and turned to Adelia, who was standing behind me.

"Adel, what time is it?"

"It's half past three in the afternoon."

"Dinner is still a long way off, huh."

Though dinner was hours away, I was feeling peckish. I licked my lips and asked Adelia.

"Are there any cookies left?"

"No. We're out of ingredients, and we'll need to buy more milk as well."

"Really? Then let's go together."

“No, I’ll go alone. What if something happens while we’re out? Besides, we’ll need to bring Kate along too.”

When I suggested going with her, Adelia immediately refused.

She knew that if I went, the need for additional protection would double.

Not to mention, if I went out, Kate would also have to accompany us, which would be mentally taxing for everyone.

Who knows when, where, or how demon worshippers might strike?

Even if it’s not demon worshippers, venturing outside would expose me to all kinds of dangers.

“It’s just down the street. Can’t I go?”

“No. If you need something, just tell me. I’ll handle it.”

“I know, but...”

Adelia might be my personal maid, but I don’t want to treat her like a servant.

After all, she’s a woman I’ve shared intimate moments with.

Commanding her for trivial tasks feels wrong.

“Aren’t you in danger too?”

“It’s the same risk, but guarding you is more stressful. I have to focus on protecting you, not myself.”

“Fine... Just be careful, then.”

“I will. Meanwhile, stay put. Don’t open the door for anyone, no matter what. Got it?”

I’m not a child, but the way she talks sounds like a parent scolding their kid.

After seeing Adelia off to buy cookie ingredients and milk, I threw myself onto the bed.

‘But are demon worshippers really after me?’

As time passed, I couldn’t help but wonder.

Chapter 338: Safety insensitivity (2)

Time flies quickly when life becomes repetitive.

This remained true even after I revealed my true identity.

Before I knew it, the weekend had arrived.

People are creatures of adaptation, and the attention directed at me had somewhat become a familiar circumstance.

Given my striking red hair and noticeable appearance, I've always attracted stares wherever I went.

Confessing my identity didn't change that.

If anything, the only difference is that the gazes I receive now seem to hold a sense of wonder, as if people are seeing a celebrity in person.

Especially when I go out, it's become necessary to have Adelia and Kate accompany me.

The two of them are striking beauties in their own right, and with me added to the mix, it's impossible not to draw attention.

What's more, Kate is not only as well-known as I am, but she also exudes a sacred aura wherever she goes.

During the first week, we endured countless stares, but by the weekend, most people seemed to accept it as normal.

However, this only applied to those who were already attending the academy. There were still people who came specifically because of the rumors.

The fact that I, a student, am enrolled at Halo Academy has spread far and wide, and I don't have plans to go anywhere until the holidays.

This has led to complications—not only from ordinary people but even from those of dubious identity showing up to see me.

Some have even attempted to climb over the academy walls, keeping the security guards exceptionally busy.

The Empire, concerned about this situation, has reportedly dispatched knights to assist.

Fortunately, the academy strictly requires proof of identity for entry.

If a student wishes to bring someone in, they must accompany them.

So far, there have been no reports of any dangerous individuals infiltrating the academy, but it's never a bad idea to stay cautious.

After all, even a high-ranking member of the demon-worshippers turned out to be a cardinal.

This means the possibility exists that someone affiliated with the academy could be connected to demon-worshippers.

Currently, Kate and the Luminous Order are conducting a large-scale investigation, with the Mora Order providing covert support.

However, perhaps because only a week has passed—or maybe because there truly isn't anything to find—nothing noteworthy has come up.

Occasionally, suspicious individuals are detained briefly for questioning, but most are simply curious onlookers trying to catch a glimpse of me.

With the exception of Cherry, who seems to have an uncanny knack for avoiding detection.

'It's amazing she hasn't been caught even once.'

Despite her conspicuous appearance, Cherry hasn't been reported even once.

From the moment she trailed Hiriya, I couldn't help but think she might truly have a gift for this sort of thing.

Time flowed, and the weekend arrived with an abundance of leisure.

Normally, I'd either train with Adelia or go on dates with my companions, but I skipped all that this weekend.

You never know what could happen while we're all together, so for now, we've decided to err on the side of caution.

Besides, it's midterm season, and Cecily has been busy assisting Descal with managing national affairs, making it a challenging time.

"Whoosh!"

"Ahh!"

"Adel must feel lucky. No need to worry about others since it's just the two of us."

I playfully teased Adelia, wrapping her in a back hug as she stood dressed in workout clothes.

She flinched noticeably at the unexpected ambush.

Even through her workout gear, I could feel her firm, well-toned muscles.

Adelia never lets her physique suffer, always training diligently after work.

"You startled me! And for the record, I'm working, not playing. There's a difference."

"But you don't hate it, do you?"

"Well, no, I don't."

Though she initially tried to maintain a professional demeanor, Adelia couldn't entirely suppress her true feelings.

Watching her cheeks redden, I smiled softly.

She always presents a strong and dependable image, but moments like this reveal her endearing side.

Despite her words, she doesn't strictly separate business and personal matters.

In the dormitory, the boundaries blur entirely, and whenever our eyes meet, a subtle tension fills the air.

When the atmosphere becomes more intimate, things quickly escalate.

When Mari and Cecily are around, we manage to restrain ourselves, but without them, there's no one to stop us.

It feels like being a fox ruling the kingdom in the absence of lions and tigers.

Though in Adelia's case, she's more of a puppy than a fox.

“So, what's the plan for today? We used to just train in the shared practice hall.”

“We can use the equipment inside for strength training. The problem is cardio...”

Adelia, still caught in my back hug, appeared lost in thought.

She had likely grown used to my playful antics.

“We could just go for a run outside.”

“No way. I'd rather skip it entirely than do that.”

Adelia firmly rejected my suggestion.

Even after a week back at the academy, her cautious nature hadn't wavered.

While her vigilance was commendable, it did make things a bit frustrating.

Most of the academy staff, as well as the Luminous Order from the Empire, have already conducted thorough investigations, and the Mora Order continues to investigate covertly.

Even with Helium's resources, including Gartz's personnel, aiding in the effort, the likelihood of any incident occurring within the academy is extremely low.

We'd only be out for about an hour for a run, so the chance of anything happening during that time is practically nonexistent.

“Then how about asking Kate to join us?”

“Kate?”

“Yeah, we could train together with her.”

“...”

Adding Kate to the mix seemed like a solid insurance policy, ensuring my safety.

Adelia pondered my suggestion, her expression conflicted.

Kate is a reliable shield for me, much like Adelia.

Despite potential risks, her presence provides a strong sense of security.

“Do we really need to? She’d agree if you asked, but isn’t it unnecessary?”

Adelia’s question made sense—after all, it’s the weekend. Asking for Kate’s help could be an imposition on her personal time.

While she’d undoubtedly agree if I requested, everyone deserves their own routine, and disrupting hers might cause irritation.

“I feel like it’s important to keep up with exercise for the future. Skipping even one day makes me uneasy.”

“Uneasy?”

“Yeah. Opportunities like this to build stamina don’t come often, and someone once said it won’t be long before I’m shared as public property.”

“...”

Adelia didn’t know whether to laugh or cry at my self-deprecating remark.

While it sounded like a joke, it wasn’t entirely untrue.

When everything settles down, it’s inevitable that I’ll become the target of unrestrained attention.

First in line will be Cecily, who’s currently tied up with Helium’s state affairs alongside Descal.

What will happen when her work is done?

No doubt, she’ll rush to me like an untamed horse.

And Cecily isn’t the only one.

“There’s no harm in growing stronger. Holy power accelerates growth, you know? That’s why paladins can build their strength through prayer. The more holy power accumulates, the greater the potential for growth.”

“True.”

“And I need to keep converting my holy power into stamina whenever I get the chance. If I keep putting it off, it’ll be like pouring water into a bottomless jar.”

“Hmm…”

Although Adelia seemed to understand my reasoning, it was clear she still found it hard to fully accept.

She understood it in theory but struggled to reconcile it emotionally.

She claimed to be a follower of Luminous, but unlike a devoted priest, she wasn’t entirely faithful.

Instead, her focus had always been on martial arts.

It was natural that such things would be difficult for her to understand.

So, I explained it in simpler terms to make it clearer.

“I might wither away.”

“What?”

“I’m not lying; I really could wither away. I lack stamina. My strength is fine, but I absolutely need to increase my endurance.”

“Let’s go right now. Does Ms. Kate even have workout clothes?”

She was quickly convinced. Judging by the faint smile, though, she might have taken it as half a joke.

The problem is, it’s not a joke—it’s a future that Luminous personally revealed.

I can’t explain how flustered I was when silence was all I could manage in response.

Fortunately, thanks to The Chronicles of Xenon, my divine power isn’t running dry.

But the fact that even that might not be enough is astonishing.

‘Handling one person a day probably won’t cut it...’

I might have to handle more than one person daily.

After all, human desires differ from person to person.

Besides, unlike men, women’s desires often grow stronger with age.

All of this is an investment for the future.

“Exercise?”

“Yes. Do you exercise, Ms. Kate?”

“No, not at all.”

“What?”

When I called Kate over, I discovered a surprising fact—Kate doesn’t exercise at all.

Her response was very much that of a devout believer: she’d rather spend time praying to Luminous than exercising.

“Aren’t you a Grand Inquisitor, Ms. Kate?”

“Yes.”

“With that white armor and heavy mace I saw last time...!”

“I go around punishing filthy demon worshipers.”

How? Naturally, my gaze and Adelia’s both shifted to Kate’s arms.

It was the weekend, and Kate had just left the dormitory in casual clothes, revealing her slender arms.

Her arms looked so fragile that it seemed she had never lifted anything heavy in her life.

Her overall figure was far from muscular.

At a glance, she appeared similar to Mari in build.

Although divine power can enhance strength and stamina, it's generally inefficient, so basic training is usually part of the routine.

“You've at least exercised at some point in your life, right?”

“Not entirely. I did receive some training while living in the Order. I think it was the same training the Holy Knights undergo.”

“And after that?”

“I haven't exercised at all. I didn't feel the need to.”

What is with this person? How did she even rise to the position of Grand Inquisitor?

Finding Kate's words hard to believe, I raised an eyebrow.

Oblivious to my thoughts, Kate stood there with a blank expression.

“Um... Cardinal Kate? Pardon me, but may I examine your body?”

Adelia, sharing my skepticism, asked cautiously. Even though she had never sparred with Kate, this was too hard to believe.

Kate nodded in agreement, likely because it was Adelia who asked.

“Um... Cardinal Kate?”

“Yes, go ahead.”

“This might be... a bit rude, but...”

Adelia seemed reluctant, but she gently pressed Kate's arm and confirmed what I suspected—her arms were surprisingly soft.

It was enough for Adelia to sincerely suggest:

“Cardinal Kate, it seems you should exercise on weekends. Even though you've received divine blessings, your body... needs work.”

This was clear proof that Kate's divine power and its application were on an entirely different level.

A single application of strength enhancement was enough to make her far stronger than a Holy Knight with decades of training.

But what about when she can't use divine power?

At that point, Kate is just an ordinary woman.

If such a situation were to arise, it could spell disaster.

Her position as Grand Inquisitor had blinded us to these facts.

Thankfully, we caught it now, or else there could have been dire consequences.

“Wouldn't it be better to spend the time praying instead of exercising?”

“That might work for you, Cardinal Kate. But focusing on just one thing isn't a good strategy.

A clear strength can also become a glaring weakness. If you can't utilize that strength, you'll be nothing more than a scarecrow.”

“...I see.”

Adelia's advice was earnest, her tone serious.

Kate exchanged glances with her before turning to me, as if leaving the final decision in my hands.

In the end, it wasn't a bad idea.

I needed to exercise anyway, and Kate could improve her lacking physical abilities in the process.

“We might as well work out together. I'll be acting as your escort anyway.”

“Understood.”

“Oh, by the way, Adelia will lend you workout clothes.”

I handed Kate some workout clothes I had prepared in advance.

They were a bit large for her since she was shorter than Adelia, but they would suffice.

Kate soon emerged wearing black workout clothes.

We could buy proper shoes outside later.

Since she was always seen in her nun's habit, the sight of Kate in athletic wear felt fresh and novel.

Her golden hair fell to her chest like ripened wheat, and her awkward blue eyes had an odd charm.

“How is it? Do the clothes fit?”

“They're a bit loose, but manageable. The chest area feels tight, though.”

She meant no harm, but it was a comment that could hurt a woman's pride.

I glanced at Adelia instinctively.

She was smiling, but the corners of her mouth were twitching, and her shadowed face added to the effect.

For the record, Adelia is not small in that regard. In fact, she's above average.

It's just that Kate, blessed with divine power, happens to be more endowed.

Thinking about it, the women around me all seem to have... noticeable figures.

‘Except for one.’

I won't name names—it feels unfair to compare.

Anyway, the weekend strength training began.

“Ms. Kate, are you okay?”

“Yes, I'm fine.”

To my surprise, Kate kept up with Adelia and my routine.

She seemed to have a solid stamina base despite her appearance.

“Cardinal Kate, just to check—are you using divine power?”

“Isn’t that how this is supposed to be done?”

Not at all.

From the start, she had been relying entirely on divine power instead of her stamina.

Normally, you deplete stamina first and use divine power as a backup.

Whether she learned it wrong or found it more convenient, her approach was completely off.

So, we restricted her use of divine power, and then...

“Huff... Huff... Huff...”

“Ms. Kate, are you okay?”

“Yes... Huff... I’m fine...”

She didn’t look fine at all.

Within three minutes, Kate was completely drained.

Then, another discovery emerged.

“Huff... Huff...”

“You suddenly seem fine again?”

“I recovered with divine power... Huff.”

“...”

Her stamina wasn’t exceptional—her regenerative ability was absurdly high.

‘It feels like raising a tiger cub.’

And thus, another uneventful weekend passed.

Chapter 339: Safety insensitivity (3)

Kate, with zombie-like regenerative abilities, has absurdly high recovery capabilities but is only at the level of an average person when it comes to basic stamina.

After just five minutes of running, she pants as if she's about to collapse, and even with holy power to aid recovery, she quickly becomes breathless again.

The fascinating thing is that she somehow manages to keep up.

Cardio workouts aren't easy.

Depending on how you approach them, they can become incredibly intense.

For example, instead of jogging, you could maintain a speed that's about 80% of your sprinting capacity or accelerate your internal mana while running, among other techniques.

This explains why skilled fighters can battle for three days and nights.

They rarely go all out from the start, have excellent stamina management, and possess endurance that defies reason.

Even I can handle vigorous exercise all night long, so I can only imagine how much more capable martial artists must be.

With the aid of holy power, I'm confident in endurance-based contests.

Currently, I'm focused more on improving stamina distribution rather than increasing my overall capacity.

There's a limit to what hardware improvements alone can achieve.

Even with abundant support from the gods through holy power, the outcome depends on how you use it.

Understanding this, I've made it a habit to exercise consistently whenever I have time.

“Haa... haa... ugh...”

“Are you okay?”

“Yes... I'm fine.”

Still, it's inevitable that Kate, with her lack of basic stamina, struggles.

Despite this, she firmly insists that we don't need to accommodate her.

Her ridiculous regenerative abilities seem to compensate for her lack of stamina, allowing her to keep up somehow.

However, I can't shake the unease that she might suddenly collapse.

‘Clerics are inherently patient, after all...’

Specifically, I mean devoutly religious individuals.

They typically have far greater patience than the average person, harboring deep faith in their gods alongside their asceticism.

This is why the Church's holy knights are treated much better than regular knights.

They endure arduous tasks without complaint if it's in line with divine will.

Moreover, their ability to self-heal even serious injuries is often joked about, highlighting their unmatched versatility.

Kate's ability to keep up despite appearing on the verge of collapse likely stems from this.

Normally, a healthy mind resides in a healthy body, but in her case, it's the opposite.

Even if her physical condition is lacking, her resilient mindset ensures she can grow quickly. I can vouch for that from personal experience.

“Haah... haah...”

However, it seems even holy power can't prevent her from sweating profusely.

Her hair and the workout clothes borrowed from Adelia were completely soaked through.

A sound mind makes building a sound body an easier task, but overdoing it can harm the body.

Without a strong physical foundation, mental fortitude only goes so far.

Pushing oneself excessively leads to physical breakdowns before mental resolve falters.

Especially now, under the scorching summer sun—not in the winter—it seems wiser to take a short break. I exchanged a glance with Adelia, who nodded in agreement.

“Let’s rest here for a bit.”

“Haa... Yes, understood.”

At the declaration of a much-needed break, Kate looked visibly relieved.

No matter how strong her mental fortitude, this was still an intense workout for her.

While iron becomes stronger the more it’s struck, the same doesn’t apply to the human mind.

A single crack can lead to severe aftereffects, and this principle holds true even for Kate, whose regenerative abilities far surpass others.

High regeneration doesn’t erase the traces of pain.

‘I still have to worry about her guarding me...’

While Kate caught her breath, I took a moment to survey the surroundings.

Perhaps because we were exercising so openly, a number of onlookers observed us from afar.

The only saving grace was that none dared approach us.

They whispered among themselves or looked at us like they were watching celebrities, but none seemed inclined to come closer.

This was likely due to the guards monitoring the area rather than my personal presence.

Whenever I leave the academy grounds, news inevitably reaches them.

Unless I approach someone first, it's unlikely anyone would dare approach me voluntarily.

'Even if it feels burdensome, I'll get used to it.'

Humans are creatures of adaptation.

These stares may feel awkward now, but after one or two weeks, I'll probably become accustomed to them.

"Phew... I finally feel alive again."

As I glanced around, Kate's voice caught my attention. Turning to look, I was greeted with quite the scene.

In an attempt to cool off, Kate had partially removed her top.

Although she was wearing a breathable T-shirt underneath, it clung to her body from the sweat, outlining her figure.

While it wasn't a provocative sight, her physique naturally drew attention.

It felt like looking at a sculpture—pure admiration rather than anything lustful.

Perhaps her innate holy aura suppressed any inappropriate thoughts, leaving only the impression that she had a remarkable figure.

"Is it very tough for you?"

"My body feels tired, but my mind is clear."

"Kate, your mental and spiritual strength are exceptional. They're so strong that they compensate for your physical limitations. I haven't seen a case like yours before, but I believe you're on the right track."

Adelia handed Kate a prepared water bottle and offered some advice.

Despite the heat, Adelia showed no signs of exhaustion, only a faint sheen of sweat.

Kate accepted the bottle and drank cautiously, the water likely feeling like the elixir of life to her at that moment.

As Adelia mentioned, Kate is a unique case.

Most people develop their physical abilities first, then train their mental fortitude. She's walking the exact opposite path.

"If it gets too hard, let us know anytime. We'll rest immediately."

"No, I can't have you two inconvenienced because of me..."

"A guard who can barely stand because of exhaustion is a liability. Understood?"

"Yes, I'll work harder moving forward."

With her motivation fully replenished, it looks like Kate will join Adelia and me for intense weekend workouts from now on.

"The more people you exercise with, the more motivated you become. Honestly, if it weren't for Adelia, I probably wouldn't have even left the dormitory."

After our break time had passed and Kate had taken one last sip of water, I smiled at her and spoke kindly.

"Shall we start running again?"

"...Yes."

Her expression remained the same, but the slight delay in her response indicated she was tired. This kind of strain is hard to get used to, after all.

Watching her show a more human side, I chuckled softly and began to move my legs.

Soon, Adelia stood beside me, running in step, while Kate followed behind, sweating profusely.

'Honestly, there doesn't seem to be much danger here.'

As we ran, I glanced around.

While taking short breaks might be uncertain, the distance between people shortened noticeably while we were running.

The academy is large, but there are just as many people exercising here as there are students like me.

Because of this, whenever someone ran toward us from the opposite direction, I made a light effort to avoid them.

Furthermore, bustling areas with frequent traffic weren't part of our routine.

In other words, the likelihood of a demon worshipper launching an attack here was very low.

'As long as I'm careful in crowded areas... a quick errand shouldn't be a problem, right?'

It was just for a moment.

I figured it might be a good time to visit the shop since I needed to buy some parchment anyway.

For safety, I could ask Adelia for help, but I didn't want to bother her unnecessarily.

'Let's finish running for about 30 more minutes and then...'

Thud—

"Ugh."

Was I too distracted by my thoughts? Or did I fail to notice a protruding rock in the path?

Something caught my foot, and in an instant, my balance tipped forward.

At this rate, I was about to kiss the ground.

Grab!

But that didn't happen. The moment my balance tipped forward, someone grabbed my clothes and stopped me from falling.

Not just one hand but two.

Judging by the situation, it had to be Adelia and Kate, both catching me at the same time.

"Are you okay?"

"Are you alright? That startled me."

As expected.

While it wasn't surprising for Adelia, I was a bit taken aback that even the struggling Kate reacted quickly.

After regaining my balance with their help, I gave an embarrassed smile. This was just a minor mishap caused by my momentary distraction.

“Sorry about that. I was lost in thought for a bit.”

“What were you thinking about?”

“Just... stuff.”

I dodged the question, fearing Adelia might scold me if I explained.

She briefly made a suspicious face but soon placed her hands on her hips and spoke.

“Let's take a short break here. It's about time for a rest anyway. Kate, you agree, don't you?”

“I wholeheartedly agree.”

“Seems like Kate is the one who needs the break more.”

“Embarrassingly enough, I admit I'm not strong enough yet, so I welcomed the suggestion.”

Kate's honest admission made Adelia and me chuckle lightly.

A refreshing breeze blew past, helping to cool us down a bit.

While Kate received a water bottle from Adelia, I looked around again.

This area wasn't crowded; it was mostly used by people exercising.

The route had few buildings, lined on both sides with tall trees—a peaceful path perfect for walking or jogging.

These cherry blossom trees, I remembered, became breathtakingly beautiful in spring.

As I moved slightly away from the group and walked toward a tree, the thought of cherries came to mind.

It wasn't odd, considering the cherry blossoms.

'Come to think of it, weren't these cherry trees brought here by Cherry's family?'

I think so. It's said that cherry blossom trees of this size only grow in the Roseberry household, Cherry's family.

While the others rested, I looked around.

A few people noticed me during their walks or workouts and appeared startled.

When I offered them a light nod, they didn't seem to know how to respond, which I found amusing.

I might enjoy this reaction more often.

As the peaceful break went on and we prepared to resume running, suddenly—

“Ugh...!”

“Huh?”

Out of nowhere, a groan reached my ears from ahead.

This was a quiet walking path, where only those exercising or strolling were usually present. Naturally, even faint sounds carried clearly.

Turning toward the source, I was shocked. It was an abrupt, unexpected scene.

Thud!

A man collapsed, clutching his chest near his heart.

He didn't even stagger; he just crumpled to the ground.

“Ahhh!”

“Someone, help...!”

“Is there a priest here?!”

As the man fell, chaos erupted among the bystanders.

Panic spread, leaving everyone frozen and unsure of what to do.

Upon witnessing this, I immediately turned to Kate.

She wore a solemn expression as she approached the man swiftly.

It looked like a heart attack, but with a priest present, recovery wouldn't be an issue. After all, Kate was a cardinal.

Still, I couldn't help but be curious.

How would they handle a heart attack here? Would they use holy power to heal it?

As I took a step forward, suddenly—

Whizz—

A sharp sound sliced through the air like something tearing through the wind.

Chapter 340: Safety insensitivity (4)

I have never been seriously threatened by anyone in my life.

This includes both my past and current lives.

Perhaps due to deeply ingrained beliefs from my past life, I also seem to have a lack of awareness about safety—a characteristic often attributed to Koreans.

Above all, the fact that my daily life didn't change much even after revealing my identity made me optimistic.

I thought, "Tomorrow will pass like any other day. What will I be doing two days from now? Maybe I'll start answering people's questions since I'm getting used to the attention."

Of course, I am fully aware of my popularity.

The emotions tied to that popularity are mostly positive, such as admiration, respect, and esteem.

Occasionally, very rarely, there were feelings of jealousy or other negative emotions, but none of them ever caused me any harm.

I understand that people have different thoughts and feelings.

However, 'murderous intent' is different.

It isn't a positive or negative emotion.

It is a force that can be unleashed through calculation rather than feelings.

Currently, there is a high probability that a demon worshipper harbors such intent against me.

Given the relentless extermination they faced after the Xenon Chronicles, it's likely they are hiding while bearing a grudge.

Even the cardinal, Bark, one of their leaders, was defeated by Kate, so it's obvious I would be their top assassination target.

Yet, I complacently went about my usual daily routine.

While I trusted my escorts, I admit my complacency was largely due to a mindset of "It couldn't possibly happen to me."

Not only Adelia and Kate but also the academy guards and even Reaper, including Gartz, were watching over me from afar.

Despite this level of security, my lack of concern about safety was undeniable, and my complacency didn't change.

What I didn't expect was that this would come back to haunt me as a boomerang so quickly.

Whizz!

The sharp sound of something cutting through the air struck my ears.

I was so distracted by the person collapsing from a heart attack that I noticed it too late.

Could it be an arrow?

But there was no time to react before the result unfolded.

Thud!

"Argh!"

The sound of a projectile striking forcefully and someone screaming in pain pierced my ears.

It wasn't me, nor Adelia, who was next to me.

Nor was it Kate, who was tending to the fallen patient.

The sound came from directly behind us, not far away.

‘No way...’

I quickly turned my head, my mind spinning with complex thoughts. I feared that the projectile intended for me might have hit someone else.

It didn’t take long to realize that wasn’t the case.

At the same time, I also understood that the projectile wasn’t aimed at me.

And the reason became clear soon enough...

“Grrrk...!”

A pained groan echoed from what seemed to be empty space.

There, in midair, was an arrow lodged in nothingness, with red blood dripping onto the ground.

Upon closer inspection, the air itself seemed to warp faintly, distinct from the seamless blending of a dark elf.

It was high-level magic, an invisibility spell specialized for infiltration and assassination.

While learning it was relatively easy, maintaining it for an extended period was the real challenge.

Someone had used that magic to follow us unnoticed.

“Isaac!”

Unlike me, who was still grasping the situation, Adelia acted immediately.

Though unarmed, she had served as an instructor for the martial arts department alongside Nicole.

Combined with her rigorous training under her father, subduing an assassin who failed in their ambush was no challenge for her.

Even if the invisibility prevented precise detection, it no longer mattered.

The assassin’s invisibility began to fade gradually due to the arrow they had been struck with.

Like ink diffusing in clear water, the figure of the assailant slowly emerged.

Thwack!

In the meantime, Adelia delivered a swift kick to their legs.

The assassin, already reeling from the arrow, couldn't even respond.

They lost their balance and tumbled to the ground, and Adelia quickly pinned them down, pressing on their neck with her knee as she had been trained.

With such a move, the assassin couldn't even struggle.

“Isaac! Are you alright?!”

By the time Adelia had subdued the assassin, Kate rushed over, breathless, from tending to the patient.

Her expression, filled with urgency, looked as if she might collapse at any moment, fearing the worst.

Fortunately, the worst hadn't occurred, but the situation was still dire.

I watched Kate running over and responded in a dazed voice.

“I-I'm fine. But...”

“Everyone, step back! Now!”

Before I could finish, Adelia shouted loudly.

It seemed aimed at the surrounding crowd.

The commotion from the heart attack had already drawn a crowd, and there was no guarantee there wasn't another attacker.

The priority was to get the people to disperse to prevent creating an easy target.

“Grrr... You bastard...”

Meanwhile, the assassin, fully visible now, was glaring ferociously despite being subdued.

I scrutinized the man assumed to be a demon worshipper.

He looked utterly ordinary, with brown hair, blue eyes, and a hint of stubble.

His lean, agile physique was fitting for an assassin.

What caught my attention the most, however, was his race.

‘He’s human?’

The man was human—neither elf nor demon, just a regular human.

But I couldn’t understand.

A human capable of using high-level magic like invisibility would be highly regarded by any nation.

Even with modern advancements, human magic was far inferior to that of demons or elves.

Yet this man used magic, and within the academy where magic was forbidden.

How did he cast magic without being detected?

How did he even gain access to the academy in the first place?

Amid the chaos of unanswered questions, my head spun.

If the arrow hadn’t struck him, the consequences could have been catastrophic.

This was my fault.

My complacency almost caused a horrific tragedy.

Unlike the safety of a cage, the world outside was far more dangerous.

“...I sense filthy energy.”

Kate’s voice cut through the confusion, chilling in its tone.

I quickly gathered my thoughts and saw Kate glaring down at the assassin with a terrifying expression.

Her eyes burned with anger, contempt, and disgust.

Even I felt a shiver at her gaze; the assassin must have been terrified.

Yet the man showed no sign of retreat.

On the contrary, he met Kate's eyes directly, glaring back fiercely.

“Oh, God, bestow your light upon us.”

Kate uttered a brief prayer while maintaining eye contact with the man.

Golden light radiated from her, enveloping the area around us.

A protective barrier formed of divine power.

Without her permission, no one could enter this space, and demon worshippers wouldn't even be able to approach it.

Sizzle.

“Aaaargh!”

Then, an astonishing phenomenon occurred.

Smoke began to rise from the man's body inside the barrier.

It was as if meat was being grilled on a hot, oiled pan.

The man flailed and writhed in agony.

As I watched, wondering what was happening, Kate sneered coldly.

“As expected of a filthy demon worshipper. To think your soul rejects the blessing of Lord Luminous. You're irredeemable trash.”

Demon worshippers are those who sell their souls to demons or are corrupted in exchange for power.

Naturally, they experience extreme rejection of divine power.

As a cardinal and a nemesis to such beings, Kate was particularly adept at destroying them.

Through sacred flames, she could obliterate even their souls.

Even a simple protective barrier, as now, inflicted immense pain on the demon worshipper.

I carefully observed the demon worshipper writhing in pain and cautiously asked Kate.

“Kate, are you certain that person is...?”

“Yes, that’s the demon worshipper who sought to take your life, Sir Isaac.”

“Then, what about the person who collapsed earlier?”

“There were traces of induced cardiac arrest. I suspect this insect was responsible.”

“That can’t be...”

The shock rendered me speechless.

To think someone would go to such lengths, endangering a life just to target me.

What crime could that person have possibly committed?

As I stood there in stunned silence, my mouth gaping, the demon worshipper continued to let out groans of pain.

Although the smoke had lessened compared to earlier, the stench of burning flesh still assaulted my nose.

“Ughhh...!”

Perhaps accustomed to the pain now, the man slowly lifted his head.

His blue eyes, blazing like fierce flames, glared with intense fury.

Was that rage directed at me, or at something else entirely?

One thing, however, was clear: this man had infiltrated the academy in secret and aimed for my life.

Even if he hadn’t succeeded in harming me, he could have endangered those around me, including myself.

And... all of this was due to my complacency.

Thanks to this ordeal, I understood that.

“... What do we do now?”

“This trash knowingly infiltrated the academy. Keeping him alive won’t yield any useful information. So...”

“Immediate execution.”

“Yes, that’s right. But considering he dared to target Sir Isaac, he won’t die easily. He will be kept alive and taken back to the cult. There, he will experience every pain imaginable for a human.”

At Kate’s chilling response, I couldn’t help but swallow hard.

Although she usually schemed to seize the seeds, at this moment, she looked every bit the Grand Inquisitor.

Apparently, even the demon worshiper shared that sentiment, as he broke out in a cold sweat while staring at Kate.

Meeting his gaze once more, Kate offered a dismissive look as though to say,

“What are you going to do about it?” Her expression was nothing more or less than that of someone staring at a bug she could crush at any moment.

In response, the demon worshiper gritted his teeth and cried out resolutely.

“For the Father of All!”

As he shouted, he opened his mouth wide, seemingly intending to bite his tongue.

Smack!

“Argh!”

Kate’s foot struck his jaw, thwarting his attempt.

Bloodied, broken teeth spilled from his mouth, scattering like white corn kernels.

With a single kick, all his teeth were shattered.

Witnessing this brutal scene unfold in real-time, I couldn't help but grimace.

Although I'd seen violent scenes in movies and other media in my previous life, this was my first time witnessing such brutality in person. Naturally, I felt a deep sense of aversion.

“What a pity. He couldn't take his own life. Not that it would've mattered; I would've revived him anyway.”

“...”

“What's next?”

Adelia, who had been holding the demon worshiper in check, asked Kate.

She was using all her strength to keep him from making any further moves.

“We'll just have to wait until they arrive. The patient who collapsed from cardiac arrest has stabilized, so there's no issue.”

“Understood.”

“And... Sir Isaac.”

“Yes?”

Startled by her call, I looked at Kate.

Unlike when she was dealing with the demon worshiper, she wore a bright expression as she spoke.

“We should thank the one who fired the arrow. If not for them, things could've gotten truly dangerous.”

“...Yes.”

“You're unharmed, right?”

“Yes, I am.”

“That's a relief. No injuries.”

Yes, I wasn't injured.

Even though I'd been distracted, Adelia would have noticed right away.

But if that were the case, she might've been hurt instead. In the worst-case scenario, she could've lost her life.

'How... pathetic.'

I had let my guard down after only a week.

Demon worshipers are not a distant threat.

Being in the eye of the storm doesn't guarantee safety. Even in the eye, the surroundings are devastated.

I sighed as I looked at the demon worshiper, blood streaming from his mouth.

From this day forward, I realized that I was never truly safe.

On the contrary, I was a walking danger.

'But what did he just say? The Father of All?'

Could there be something deeper behind this demon worshiper?

★★★

Meanwhile, at a similar time, atop the cherry blossom tree that stretched high along the walking trail.

"This makes two of them."

The man watching Isaac from a distance, Gartz, murmured softly as he loaded his crossbow.

He had been momentarily distracted by a man who had suddenly collapsed from a heart attack, which was dangerous.

However, fortunately, he had acted first, allowing him to avert the crisis.

At first, he thought the fallen man might be attempting a suicide bombing, but that wasn't the case at all.

The man was merely bait, while a filthy demon worshipper had been sneaking up behind him.

‘You should be more careful.’

Isaac likely had no idea, but the number of demon worshippers targeting him was not one, but two.

One of them was the demon worshipper currently bound and being dragged away, while the other was an academy staff member.

The latter wasn’t aiming to harm Isaac directly but had planned to poison him by lacing his drink. That plan was set to unfold during his earlier meeting with the principal.

‘That was really close.’

Thankfully, they managed to notice and stop it in time.

According to the report, the poison had been added when the principal left to greet Isaac.

The staff member—or rather, the demon worshipper—was dealt with by being forced to resign due to “personal reasons.” There was no need to explain what had truly happened.

‘If I report today’s events, will I finally get my signed copy?’

Gartz still hadn’t received the signed copy he was waiting for.

Chapter 341: It's dangerous outside the blanket (1)

The demon worshiper who nearly ambushed me was immediately apprehended and taken to the temple.

There is a law stating that demon worshipers are to be transferred to the temple as soon as their identity is revealed.

Thus, the ones handling the escort were the Holy Knights.

Since Kate had completely subdued the worshiper, they wouldn't resort to extreme measures like self-destruction, but caution was still necessary.

Originally, summary execution was the rule, but an exception was made this time.

It was because the individual had used magic within the Academy and had concealed their murderous intent until the last moment, which suggested they were no ordinary person.

Above all, they were sent to assassinate me.

This meant they likely held a considerable position of trust among the demon worshipers.

Of course, it could have been a probing attempt, sent despite knowing it wouldn't work.

Word of Kate guarding me must have reached the demon worshipers.

However, considering they paralyzed a passerby's heart, it was certain they were skilled. If not for the arrow that flew in mid-attack, I might have been in great danger.

And so, while the demon worshiper was dragged to the temple, I was promptly escorted back to the dormitory by Academy guards and my personal protectors.

The fact that a demon worshiper used magic within the Academy, aiming for my life, would undoubtedly become a major topic of discussion.

“So that’s why you’ve stayed indoors this whole time?”

“Yeah.”

“You even stopped asking Adele to fetch things and started asking others instead?”

“Yeah.”

Three days passed, and I didn’t take a single step outside the dormitory.

Originally, I would have needed to leave to fulfill my duties as a teaching assistant and assist with Elena’s research, but my perspective changed after being directly threatened by a demon worshiper.

The world outside the dormitory—or even outside my room—suddenly felt dangerous.

The attack reminded me that demon worshipers were not a distant threat but something that could happen anytime, anywhere.

The thought that the Academy would be a safe haven?

I threw that notion into the trash the moment the incident occurred.

My very existence could endanger innocent people.

“You made the right decision. So, are you giving up on graduating from the Academy?”

Marie, who had come to the dormitory because I refused to leave my room, asked me this.

Although she was supposed to attend classes, her attendance was excused since she was my fiancée.

Moreover, after the recent incident, she had all the justification she needed to stay away.

“No. I’ll graduate from the Academy. This situation happened because I wasn’t cautious enough. I just need to be more careful.”

“Then why aren’t you leaving the dormitory?”

“For peace of mind.”

“... ..”

Marie gave me a strange look.

It was a face that wanted to say something but couldn't find the right words.

But I was serious.

Only three days had passed since the incident, and even stepping outside felt risky.

After all, an arrow could fly at me the moment I stepped out. Although the chances were low, there was always the “what if.”

For now, I planned to stay inside the dormitory.

As Marie mentioned earlier, I could ask the guards patrolling the halls to bring me meals and necessities.

Of course, I didn't plan to stay confined to the dormitory forever. Once the Academy strengthened its security measures, I'd venture outside again.

Until then, I would only meet people who came to see me.

By now, word of the incident must have spread, so I expected many visitors soon.

“At least that's a relief. Honestly, I was worried. I thought you hadn't realized what kind of person you are.”

“I was aware. I just thought demon worshipers were a far-off issue.”

I offered a weak excuse. It could be seen as foolishness or complacency on my part.

The deeply ingrained notions from my previous life were partly to blame.

After all, the Minerva Empire's capital, especially the Academy, was considered highly secure.

So I couldn't help but think, “As long as I'm a bit cautious, I'll be fine.” The uneventful week after my return to the Academy only reinforced that belief.

You could call it stupidity, and I wouldn't argue. I deserved the criticism.

I had always known demon worshipers were scum, but since they had never targeted me directly, I had let my guard down.

Demon worshipers are vile creatures who will do anything to achieve their goals.

Not only did they target my life, but they nearly killed an innocent bystander.

This incident alone was enough for me to clearly understand what kind of people they were.

No matter what their reasons for joining the demon worshipers, they were unforgivable.

Still, one thing lingered in my mind—the words the demon worshiper muttered before taking their own life.

“‘The Father of All Things’ ... that part is a little concerning...”

I decided to set it aside for now. The priority was figuring out how to return to a normal life.

The incident had occurred at Halo Academy, known for its strict security. How would this affect the Minerva Empire’s reputation?

Even without reading the newspapers, I could imagine the scene.

The Academy’s president and higher-ups were likely being dragged through the mud.

Though they might feel wronged, politics work that way. If you give people a reason, they’ll exploit it.

Fortunately, with Marie publicly recognized as my fiancée, the Empire’s position remained stable. Even I had no plans to leave the Empire anytime soon.

‘Things might change if Cecily and Arwen visit.’

Nibbling on a cookie baked by Adelia, I pondered. Cecily and Arwen were unofficial lovers, unlike Marie.

Though there were other women, none were officially acknowledged like those two.

Especially with Arwen, who indirectly hinted at a “gift,” I suspected there would be a major development soon.

‘When will that happen?’

Cecily’s declaration seemed imminent, yet things were oddly quiet.

However, keeping silent was also a strategy.

Even if they didn’t announce it outright, it wouldn’t be a shock when people eventually found out.

Thanks to *The Chronicles of Xenon*, many knew about the salvation of the demon race, and Cecily was set to become the next monarch.

Helium had already expressed infinite gratitude toward me as a nation. Moreover, during her speech, Cecily dropped a bomb by declaring herself “Xenon’s woman.”

That one statement cemented the idea in people’s minds.

It would be fine even if she openly dated me, as those in the know were already aware.

‘Arwen, though...’

I was curious when Arwen would reveal her “gift.” Given the elf’s culture, I had a vague idea of what it might be, but nothing was certain until it was unveiled.

Though I intended to stay indoors until the Academy bolstered security, I would consider traveling to Alvenheim if she presented her gift.

“So, when do you think you’ll go out? A week? Or a month?”

“It’ll be at least a week. I think the Academy would prefer I stay put for now. By the way, how’s Lina? She must be feeling the pressure too.”

“She hasn’t been attending classes. She’s probably busy in meetings right now.”

“Hmm.”

I nodded. With such an unfortunate incident happening on her watch, Rina must be struggling.

I felt even more guilty knowing my poor judgment and complacency were causing trouble for those around me.

Resolving to ensure nothing like this ever happened again, I shifted the topic to another matter—one involving Adelia, who had subdued the demon worshiper three days ago.

“Adel.”

“Yes. What is it?”

With Marie present, Adelia replied formally. She always stood as a reliable shield for me.

This incident made me realize how much I relied on her protection.

But what if that shield were to break or become unusable? Though I would take every precaution to prevent such a scenario, nothing in life was guaranteed.

“Didn’t I tell you? It’s better to learn how to handle small weapons, not just simple self-defense techniques.

So that when the moment comes when your shield breaks, you’ll at least have the strength to resist.

If I die, it won’t just make others sad—they’ll fall into despair. So let’s cultivate the strength to at least ‘survive’ threats.

Even if both my hands are cut off, it doesn’t matter. The most important thing is my life.

More than anything, as long as I survive, I can recover everything through divine power. According to Luminous, even regression is possible, though only for a short time.

“So, can you start teaching me from today?”

“...It will be very tough.”

“Better than getting hurt or dying.”

Adelia stared at me quietly, her gaze reflecting determination. I met her eyes, which were filled with calm seriousness.

I wasn’t hoping for the advanced weapon techniques passed down in the family.

It’s already a bit late for that, and what I need to learn isn’t combat, but self-defense.

Father is likely busy with his duties, so it seems better to learn from Adelia for now.

“Then, I’ll first consult the Baron and get his permission. That’s the proper procedure.”

“Got it. That’s fine by me.”

Father will surely give his approval.

There’s no way he’d refuse when his youngest son wants to train in martial arts, even if he’s not a fighter himself.

Besides, communication through the teleport set up at the dormitory is quick. If all goes well, I might be able to start learning today.

Afterward, I wrote a letter in elegant cursive and sent it directly to the estate. The reply I received was...

The Baron says he’s coming *in person*.”

“...What?”

Father’s coming in person? I blinked in surprise, completely unprepared for such an answer.

Adelia, seemingly just as taken aback, handed me the letter and responded in a daze.

“He said, if you’re going to learn, it’s better to learn properly.”

“What about you? Does he not trust you?”

“I’m not sure. The letter only says he’s coming himself...”

“...”

Could he just be making an excuse to get out of work?

★★★★★

The news that Isaac was ambushed by demon worshippers spread worldwide in an instant.

Considering it was none other than Isaac who was nearly attacked, it was only natural for an uproar to follow.

As expected, the Minerva Empire found itself in deep trouble.

The Halo Academy, constructed by enticing master craftsmen from the Kingdom of Ters with money, had now exposed its vulnerabilities to the world.

In such circumstances, the person in the most difficult position was...

“Ugh. These damned bastards...”

It was Arwen, who had missed the perfect timing to make her announcement because of the demon worshippers.

Originally, the announcement was scheduled for today, but due to the attack on Isaac, the plan had to be scrapped.

When she first heard the news, she worried that something had happened to Isaac.

However, upon hearing he was safe, she felt both relief and irritation.

Frustration.

“Ah, I really want to show it already...”

With a slightly dejected look, she gazed at the ‘gift’ carefully nestled inside the box.

The thought of wearing it and showing it to him made her feel unbearably embarrassed but also filled her with anticipation.

What kind of reaction would Isaac have? The mere thought made her heart race and her lips twitch.

“...I can’t keep delaying this.”

If she kept hesitating, she would miss the timing again. Even if she had to endure criticism, she needed to make the announcement within a week.

Resolving herself, she closed the box containing the gift with a determined expression.

Tap, tap—

Next, she checked to ensure no one was around before lightly tapping the crystal orb on her desk with her fingers.

The crystal orb was none other than a communication crystal, an item used for long-distance communication.

As an elf, and someone of Arwen's stature, she could have used telepathy, but even she would struggle with the vast distances involved.

Hence, she used the power of the communication crystal to contact someone far away.

"Testing, testing. Can you hear me?"

[Yes, I hear you, Your Majesty. What's the matter?]

At Arwen's words, a sultry woman's voice flowed from the other side of the crystal.

If Isaac had heard it, he would've found the voice not just familiar but intimate.

After confirming again that no one was around, Arwen cleared her throat with a light cough and composed herself.

Her face noticeably reddened, and her ears twitched up and down uncontrollably, revealing her emotions at a glance.

"I've... made my decision and contacted you about it."

[Oh my, finally? But... the timing right now...]

"I know that as well. But I feel it's no good to keep delaying it..."

[Hmm... Understood. So, what do you need my help with today?]

The woman beyond the crystal asked in an intrigued tone.

Hearing the question, Arwen hesitated for a moment.

Although this woman often got on her nerves, Arwen had no choice but to set her pride aside and ask for help this time.

When it came to matters of romance, she was clueless, whereas the woman on the other side of the crystal was leagues ahead.

Not to mention, that woman had plenty of experience with the man she liked.

"Can you tell me... what Isaac likes... and what he enjoys?"

[Oh, that's easy. I'll share everything with you later, along with a few others. Just wait a little.]

“I-I’ll be waiting.”

Click—

The crystal went dark as the connection ended.

Arwen stared blankly at the dimmed crystal before letting out a long sigh.

“...A gift should make the receiver happy.”

For that, she could set aside her pride without hesitation.

Chapter 342: It's dangerous outside the blanket (2)

The news that my father would personally come to see me was bewildering at first, but when I delved deeper, it made sense.

It's not like I'm a distant relative—his own son nearly faced danger because of demon worshippers.

And now I've decided to learn martial arts because of that.

Who could refuse?

Especially my father, who is naturally inclined to martial arts and enjoys teaching them.

When I was younger, he gave up on me because I was too frail, but he has consistently practiced martial arts himself.

All these reasons combined explain why he rushed to the academy as soon as he heard the news.

Of course, part of it might be to escape the mountain of paperwork piling up every day, but the bigger reason is his genuine concern.

Thanks to my steady physical training, I don't need any extra conditioning.

All I need to do is learn martial arts from my father.

I don't aim for profound enlightenment or any accompanying honor. I just want to be capable of minimal resistance when all my shields are gone.

“Got it. So, you're saying I should aim precisely for the vital points to subdue my opponent?”

“Pardon?”

But it seemed my father interpreted ‘resistance’ in a completely different way.

I widened my eyes at him, standing solemnly with his arms crossed.

He had come to the academy just one day after sending his reply.

Thanks to the mage stationed at the mansion, such rapid travel was possible.

After listening seriously to my story, the first thing he said was that. To me, it sounded like telling a toddler to start running before they could even walk.

Even though I’m clueless about martial arts, I know how much effort and talent it takes to accurately target vital points.

“Uh... Father? I said resistance, not subjugation.”

“If someone’s targeting you, they’re likely not an easy opponent. Do you really think resistance will be enough?”

It would be more efficient to aim for their vital points to incapacitate or render them completely powerless, even temporarily.”

“... ..”

Coming from someone experienced, his words carried even more weight.

As my father pointed out, anyone targeting me would be far from ordinary.

Like the demon worshipper who used magic at the academy, I could be ambushed in completely unexpected situations.

Even if the ambush failed, they’d likely possess superior physical prowess, and in the worst-case scenario, there might even be radical demons among them.

“...Fine. So, instead of the family’s traditional martial arts, you’re teaching me self-defense, right?”

“It’s far from self-defense. This is strictly military combat technique. I’d love to teach you the family’s secret techniques, but...”

My father gave me a regretful look, his golden eyes shimmering like he was gazing at an unpolished gem.

I could only offer an awkward smile under that gaze.

If it were the frail me from the past, maybe, but now, with divine power bolstering me, my physical hardware was on par with a knight's.

If I added well-designed software to that, I could undoubtedly become an outstanding knight. However, that's not my current intention.

'I'm inherently a writer.'

I exercise purely to survive and to satisfy the women I've been intimate with.

They say distance dulls feelings; I have to train to fulfill the responsibilities of my choices.

Beyond that, I'm not inclined toward physical activity.

To be precise, I'm hesitant about wielding a weapon to harm others.

The only reason I'm learning martial arts now is the unavoidable issue of demon worshippers. If not for them, I'd have stopped at simple workouts.

"I'll learn it later when the opportunity arises. It'd be odd not to, as your son."

"Alright. To be honest, the secret techniques aren't much. Just grab a suitable battle axe and swing it. That's it. Axes are inherently easier to use than swords."

Easier said than done.

Watching my father, Dave, and Nicole all this time has taught me just how absurd that claim is.

It's true that axes are simpler to handle than swords, as my father explained.

Their weight distribution focuses on the blade, restricting their use and simplifying their operation.

However, that's only true when used crudely, like a barbarian.

Our family is different.

We don't just wield weapons; we mix in hand-to-hand techniques to confuse the opponent.

Moreover, the sheer impact of an axe's powerful strike often forces the opponent to block, which directly leads to victory.

Even if they manage to block, the blow's force disrupts their balance.

In other words, defending against the axe puts the opponent at a disadvantage. To win, they must evade or deflect every strike while seizing control of the fight.

If a skilled swordsman embodies "If you don't know, you'll get hit," our family demonstrates "Block it, and you'll die."

Despite its raw power, the technique isn't sluggish—it's quick and precise.

"Anyway, before I teach you martial arts, remember this one thing. Sir Cross and the escorts will protect you, but if you ever find yourself alone, always run.

Never think of fighting. Trust your stamina and endurance to escape to the end. That's the best someone unskilled in martial arts can do."

"Do you think I can actually escape?"

"Fully escaping might be difficult. But with luck, you might succeed, or at least create an opening for a counterattack. Ambushes are effective even against the most skilled opponents."

Before moving on to practical training, my father offered various pieces of advice.

Perhaps anticipating the worst scenarios, every word carried the weight of experience.

Normally, these lessons would be learned through practice rather than words, but circumstances didn't allow for that.

If I had known this future awaited me, I'd have started training earlier.

Who could've guessed the "Chronicles of Xenon" would gain such popularity? And the future promises even more.

As I listened quietly, my father began meticulously teaching me about vital points, from commonly known areas to places even I wasn't aware of.

Some spots, if struck properly, could be life-threatening with a single blow.

A question suddenly arose, so I paused to ask.

“Father, I have a question.”

“Ask away. You’re free to ask anything.”

“Um...”

Before speaking, I glanced at Adelia, who was watching nearby.

She wasn’t wearing her maid uniform but instead donned athletic clothes for easy movement.

Marie wasn’t here today, saying she had something to do. When I asked, she mentioned getting a message from Cecily.

Cecily, upon hearing that I was threatened by demon worshippers, immediately sent a message.

She wanted to rush over right away but stayed put for the sake of my peace of mind.

‘Even the person who shot the arrow turned out to be Gartz.’

Anyway, I had to ask my question. Turning my gaze from Adelia back to my father, I voiced it.

“From what I’ve seen, there seems to be an unspoken rule against targeting a man’s testicles. It seems efficient since even a slight impact there has a big effect.”

“That’s an oddly insightful yet understandable question. Just so you know, that area is also a vital point for women. It’s a reproductive organ, so the nerves are concentrated there.”

My father chuckled at my question, adding that the male anatomy’s greater exposure makes it more painful.

“Targeting that area typically works only in surprise situations. It’s instinctive for people to retreat when their genitals are threatened. Instead, you could exploit that reaction to aim for their eyes.”

“I see.”

“Speaking of which, if there’s dirt around, throw it at their eyes. Temporarily blinding them creates an opening. It’s quite useful.”

My father was truly teaching me survival-oriented techniques. I listened intently, taking careful notes.

However, no matter how much I heard, there's no substitute for practice. Without practical application, it's meaningless.

Of course, running away without looking back, or throwing dirt into someone's eyes, are simple enough. What I needed to learn was how to accurately strike vital points.

No matter how skilled an opponent is, a well-landed strike to a vital point can leave them incapacitated, so I must master this.

“Then, before we move on to practice, Sir Cross.”

“Yes.”

At my father's call, Adelia brought something over, steadily approaching us.

When I checked the item she carried, it was something familiar—something I'd often seen at the mansion.

“Are we practicing with this?”

“Yes. I'll teach you the fundamentals of martial arts using this.”

It was a wooden training dummy commonly used for martial arts practice.

At the mansion, we used scarecrows stuffed with straw, but the academy preferred wooden dummies.

They were not only durable but also quickly replaceable if broken. I had seen them a few times in the communal training grounds.

“With this, we'll learn where the vital points are and how to attack them with each weapon.”

“What about barehanded situations?”

“As I said earlier, in such cases, running is your best option. You can pick up a stone from the ground and throw it or grab a branch to use as an improvised weapon.

I'll teach you basic hand-to-hand combat as well, but we need to raise your odds of survival as much as possible.”

Martial arts, huh... The thought of learning everything from basic standing strikes to grappling techniques like wrestling makes my head spin.

Especially wrestling—it's practically a must. There's hardly any martial art as practical as wrestling.

In my past life, and even in this world, knights acquire wrestling as a foundational martial art.

Sure, there are monsters capable of slicing through rocks and splitting trees thanks to mana, but once they're on the ground, the game is over.

That said, due to the inevitable need to close the distance, it's not often used in real combat. Still, it serves as a last-ditch effort for the worst-case scenario.

“Before we head into practice, it's best to decide on your weapon first. Something more for self-defense—perhaps a dagger, a hand axe, or a mace. What do you prefer?”

A dagger seems the most versatile. Each weapon has its clear advantages, but few are as broadly useful as a dagger.

Just as I was about to say “dagger,” my father, realizing he'd overlooked something, changed his stance.

“No, it's better to learn them all instead of just one.”

“Pardon?”

“To be precise, I'll only teach you dagger and blunt weapon techniques. With those two, you can make use of even a random stick lying around.”

“... ..”

The world outside the blanket is dangerous. But one can't stay hidden under the covers forever.

“This is all for your own good.”

.....Understood.

The journey to step outside the blanket begins today.

★★★★★

Isaac's training began, and Hawk was the first to teach him how to handle weapons.

While blunt weapons required nothing more than simple swings, daggers demanded a specific grip technique, making explanations essential.

The dagger Isaac used wasn't a real blade but a wooden training dagger, ensuring safety. However, the real issue lay with Isaac himself.

In the past, Isaac had only received basic training and had never held a weapon before.

He was a noble who was more familiar with books and intellectual pursuits than physical training or weaponry.

But Hawk, having taught both Dave and Nicole, was someone who had learned through trial and error.

Moreover, teaching daggers—unlike longswords—was relatively straightforward.

Thanks to Hawk's instruction, Isaac quickly grasped the basics and was soon able to practice with a wooden training dummy.

The core of the training involved repetitive actions designed to ingrain reflexive movements, ensuring that he could respond instantly to sudden ambushes.

“Is this all you're planning to teach him?”

Adelia, who had approached Hawk while Isaac was diligently striking the dummy, asked softly.

From Adelia's perspective, this level of training was adequate for an “ordinary person,” but considering Isaac's circumstances, it seemed woefully insufficient.

The skills of the demon worshippers targeting Isaac were no joke.

Although they had been careless last time, Isaac hadn't even been able to sense them coming.

Fortunately, swift follow-up measures had saved him.

Had the strange creature's arrow not missed its mark, the situation could have turned dire.

“This alone won’t cut it. Demon worshippers are not an easy foe. I plan to teach him efficiently enough so that he doesn’t become a burden.”

“What do you think of Isaac’s talent, my lord?”

“Perhaps my standards have grown too high, but it’s not great. He inherited decent strength from his mother, but everything else leaves much to be desired.”

Hawk’s eldest son, Dave, inherited all of Hawk’s physical traits, while Nicole, the eldest daughter, combined Hawk’s talents with Anna’s beauty.

Lastly, Isaac inherited Hawk’s physique, but everything else—his demeanor and abilities—came from Anna.

Of course, even Anna, with her unusual strength, couldn’t be considered ordinary.

After marrying Hawk, her physical abilities had only grown stronger, making her far from typical.

One only needed to recall the time she crushed fruit barehanded, without any physical enhancement. Her strength was far from that of an average person.

However, when it came to martial aptitude, Isaac was no more than an ordinary individual. He couldn’t absorb skills like a sponge, as Xenon, the protagonist of *Xenon’s Chronicles*, could.

“Instead, he has focus that can compensate for it. In the worst situations, brains matter more than brawn. As long as he’s properly taught, there shouldn’t be any problems.”

“That’s a relief.”

“By the way, that demon worshipper who attacked you—was he strong?”

At the mention of the demon worshipper, Adelia flinched.

Although the ambush had caught her off guard, she was well aware of how close Isaac had come to being seriously harmed.

Wearing an expression of deep regret, she answered.

“...He wasn’t particularly strong. But I failed to detect his presence.”

“Ah, so he must have been specialized in ambush tactics.”

“I’m sorry. My lack of skill caused this...”

“No need to blame yourself. Use this as an opportunity to improve. In fact, one of the reasons we came here—besides Isaac’s request—was to train you as well.”

Adelia nodded silently.

She had suspected as much after receiving Hawk’s reply.

Unless demon worshippers waged an open war, they would likely continue sending assassins.

Although she could protect Isaac, her ability to detect threats was lacking.

To address this shortcoming, Hawk’s special training was essential.

“I’ll teach you a detection technique—one that served me well during my active years.”

“What kind of technique is it?”

“I don’t know its name. But it lets you predict when, where, how, who, and what someone will do.

It’s a power I stumbled upon during my time in service. It’s the reason I survived when all my comrades fell at the border.”

If Isaac had heard this, he might have thought, *Isn’t that just Observation Haki?*

It was a power that allowed Hawk to sense presences and predict future movements—a seemingly overpowered ability.

However, Hawk soon explained why he hadn’t taught it earlier.

“But the problem is the immense mental strain it causes.

Unless you take proper breaks, the constant use of this ability can take a toll. In my case, I had to keep it active every day during battle, which left me no choice. Even so, I couldn’t save my comrades. That’s why I retired early.”

“... ..”

“If you’re willing, I’ll teach it to you. But if it becomes too burdensome—”

“It doesn’t matter.”

Before Hawk could finish, Adelia interrupted him.

Hawk closed his mouth and turned his head slowly.

Her clear, sky-blue eyes were calm like a still lake, devoid of any fear.

“What could be more painful than letting Isaac die?”

“...That’s enough for me.”

Hawk, satisfied with her resolve, patted Adelia on the shoulder a couple of times. With a reliable bodyguard like her, he felt confident in his teaching.

But still...

Hawk’s gaze shifted back to Isaac, who was engrossed in his training.

Completely absorbed in his efforts, Isaac seemed oblivious to the conversation happening nearby.

Did he really write Xenon’s Chronicles just as a hobby?

Over time, such questions naturally arose.

Anna had dismissed it without much thought, but Hawk, having experienced much, couldn’t help but wonder.

If it was all coincidence, why did even the gods seem to elevate Isaac’s reputation?

Moreover, Isaac had shown a precocious and mature side from a young age.

Initially, Hawk had dismissed it as quirks of his personality, but upon reflection, certain aspects felt undeniably suspicious.

He barely left the mansion, yet he knows so much about the world.

As Isaac’s father, Hawk felt guilty admitting it, but Isaac had almost never ventured outside the estate.

His social circle was so limited it was practically nonexistent.

And yet, this recluse managed to craft such a vast and detailed story purely from imagination?

Even for a bookworm, it was implausible.

Could he really be someone from the future?

Hawk's suspicions deepened.

And yet, he was oblivious to the demon worshippers. Or... did he draw them in on purpose? To gather information about those who threaten him?

Though his thoughts wandered in odd directions, they were slowly closing in on the truth.

Chapter 343: Outside the blanket (1)

When Isaac was training under Hawk, the world outside his blanket was in turmoil.

Isaac was attacked by a demon worshiper.

This incident alone made it clear how the situation would unfold.

The Minerva Empire found itself in a difficult position, while other nations used the incident as a convenient excuse to launch criticisms.

However, the criticisms were not particularly severe; they could point fingers, but outright condemnation was out of reach.

The Kingdom of Ters, long hostile toward Minerva, had no room to interfere as Friedrich had recently abdicated.

Other nations were similarly preoccupied with their internal matters.

Although Alvenheim and Helium expressed criticism, their focus was less on the Minerva Empire's failure and more on the demon worshipers.

After all, these two nations had to keep an eye on each other more than on Minerva.

The harshest criticisms came from the Stavirk region, which constantly demanded independence and used any opportunity to attract attention.

Despite the international outcry, Isaac himself remained unharmed, and the situation only fueled hostility toward the demon worshipers.

Among the nations, two were particularly sensitive to the demon worshipers.

The first was the Saviour Papacy, whose prestige had plummeted due to a corrupt cardinal.

The second was Helium. Demon worshipers were mostly humans, but their ranks included a mix of various species.

To be specific, many who dwelled deeply in the shadows were linked to demon worshipers.

Among them, the radical demons held the greatest influence.

Like the dark elves of Alvenheim long ago, they had been exiled, harboring ominous goals.

Their mission: to destroy the world that cast them aside.

If the world branded them as demons, they would become true demons to bring it to ruin.

With such intent, they had meticulously planned their actions, but their efforts were thwarted by the sudden appearance of the *Chronicles of Xenon*.

Amid this upheaval, there wasn't much the radical demons—now demon worshipers—could do.

Even attacking Isaac, the author of *Chronicles of Xenon*, was no simple task.

After the corrupt cardinal, Bach, met an absurd death, an avalanche of evidence was revealed.

Details about the whereabouts of the key members of the demon worshipers and those colluding with the radical demons came to light.

Although Helium kept this information discreet, under Cecily's leadership, purges were underway.

Anyone associated with the radical demons or demon worshipers was executed on the spot unless they had an undeniable reason to be spared.

Initially, Cecily's authority had been modest compared to the current king, Descal.

However, after a pivotal speech, Descal delegated some of his power to her.

While Descal focused on diplomacy and external affairs, Cecily meticulously handled internal issues.

Although it would be a long time before she could become queen, given the circumstances, a capable figure like her was indispensable.

Consequently, much like Arwen, she was overwhelmed with state affairs daily.

“I miss Isaac.”

As her longing for Isaac grew, Cecily felt her desire intensify.

It had been over a week since she last saw his handsome face after his public announcement.

If she could, she would rush to him, sink her teeth into his beautiful face, and understand why Mari occasionally nibbled on him.

After satisfying her craving, she would embrace him tightly, feeling his warmth and inhaling his distinct scent.

And naturally, their next destination would be the bed.

The thought of indulging in their love made her heart race.

‘Meanwhile, Mari and Adelia must be having all the fun with him.’

Cecily pouted as her thoughts turned envious.

Instead of desire, jealousy welled up inside her.

The thought of being stuck with work while the others spent time with Isaac made her blood boil.

To make matters worse, her work, which she thought would be over quickly, took longer than expected.

The number of people colluding with the radical demons had been greater than she anticipated.

Although Helium was founded by moderate demons who valued restraint, time had eroded their beliefs.

Fortunately, the faith of the demon race itself remained intact, but the rise of a society introduced inevitable complications.

‘I didn’t expect there to be so many.’

Cecily checked the list of radical demons and demon worshipers she had dealt with so far.

These were the ones uncovered thanks to the evidence from the capture of Cardinal Bach, individuals who had hidden in the shadows, preparing for rebellion.

Had these individuals gone unnoticed, they wouldn’t have been mere obstacles but threats capable of shaking Helium’s foundation.

‘Using restraint for such treachery...’

Yet Cecily turned the situation to her advantage.

She furrowed her elegant brows as she reviewed the list.

Demons, by nature, had greater patience than other races and were slow to anger.

Hence, when demons expressed rage, it was widely acknowledged that the other party must have been at fault.

The radical demons who sided with demon worshipers exploited this to incite rebellion.

Their timing was set for Descal’s abdication and Cecily’s ascension to the throne.

Without the *Chronicles of Xenon*, Helium would have remained isolated, and the rebels would have fueled the desire of demons yearning to see the light.

Had the rebellion succeeded, the aftermath was self-evident.

Cecily would have been overthrown, and...

‘Their plan would’ve been enacted.’

The plan to corrupt all demons into true demons by defiling their unique black mana.

To accomplish this, the rebels had to first remove Cecily, whose overwhelming power posed the greatest obstacle.

They had carefully bided their time, inching toward this goal.

Given the demons' long lifespans, they had an abundance of time, patience, and experience to carry out such plans.

“But it's all meaningless now.”

Cecily smirked, her smile so enchanting it could captivate any man who saw it.

The names on the list had all disappeared, reduced to nothing more than droplets of blood on the executioner's blade.

Despite the chaos after Bach's death, the 'Reaper' had captured them all.

However, to avoid public unrest, the announcements would be made later.

Whether or not they disclosed the rebels' plans to demonize the nation, their intent had already been exposed through the *Chronicles of Xenon*.

‘It's all thanks to Isaac.’

He hadn't just changed the world with a book; he had saved it.

Could there be another person capable of such a feat?

Saving the demons alone was enough to win her heart, but saving Helium from the brink of destruction made him a hero in her eyes.

In truth, the entire demon race of Helium adored Isaac.

Should he be in danger, countless demons would willingly lay down their lives for him.

‘Thankfully, I met him first as a woman.’

If another demon woman had discovered his identity, Cecily doubted she'd be by his side now.

Of course, as the princess of Helium, she could have forced her way into his life.

But it wouldn't have been as comfortable as it was now.

Though it had been sheer coincidence that she met Isaac, at times like these, she was grateful for her title as Helium's princess.

‘That's why I must protect him. Even at the cost of my life.’

Cecily's crimson eyes shone with fierce determination.

If he were ever in danger, she would shield him with her life.

If he were to die, she would avenge him before following him into death.

To protect the man she loved. To safeguard the savior of demons and the world.

When Cecily heard that Isaac had been attacked by demon worshipers, her fury nearly boiled over, but she restrained herself.

Now was not the time for anger.

Someday, after capturing all the demon worshipers, she would mercilessly torture them and throw them to the dogs.

Her vengeful nature reminded her of Kate.

The two shared a devotion to Isaac that bordered on reverence.

The difference lay in their feelings—Cecily's love was far more passionate, while Kate's faith outweighed all else. Yet, their love for Isaac was equally deep.

Knock, knock, knock—

Just then, Cecily heard a knock at the door.

With her detection magic active, she had known for a while that someone was approaching.

Turning toward the door, she spoke in her signature enchanting voice.

“Who is it?”

“Your Highness, the guest you mentioned earlier has arrived.”

“Ah, let them in at once.”

Upon hearing that her guest had arrived, Cecily's expression brightened, and she immediately granted them entry.

As soon as she spoke, the office door opened, and a figure slowly stepped in.

The visitor wore a white robe that obscured their face, but their petite frame and the contours of their body suggested they were a woman.

Cecily watched as the woman approached her and gave a simple gesture.

At that moment, the previously wide-open door quietly shut.

When the woman reached the desk, Cecily rested her chin on her interlaced fingers and smiled faintly.

Her crimson eyes held a mix of mischief and endearment.

“You must have had a hard time coming all this way.”

Cecily greeted her in a gentle, captivating voice.

Although she spoke formally, her tone was friendly, indicating familiarity with the woman before her.

At Cecily’s greeting, the woman slowly removed the robe that had been draped over her head.

As the robe fell away, silvery-gray hair that shimmered faintly cascaded down to her shoulders, and her pointed ears—proof of her elven heritage—came into view.

Finally, her silver-gray eyes, shy yet shining like a galaxy, revealed the woman’s identity.

She was Arwen Elodia, queen of Alvenheim and a woman destined to become a significant political rival.

Yet here she was, in Helium, unofficially standing before Cecily.

Snap!

Cecily lightly snapped her fingers, casting a spell.

A table and two chairs materialized in the center of the office, as if emerging from thin air.

The table was set with a simple tea service, complete with a freshly brewed pot of tea.

While Isaac might have looked at such magic with amazement, to an elf like Arwen, it was merely a matter of using tools.

“Why don’t we sit and talk over there?” Cecily suggested.

“Alright.”

Arwen accepted Cecily’s invitation without hesitation. Cecily smiled at her response and stood up slowly.

The two women took their seats, with Cecily displaying a relaxed demeanor while Arwen fidgeted awkwardly.

Though she had visited Helium before for official speeches, it was her first time coming to the royal palace itself.

The fact that this was an unofficial invitation was her only solace, as it avoided causing a significant stir.

“This tea is unique to Helium. Like a calming tonic, it’s excellent for soothing the mind.”

“Th-thank you. I’ll drink it well.”

Seemingly nervous, Arwen sipped the tea without even trying to maintain her usual regal poise.

The dignity she displayed as a queen was nowhere to be found, her actions reminiscent of those she exhibited only in Isaac’s presence.

And Cecily knew exactly why.

She understood the reason behind Arwen’s visit to this place.

“So, you want me to teach you how to handle your first night together?”

“Pfuh!!”

The bold remark, delivered while Arwen was mid-sip, caused her to spray tea violently.

Fortunately, none of it hit Cecily’s face, though the surrounding area ended up a mess due to Arwen’s embarrassment.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

As she coughed and waved her hand, the dirtied table and her tea-splattered mouth were instantly cleaned by a simple spell—a type allowed even within the royal palace.

Arwen, her face flushed red, glared at Cecily with a voice full of reproach and indignation.

“Y-you didn’t need to bring that up right away...”

“What’s there to be embarrassed about? You’ve swallowed your pride to come all this way for the man you love. I’m more than willing to teach you.”

Indeed, Arwen’s unofficial visit to Helium was for one purpose—to receive “lessons” for her first night with Isaac.

Born a half-elf, Arwen was knowledgeable about human customs, including matters of intimacy, and her understanding was further enhanced by the detailed accounts in *The Chronicles of Xenon*.

Though following the descriptions in *The Chronicles of Xenon* would ensure a successful first night, Arwen wanted to offer Isaac something truly special.

For that reason, she sought more in-depth guidance.

Even Cecily couldn’t help but wonder why Arwen chose her instead of Marie or Adelia. However, Arwen offered a logical reason.

“I-I was pressed for time. The holy water made from the dew of the World Tree loses its effectiveness quickly... It’s urgent.”

“Holy water?”

Hearing this for the first time, Cecily raised an eyebrow, intrigued.

Arwen patiently explained the details about the holy water.

The more Arwen explained, the more Cecily’s expression changed, gradually reflecting her disbelief at hearing something so unexpected.

When Arwen finished, Cecily finally responded.

“Queen Arwen.”

“Yes?”

“You have... quite the bold streak. To think you’d use something like that on your first night.”

Cecily’s unexpected words of admiration turned Arwen’s face an even deeper shade of red.

From Arwen’s perspective, she had merely conveyed a traditional elven practice, but Cecily seemed to interpret it differently.

“S-so, is it unusable...?”

“No, no. It’s an elven tradition, so I won’t criticize it. Honestly, I’m just a bit envious. If I had something like that...”

She trailed off, suppressing the thought that she might have shared even more intimate nights with Isaac if she’d had such a custom.

Setting that aside, Cecily focused on the present matter—teaching Arwen.

But before starting, there was something she needed to confirm.

“Alright, before we begin, Queen Arwen.”

“Yes?”

“When you and Isaac become a couple, we must ensure one thing: neither of us should fight over him until he returns to the gods. Whether politically or personally.”

Hearing this, Arwen’s expression turned serious.

Though her flushed face radiated a charming allure, Cecily remained unfazed.

She continued, her tone sincere and unwavering.

“Isaac will love us all equally. He has the ability and the heart to do so. But if that balance falters, it could lead to significant problems.”

“I understand.”

“Even so, it won’t be easy. Feelings can’t always be controlled. At some point, you may feel neglected or jealous. That’s when things get dangerous.”

Cecily's gaze turned somber as she referenced historical examples of rulers who destroyed nations by favoring one partner excessively.

Though Isaac wasn't a king, his influence surpassed that of many monarchs.

His lovers were vital pillars of their respective nations, making balance crucial.

"So, don't try to monopolize Isaac's love. I've learned to let go of such thoughts and treat it as a joke. Do you understand?"

"I'll remember that. I'm content just being with him."

"Good. Since this is a matter of trust, we won't need a formal vow."

Cecily's lips curled into a radiant smile as she rested her chin on her interlocked fingers.

Her crimson eyes met Arwen's as the tension in the air grew.

Then, just as Arwen grew nervous under that gaze, Cecily's soft, alluring voice broke the silence.

"Shall we get started? First, about the lingerie you'll wear on your first night..."

"I-I already prepared that long ago!"

"What color is it?"

"R-red."

Cecily's eyes widened, and she offered an amused evaluation.

"Well, I take it back. You're not bold; you're daringly sensual. Are all elves like this?"

"S-sensual?!"

"It's a joke. Now, let's move on... Shall we stand? It's time to teach you how to use your strengths."

And so began the collaboration of demon and elf—a partnership producing a rather unique "gift."

Chapter 344: Outside the blanket (2)

Even while learning martial arts, I never stopped writing.

If I were to stop now, the demon worshippers might grow bolder.

There are already rumors spreading that I've half-retreated into seclusion.

If I were to stop writing as well, they would undoubtedly attempt another attack.

Being holed up entirely in my home poses another risk—the worst-case scenario being a magical bombardment.

You might think I'm being excessive, but the last attack taught me something: when it comes to matters involving demon worshippers, one must always assume the worst.

These are the same people who paralyzed an innocent person's heart just to target me.

If they were willing to do that, they might even summon a meteor to take me down.

Fortunately, since Cardinal Bark's death, their power has significantly dwindled. But I can't let my guard down.

I just need to slowly build my strength and continue writing until their influence is completely eradicated.

That's the endgame.

Moreover, staying confined indoors is quite dangerous in itself.

While the security in this fantasy world is top-notch, there are plenty of assassins who can render such defenses meaningless.

Take Rain, for instance—she effortlessly infiltrated and robbed our mansion.

To elves and demons, human magic is akin to that of a newborn child.

As a result, our mansion is currently undergoing renovations, according to what I heard from my father.

It's apparently an unusual collaboration between elves and demons.

The security magic installed in the dormitories is excellent even by their standards, so I'm not too worried, but preparation is still necessary.

'Why does it feel like the finale is taking longer?'

It feels like I'm close to wrapping things up, but surprisingly, the story keeps getting longer.

From volume 26, the full-fledged war began, and the hidden mythology of the elves was revealed.

From volume 27 onward, Zenon and his companions face off against Pride.

However, I can't help but feel that some parts are rather plain, which is disappointing.

As I kept adding elements here and there, excellent scenes emerged, and the story flowed more smoothly. Since it's a war arc, the story naturally grew longer.

'There were plenty of great moments for everyone.'

I didn't forget to include iconic scenes fitting for each race.

It's a highlight, so it had to be done.

As the story heads toward its finale, I also made sure to infuse each race with a sense of pride. This isn't optional—it's essential.

Humans showcase their tenacity, elves and demons display their grand magic, dark elves and demon hunters demonstrate their restrained precision, beastkin perform exhilarating charges, and finally, the dwarves...

'Weapons, of course.'

While having them fight directly is fine, their strong image as craftsmen makes it more fitting for them to create tactical or strategic weapons.

For example, cannons with powerful firepower, or perhaps golems equipped with artificial intelligence.

Gunpowder itself already exists in this world.

Although I'm not well-versed in military affairs, the existence of gunpowder in this era isn't all that strange.

While magic, which is seen as a more strategic weapon, somewhat overshadows cannons, gunpowder is still widely used by regular soldiers because it can be mass-produced, unlike magic.

After all, no matter how much training a knight undergoes, it's nearly impossible for an ordinary human to defeat a monster—especially an ogre or something stronger.

Just as the invention of guns in my past life placed humanity at the top of the food chain, weapons here also play a role in driving monsters out.

The downside is that people stronger than any weapon are everywhere, but let's set that aside for now.

'Golems seem like the perfect choice.'

When you think of fantasy, golems often come to mind as strategic weapons.

Occasionally, they appear as ancient relics, but that's not the case in this world.

Powered by artificial intelligence, they may be expensive to produce, but their performance is top-notch.

In a world where even steam engines have been invented, creating golems powered by some form of energy shouldn't be impossible.

What about the issue of artificial intelligence?

I'd simply explain it as being powered by magic, similar to Mary's magic from before, which everyone eagerly dissected for theoretical details.

'Who cares, anyway?'

When mechanical civilization advances, the greatest beneficiaries are not the elites but the ordinary citizens who must handle everything manually.

Although the golems in the book were invented during a war, history shows that wartime often accelerates scientific advancement.

In this world, too, humanity's science and magic advanced significantly during the racial wars.

Although demons secretly passed down their magic, humans eventually claimed it as their own.

So, it's not entirely implausible.

People will clamor to create such devices, claiming it as knowledge from the future.

'The problem is, it really could be used as a war weapon.'

In the past, I might have felt uneasy about this.

However, after Zenon's Chronicles concludes, I plan to write a new work based on Earth's Second World War.

If I'm going to include all kinds of war weapons in that story, why make a fuss over a mere golem?

Even if someone actually invents such a thing, it's ultimately a step toward advancing mechanical civilization.

Later on, golems could even be used for farming or hunting monsters. I just need to write it with peace of mind.

'Wait, didn't Luminous mention that the dwarves would later bring tanks?'

I paused my writing and recalled the events of a past exhibition.

Among the attendees were three eccentrics, including Ains, the inventor of the magic engine.

It wouldn't be surprising if they, driven by curiosity, invented tanks. Comparing this to Luminous' prophecy, it seems highly likely.

'The world is becoming more intriguing. And so is this one.'

This world has always demonstrated unbalanced development.

Despite having refrigerators and air conditioners, steam locomotives were considered absurd contraptions.

It's likely a cultural preference for magic over technology.

If advanced science is no different from magic, the reverse must also hold true.

But upon reflection, the development of machinery seems inevitable.

Even without my books, this change would have occurred eventually.

The reason lies in the clear limitations of magic. Magic is "all-powerful," but it's not "omnipotent."

Luminous once told me directly that I merely accelerated what was bound to happen.

So, I should write freely without concern.

'But there's one crucial issue.'

I twirled my pen and looked at the manuscript I had printed in advance.

Volume 27 was nearly complete, but one thing still bothered me.

That was none other than a name—the name of the united forces opposing the demons.

You might wonder, "Since it's a coalition, can't we just name it whatever we want?" However, this is a war that determines the survival of the world.

Sometimes, in fantasy media, there are moments where the protagonist shouts, "For XXX!" just before charging into battle.

That single cry elevates the morale of their allies and entire army to its peak, while overwhelming the enemy, who gets swept away by the momentum. It's the highlight of the scene.

Such a magnificent moment is included in Volume 27, but the name itself still hasn't been decided.

'Even the name Earth is said to have originated from an ancient language...'

Here, too, there is a linguistic history spanning over 3,000 years.

Languages have undergone diverse changes over time.

Although a common language is now used as the standard, older languages are still occasionally employed.

This is largely due to the elves and demons, many of whom live nearly a thousand years, with most being over 500 years old.

Therefore, even if using a dictionary poses no issues, how to incorporate those words is the real challenge.

Of course, one could simply shout “Charge!” and move on without deciding on a name. However, for the sake of impact, it’s essential to finalize one.

‘How did they come up with such cool names for planets?’

When I think of planets that come to mind, all of them have impressive names.

Since a name can make or break the impression, careful consideration is necessary.

I tapped my pen on a pre-printed sheet, deep in thought.

The center of the manuscript paper I had prepared in advance was left blank on purpose.

It was left empty because I couldn’t think of an appropriate name at the time, and now, even as I near the end, it remains unfinished.

Honestly, it wouldn’t be a problem to name it after Hirt, the goddess of nature.

Even if the planet’s name was decided based on this one detail, there’d be no objections.

After all, Hirt embodies nature and the entirety of this world.

Who could possibly dispute that?

‘Then maybe I can modify Hirt’s name slightly...!’

Just as I poured all my deliberations into pressing the pen to the paper—

Rumble, rumble, rumble-

“Hm?”

A sudden vibration. I lifted the pen from the paper and looked around.

It didn't last even a second, but it was unmistakably an earthquake.

The same kind of tremor I had felt when I was feverish.

“What’s going on?”

“Isaac, did you feel that too?”

While I stood there in confusion, my father emerged from the training hall.

He was dressed lightly, having been training Adelia moments ago.

Judging by his expression, it seemed he had felt the tremor too, so I nodded.

“Yes, I felt it. It seems to be an earthquake.”

“Hm... I heard there was an earthquake not long ago as well... Alright, then.”

With that brief comment, my father returned to the training hall.

I wished him good luck with his work and picked up the pen again.

Once more, I began to write the name of the planet based on Lady Hirt...

Rumble-

“....”

Was it a sign not to write it? I hesitated and lifted the pen from the paper, just in case.

The vibration stopped immediately. Just to be sure, I tried putting the pen back to the paper...

RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE!

This time, the tremor shook the dormitory even harder.

“Isaac! Evacuate immediately!”

“Young Master! Please get outside...!”

“...”

Why was this happening? I couldn't understand it at all.

It seemed like I would need to visit the temple soon to get some answers.

★★★★★

About three days passed since then...

[Alvenheim. The gift for Xenon has been prepared.]

I finally had a reason to leave the comfort of my blankets.

Chapter 345: Outside the blanket (3)

In Alvenheim, they made a grand announcement that they had prepared a gift for me, but I can vaguely guess what it is.

Considering the Elven-style communism and Arwen's reaction, it would be strange not to know. Moreover, since she confessed her feelings for me, it's impossible not to know.

Alvenheim plans to give me Queen Arwen as a gift.

They say they can never lose to the demon race, so they will offer their queen to me.

It might seem a bit too much to give away the king of a country, especially a powerful nation, and some might argue that treating a person as a gift is wrong.

But that's just the way things are.

The tradition of arranged marriages exists, and there are places where marriage is used as a diplomatic tool.

Even though Arwen is the queen of Alvenheim, that doesn't mean she can't be an object of an arranged marriage.

In fact, for Arwen, being with me would be a solid shield both personally and politically.

It's like having your cake and eating it too.

She could maintain her happiness while also gaining a solid diplomatic advantage.

'But I'm sure she won't give me the gift right away.'

A day is long.

Arwen won't just hand me the gift without any process.

She'll probably spend the whole day on a date and reveal the gift only at night.

Of course, all of this is just my guess, so I shouldn't be too sure.

To confirm, I'll have to head to Alvenheim.

It's dangerous outside the blanket, but to receive the gift, I'll have to go out.

Alvenheim knows this, so they will surely send the most elite of the elite.

This much I can predict, but an unexpected condition has come up.

"I swear. If you want to monopolize me, just say it clearly. I don't understand why you're making so many excuses. Right, Adele?"

"Yes, I agree."

I let out a wry smile as I watched Marie and Adelia chatting.

Right now, I was getting ready by Adelia's hands.

The reason they were complaining like that is because of the condition Alvenheim had set.

The gift is exclusively for "Xenon," which means it's for me, so no one else is allowed to come.

No need to explain, it's a state-level declaration, and they only want me to come.

Anyone who doesn't understand the situation might think it's natural to receive a gift for an individual, but those around me quickly caught on to Arwen's intentions.

When it comes time for the gift, Arwen clearly wants to monopolize me, so she'd prefer if no one else came. That's all it means.

"If you hadn't been generous and let me have a few days, the goodwill I've built up would have completely vanished."

"Have you met Arwen?"

I looked at Marie with a puzzled expression at her complaint.

I knew that Cecily and Arwen had been in light contact, but this was the first time hearing about Marie.

She flinched for a moment before shrugging her shoulders and answering nonchalantly.

“We met at the mansion before, right? She gave me a communication device, saying she’d take good care of me in the future. But, unless it’s something special, we don’t really contact each other.”

“Special matters?”

“Well...”

At my continuous questions,

Marie rolled her eyes, then met my gaze.

Her blue eyes were as mysterious as the sea, and I couldn’t figure out what she was thinking.

Then, she smiled slightly, pinched my cheek, and said sweetly,

“I can’t tell you now. Ask Queen Arwen herself later. But don’t ask directly. Time it right.”

“What kind of timing?”

“You can ask when the first night conversation comes up. You’re going to do it anyway, right?”

“....”

I was taken aback by how confidently she asked, and for a moment, I was left speechless.

Was Marie the one who got jealous whenever I was involved with other women?

She seemed to have read my thoughts because she smiled warmly and said,

“Like I said before, you’re too big for me to handle alone. If I’m going to be pressured from all sides, it’d be better to embrace everyone, right?”

“....”

“Instead! As I’ve mentioned repeatedly, never forget that I’m your number one priority. Even now, I’m just ‘lending’ you to the queen for a moment, okay?”

I couldn’t help but chuckle at her typical Marie response.

As my fame grew, Marie’s consideration for me also increased in proportion.

Who wouldn’t love someone like her?

She has a charm that doesn’t lose to any other woman.

I gently cupped her cheek and gave her a light kiss.

That act alone confirmed our affection.

When I faced her again, I could see her cheek blushing in a youthful way.

Our flame of passion hasn’t died out; it burns steadily.

“Well, then, take care and don’t make Arwen suffer with your excitement.”

“People would misunderstand if they overheard us.”

“So what? They already know. But before that, kiss Adele goodbye.”

“I-I’m fine.”

When the conversation turned suddenly to Adele, she hurriedly shook her head.

Her face quickly turned bright red, and it was quite cute.

Still, I thought a kiss before I left wouldn’t hurt.

After checking my outfit, I gave Adelia a light kiss on the cheek.

The outfit, a simple red ceremonial robe with intricate golden cross embroidery, looked splendid despite its simplicity compared to other nobles’ attire. I especially liked the golden embroidery.

I had planned to wear something without the embroidery, but Marie insisted that I change it, and I ended up liking it.

“Alright, I’m off now. Alvenheim said they’d send their best, so I won’t have to worry about demon worshipers.”

“Got it. Be careful until then.”

“For now, I’ll stay with Adele. I’ll also try to get closer to Kate.”

Marie showed a cool attitude as I prepared for a date, and possibly even a first night with another woman.

I smiled softly at her and waved goodbye.

By the way, my father had left the mansion earlier for work, and Kate had gone to the temple for worship, so I was only saying goodbye to Marie and Adelia.

“Well, I’ll be off.”

“Take care~ Oh, I almost forgot, here.”

Just before I left, Marie handed me a small vial.

Inside was a white pill, and I knew exactly what it was.

Contraceptive pills.

I stared at the vial, shocked, then looked up at her.

Marie was grinning, as usual.

“You never know. I have to stop another woman from having your child before me.”

“...You know elves have trouble getting pregnant, right?”

“I know, but just in case. If you’re going to spend the night, you won’t leave the room, right?”

So take it with you. If you don’t take it and Arwen gets pregnant, then be prepared to break up.”

“Okay, okay.”

As expected, Marie was thorough in these matters.

I hadn't even thought of it, but she had.

"Honestly, I had forgotten about it."

"No?"

"That inability to lie is so adorable. Aww!"

"Aah!"

When will she stop biting my cheek?

I gently rubbed the spot where I could almost feel the bite mark.

★★★★★

While Isaac was preparing to head towards Alvenheim, the busiest person was Arwen.

She didn't really care about the fact that Zenon, or rather Isaac, had chosen her as a gift.

Politically, it could only elevate her status, and there was a lot of personal selfishness involved.

Honestly, the selfishness was the biggest factor.

The political side didn't matter much to her; she hadn't even considered it from the start.

All of this was what the people of Alvenheim wanted, after all.

They had strongly desired it, so which leader would reject that?

Although the announcement had been delayed because Arwen was embarrassed, it was done now, so what was the issue?

"Your Majesty. Before you leave, you must take care of yourself with the World Tree's spring water."

"Spray some perfume as well..."

"You are the symbol of our Alvenheim, Your Majesty."

"You cannot go lightly. Come here."

Before even spending the first night, Arwen almost collapsed.

She had been so focused on national affairs that she had forgotten the traditional, somewhat old-fashioned customs of the elves.

Elves valued tradition, and no matter how much of a queen you were, there were things you couldn't avoid.

Especially now, when she had to 'wrap' the gift she would send to Isaac properly.

Although the old elves from the Senate and the likes of Peren had mostly disappeared, the old-fashionedness had not.

This was not just a worn-out bad habit, but an ancient, passed-down tradition.

There was no way Arwen, who was a half-blood, could bear such a burden.

'No wonder the birth rate is so low...'

Thanks to this, she finally understood why the elf birthrate was so low.

Regardless of gender, every time they performed this act, it was an unavoidable process, so they couldn't help but be physically exhausted.

Thankfully, as a queen, she had attendants, but for regular citizens, it would take a long time to do everything themselves.

For the sake of Alvenheim's revival, perhaps something should be changed.

With a sigh, Arwen pondered this unnecessary task.

'Still, I'm glad I did it early.'

Arwen checked her appearance in the mirror, pleased with how she looked.

At first glance, nothing seemed very different, but since she usually didn't decorate herself, she looked better now.

Normally, if someone like her, who appeared younger, wore makeup, it would be awkward, but now, maturity and cuteness coexisted perfectly.

A smile brought out the freshness of a young girl, while a soft smile exuded the innocence of a maiden.

Lastly, the faint scent of perfume stimulated the senses.

The perfume was also made from the World Tree's dew. Just being near it brought a calming effect.

Finally, her attire.

The true 'gift' was prepared for later in the night, but for now, she wore a white dress, a simple one-piece.

However, her attendants seemed to have figured out Arwen's strengths, as the design was slightly different.

One side was closed off, while the other was left open, revealing a clear curve of her hips and exposing her pure white thighs without hesitation.

There was no garter belt. Only Arwen's pale thighs were exposed.

Although she was shorter, her proportions were as good as Cecily's, exuding a unique charm.

'It's embarrassing, but it's a gift for Isaac, so...'

Even though Arwen usually wore clothes with side slits, she felt embarrassed by today's outfit. Was it because it was for Isaac?

She blushed, gazing at herself in the mirror, before turning and walking.

Her new heels clicked—click—click—on the floor.

She finally arrived at the bed.

On it lay the true 'gift' for Isaac, neatly arranged.

As she observed the gift carefully, she looked around before clearing her throat.

Then...

"Dearest, please lower the blanket. Then the true gift..."

Thud—

Arwen, unable to finish her sentence, suddenly knelt and pounded the bed with her fist.

Her face was crimson, and her long ears shook uncontrollably.

Even after practicing several times, it was still hard for her to speak the words out loud.

‘How did she do it?’

Suddenly, she remembered Cecily, who had taught her these words.

She had even described herself as a ‘dessert.’

Arwen truly admired how Cecily had managed to say such a vulgar thing in front of Isaac.

While Arwen was pounding the bed in embarrassment, there was a knock on the door.

Knock knock knock—

“Your Majesty, Zenon has arrived.”

“I’ll be right there!”

But first, she had to meet Isaac.

Everything else could wait.

Arwen stood up quickly, her face still flushed.

She didn’t forget to hurriedly place the gift back in its box.

It could’ve been a disaster if she had been careless.

“Where is he now? I’ll go meet him in person.”

“Currently, Isaac is…”

Alvenheim’s gift offensive had just begun.

Chapter 346: Gift (1)

Visiting Alvenheim for the second time.

Helium had often visited Alvenheim due to his long-standing friendship with Cecily, but this was not the case for Alvenheim itself.

Cecily was a princess with fewer restrictions, while Arwen was a queen of a nation.

Even though Sirius served as a messenger, she was not a slave—she was, quite literally, a messenger.

Even now, she would fetch books from the holy land with just a request.

Thus, visiting Alvenheim as a Zenon, and not as an ordinary person, felt inherently awkward.

Even Helium, following Cecily or Gartz's guidance, had never visited as a Zenon—only once had he come as such.

That alone was enough to give me a complicated feeling, but Alvenheim added another layer of pressure.

“So... who are you?”

“I am Beatrice Stashiker, former Captain of the Alvenheim Guard. I oversee the Alvenheim Royal Guards.”

A woman with long, glorious blonde hair pushed behind her ear and bright, emerald eyes—glowing as if they contained the aurora—spoke to me.

Her high, clear voice left a strong impression, with an undertone of warmth. I looked at the elf who had greeted me.

True to the elven embodiment of beauty, her appearance was strikingly lovely.

She wore light white leather gloves that accentuated her slender figure.

From the sword at her waist, it seemed she was a practitioner of swordsmanship.

Judging by her graceful and sophisticated appearance, it wouldn't be surprising if her swordplay was just as elegant.

“And this person...?”

“This is Captain Haas Stormhoff. He oversees the Alvenheim Magic Corps.”

A man with smooth, pale green hair tied into a small ponytail greeted me in a polite tone.

Unlike the elf woman introduced as Beatrice, Haas was wearing a simple robe, giving off a more intellectual vibe, especially with his round glasses.

His soft smile was the kind of thing you wouldn't expect from someone with such a bold appearance—so much so that, at first, I mistook him for a woman.

I alternated between looking at the two of them, who had introduced themselves as the captains, and awkwardly greeted them.

“Well, it's a pleasure to meet you. As you might know, my name is Isaac Duker Michelle, also known as the Zenon who is writing the Zenon Chronicles. But... are you two really the captains?”

“Yes. That's correct.”

“We're in a position that's too much for us, honestly.”

Beatrice responded confidently, while Haas spoke humbly.

You could immediately tell their personalities from their answers.

Rather than feeling confused, I couldn't help but chuckle.

These two had been the ones escorting me ever since I left for Alvenheim.

Back then, we were in too much of a hurry, using teleportation to prepare for any possible dangers, so there hadn't been time for introductions.

It was only after arriving in Alvenheim that I learned who they were.

“So the ‘Captain’ position I know of... it’s the one given to the most capable person in the military, right?”

“Yes.”

“That’s true, but magic has no end, does it?”

While Beatrice gave a concise answer, Haas always responded humbly.

I nodded, and inwardly let out a wry laugh.

As I had asked, the position of “Captain” in Alvenheim was one held only by those with the highest skill in their respective fields.

Since this was the military, strength was a given, but one also had to have leadership, command, political skills, and public favor to become a Captain.

To understand who they were, I’ll give you an analogy: a regular knight might be a tactical weapon, but once you reach the level of Captain, it’s more like strategic-level warfare.

As such, the position of Captain was one of enormous prestige, both domestically and internationally.

To think that they had sent two Captains to escort me—this was more than enough to make me feel a sense of awe.

When considering there were only five Captains in Alvenheim, this meant that more than a third of their military power was devoted solely to my escort.

All for the sake of one simple task: protection.

‘But they all seem so young...’

We had just gone through customs and were resting in a space reserved for guests.

Once Arwen’s preparations were complete, we would head straight to the Wigr Drasil.

We could go to Elodia, where Arwen resides, but I was told we would need to walk slowly, as we wouldn’t meet Arwen immediately.

Alvenheim, as a nation, had gifts prepared for me, and it was necessary to make a favorable impression with the public.

I'd heard that Arwen hadn't personally chosen the gifts, but rather, the citizens had volunteered to do so.

In many ways, it made me think of Elven-style communism.

I glanced at the two Captains again, and as they knew I was a Zenon, their eyes were different.

One of them had eyes that sparkled like stars, while the other was full of curiosity.

They weren't ordinary people, and as Captains, they were even a bit intimidating.

Moreover, this only made the situation feel even more awkward, and I cautiously spoke up.

My question might have been a little rude, but I had to resolve my curiosity first.

"I know this might sound like a foolish or rude question, but may I ask it?"

"If it's a question from a Zenon, I'll answer anything."

"I'd like to have a conversation with you."

Thankfully, I had already built up some goodwill with the elves as a race, so I didn't expect any issues.

I collected my thoughts briefly before speaking cautiously.

"Perhaps it's because I'm human, but I find it hard to guess your ages. Given that you're Captains, you must be quite old..."

"It's not as much as you'd think. I'll be exactly 250 years old next year."

"I've spent many years, over 650 springs."

"..."

They gave answers that matched their generations.

Beatrice, being a new generation elf, answered in a straightforward manner, while Haas used the grammar of the older generation.

The divide between the new and old generation of elves occurred 300 years ago during the Race War. Beatrice had never experienced the war, while Haas had.

I turned to Haas, who seemed more fitting for the history books, and looked at him with wide eyes.

Elves, like those from a certain manga, maintain their youthful appearance for a long time, with aging slowly starting around the age of 800.

And while old-generation elves were typically rigid and narrow-minded, Haas didn't seem that way at all.

“Indeed, it's difficult to guess an elf's age.”

“That's not something a Zenon should say.”

“Huh?”

What was he saying? I stared at Haas, my eyes wide in confusion, not understanding his words.

Then, he gave me a gentle smile, which was enough to leave me feeling flustered.

“You, Zenon, are even harder to guess in age. My body and soul's age align, but yours do not, do they?”

“...”

I was unsure what kind of misconception he had, but to my surprise, he had hit the nail on the head.

It felt like there was kindness underlying his words.

Perhaps because I had only dealt with the rigid elders like Peren, I had assumed that older elves would not like me, but it seemed I was wrong.

Flustered, I rolled my eyes and replied nonchalantly, though I couldn't prevent a drop of sweat from rolling down my cheek.

“That's an interesting thought. What made you think that?”

“I've lived through hundreds of winters, but it seems like you've experienced a broader world than I have.”

Back then, it was just an imagined story, but who else, who would dare think such things?

You saw demons not as devils but as people, and directly criticized the Senate's corruption and incompetence."

Hmm.

Now I had nothing to say.

In hindsight, fantasy novels themselves had made significant cultural advancements, and web novels were no exception. Even I had been culturally shocked by playing an intergalactic war game in my past life.

How much more so the people in this world.

I didn't refute Haas's words but instead let out a wry smile.

Haas, perhaps now convinced, gave a subtle nod while smiling faintly.

"Then, when we go to Elodia to meet Arwen, could you tell me what we'll be doing?"

In order to break the awkward atmosphere, I needed a change of topic. I hastily directed my question to Beatrice, not Haas.

She blinked at my question before raising a smile and answering.

As I'd sensed earlier, though her voice was pure, there was an underlying boldness to it.

"Since it's a gift from Alvenheim, it was prepared on our side, but we will fulfill whatever you wish, Zenon."

"Is it possible to visit the holy land?"

The holy land was known as the first library, and it held an immense collection of books.

For a book lover like me, it was truly a 'holy land' in every sense.

Up until now, books had been supplied through Siris, but now I thought it might be time to confidently enter on my own, so I asked.

"Of course. Additionally, Her Majesty's..."

“Hmm. Hmm. Ms. Stashiker?”

“Ah.”

Beatrice almost made a slip of the tongue, but fortunately, Haas stopped her.

Though I was slightly disappointed, it seemed like it was a secret, so I decided to leave it at that.

There was also something I was very curious about, though—it’s a famous “sanctuary” that even Arwen cannot pass through without permission.

After looking around cautiously, I asked carefully.

“Then... may I approach the World Tree?”

“The World Tree... you mean?”

“Yes.”

During the Demon War, the Goddess of Nature, Hirth, gave the Elves a seed, which ignited and grew into the sacred tree, the World Tree.

Anyone with even the slightest bit of evil inside them cannot approach it, and even a single drop of dew from it is a precious elixir ingredient.

Even after 3,000 years, it continues to grow steadily, and now its scale is large enough to cover an entire city.

When I first visited Alvenheim, I heard that it ignored all sense of distance.

However, without the permission of the priests who guard the World Tree, even Arwen cannot enter or exit.

I expected it would be difficult, but...

“Of course. The priests would gladly grant permission if it’s for you, Zenon-nim.”

“Really?”

“Yes. After all, you’re the one who saved the roots of the World Tree from corruption. If they refuse you, the people would never forgive them.”

That's a relief.

I had been hoping to see it up close, and it looks like today that wish will be fulfilled.

Of course, I don't plan to pick up fallen leaves or collect dew from the World Tree.

I just want to see it once.

Everyone has a desire to visit a famous tourist spot, right? It's the same feeling.

"I'm glad. Have you two ever been to the World Tree?"

"I haven't."

"I haven't either."

"I've visited for research purposes, but I only observed it from afar or picked up leaves that had fallen to the ground. I've never approached it closely."

Even the two former commanders, who are quite experienced, have never been there.

I didn't stop there and asked another question.

"What about other races, excluding Elves?"

"At least in the hundreds of springs I've witnessed, none have approached it. Even prominent scholars have never tried. Zenon-nim, you might be the first."

"The first...?"

So, I'm the first among humans. Just imagining it makes my heart race.

Scholars dream of visiting libraries, of going to sacred places, but how much more so with the World Tree.

'But they say there's a soul dwelling there...! I hope it's not something like a demon being tortured and then blown up, refusing to accept it.' I suddenly had a humorous thought.

"Well, it looks like it's time. We should start heading out soon."

"Yes. How long does it take to walk to Elodia?"

“It won’t take long.”

“Good.”

At that moment, I thought it was all fine.

“...What’s that?”

“It seems like people have gathered to see Zenon-nim.”

A red carpet... no, a street split apart like Moses’ miracle, I had to see it with my own eyes first.

It was the same scene I had seen at the academy.

People were swarming on both sides, and knights were blocking the way to prevent them from getting closer.

And this wasn’t a special institution like the academy; this was the capital.

The center of the capital was clearing the path for me.

Thankfully, I hadn’t revealed myself, so it was calm, but I knew that as soon as I took one step, I could imagine what would happen.

“Do we really have to pass through there?”

“Yes. This way, the people can see that they are offering gifts to Zenon-nim with their own eyes. You don’t need to worry about attacks.”

“No, that’s not it...”

It seems like Arwen is trying to embarrass me. But I can’t just ignore it and pass by.

I squeezed my eyes shut and took a step forward. Then...

“It’s Zenon-nim!”

“Where? Where?”

“He’s over there! The one with the red hair!”

“Wow!!!”

With the sound of clapping and loud cheers filling my ears, my face inevitably turned red.

‘...I’m not made for this.’

How did those called heroes pass through such paths?

I’ve always been a homebody, so just walking through this street feels embarrassing.

“How about waving your hand once?”

“Yeah! Everyone came to see Zenon-nim!”

“...”

Let’s see, Arwen.

At that moment, Arwen, who had been waiting in Elodia, suddenly felt a jolt.

Zzzzt!

“Huh?!”

“Your Majesty?”

“No, it’s nothing. I just suddenly felt a strange jolt...”

The sudden feeling of a sharp tingle in her body made her jump in surprise.

‘What is this? Why do I feel...’

It was an odd sensation, and she tilted her head, feeling her face turning red.

Chapter 347: Gift (2)

There had been similar situations at the academy, but back then, I was able to endure it.

At that time, the reaction was closer to the arrival of a famous person, not a hero.

However, the road to Elodia felt like a hero's welcome, akin to that of a great general.

All around, voices were singing my praises, and bright white flower petals were scattering from the sky.

I couldn't help but feel flustered by the warm reception, but deep down, I also felt embarrassed.

It had been a long time since I realized just how great an achievement I had accomplished.

Even though it was the result of a series of coincidences, I had saved the world from the Devil Worshiper's plot.

Moreover, I had prevented the tragic collapse of several nations.

There have been countless instances where books, like those of Marx in a past life, changed the world, but saving the world itself is extremely rare.

I am the hero who achieved that difficult task.

Still, receiving such fervent attention didn't sit well with my nature.

Perhaps it was because of a deeply ingrained tendency from my past life, but I don't like being in the spotlight.

To be precise, I don't mind if the work itself is in the spotlight, but I feel uncomfortable with drawing attention to myself as a person.

There's no need for petty reasons—this is simply my personality.

Of course, I had anticipated receiving attention when revealing my true identity, and such hospitality was expected as well.

But it's just that, due to my nature, I disliked it.

So, when I waved my hand courageously, the reaction grew even more enthusiastic, and I felt embarrassed all over again.

“If I go to Helium, it'll be absolute chaos.”

If Alvenheim is like this, how much greater will the reception be in Helium?

Having officially visited Alvenheim this time, it won't be long before Helium sends an invitation as well.

Especially the demon race, they will likely be even more fervent.

Even before I was regarded as a prophet, they already considered me their benefactor.

Unlike Alvenheim, where the nation harbored grudges, the demon race regards me as a saint at the level of their entire species.

Considering that, I almost felt like this was nothing.

The demons, without exaggeration, probably worship me as a god.

“For the hero who saved the world! Salute!”

Chuk!

Still, isn't this a bit much?

As I received the salute from the soldiers guarding Elodia's gates, I couldn't help but smile wryly.

Knights in armor engraved with symbols, shields on their backs, and swords held in both hands.

Seeing them salute me so gracefully made my face turn red once more.

“We are the Guardian Corps of Alvenheim. Only the most skilled warriors among us can join this group.”

“Ah... I see.”

I nodded reluctantly to Beatrice’s explanation.

It was as if the Navy Order from the Empire had come to greet me directly.

Alvenheim had clearly put a lot of effort into welcoming me, from the reception I received from the warlord to this point with the knights.

It seemed right to offer them at least a little comfort for all their efforts.

I bowed my head to the Guardian Corps and thanked them.

“Thank you for your hard work. I appreciate the warm welcome.”

“Thank you!!”

Oh wow, that was loud.

My ears almost popped.

Despite being a mixed group of both men and women, their gratitude was so loud it felt like it pierced through my eardrums.

After we passed through the gates, the Guardian Corps saluted again, but I paid little attention, focusing instead on seeing Elodia.

“Wow...”

“How is it? Isn’t it magnificent?”

Just as Has boasted proudly, Elodia, the political institution of Alvenheim, was indeed showing its grandiosity, fitting its reputation.

Alvenheim had been a republic before the species war.

They believed that under the care of the gods, rulers were unnecessary.

Thus, unlike foreign palaces, Elodia had the appearance of a temple. It was based on the Olympus Temple, with Roman architecture added on top.

Moreover, like its exterior, it also served as a temple.

This was to prevent anyone from doing anything foolish in the presence of the gods.

‘But the only place that’s not under observation is the bedroom, right?’

I continued to walk toward Elodia, admiring it.

Despite being built by human hands, it harmonized perfectly with its surroundings, likely because it was crafted by elves.

The towering trees surrounding the building were like walls, and behind Elodia stood the World Tree, firmly planted.

As I gazed in awe at the picturesque scene, a beautiful voice suddenly reached my ears.

“Finally, you’ve arrived.”

“Huh?”

I turned toward the familiar voice, momentarily distracted from the World Tree.

And there she was, an elven woman waiting for me at the main gate.

“Arwen?”

Arwen was waiting for me at the front gate.

If I only looked at this, I would have welcomed her with joy, but she was far from her usual self.

For one, her outfit. I already knew she preferred clothes that highlighted her strengths.

This outfit was no different.

A slim white dress that clung to her body—difficult to pull off unless one had a perfect figure.

More than that, the slit along the side of the dress revealed a hint of her pale thigh, adding a delicate touch of sensuality.

Her slender waist and the curve of her hips made her look more alluring than usual, even though the outfit itself was modest, exposing only one thigh.

Moreover, the subtle fragrance emanating from her made my heart flutter.

“Then, we’ll leave you two alone.”

“We hope you have a pleasant time.”

As the atmosphere became somewhat awkward, Beatrice and Has politely excused themselves.

Though they would retreat for now, they would likely be patrolling nearby, keeping watch.

Still, it was just me and Arwen left.

I stared at her, who was unlike usual, with more intensity than I normally would.

Arwen, embarrassed by my gaze, avoided my eyes and swept her hair behind her ear.

Her face was slightly flushed.

With just that one gesture, I knew I had to say this.

“You look really beautiful. You were always pretty, but you look even more beautiful now.”

“Ugh...”

Arwen, shy at my sincere compliment, couldn’t even speak.

I hadn’t realized it before, but her dress subtly revealed her soft skin.

What kind of fabric was this, that it seemed almost see-through?

Thankfully, the important parts were covered, but even so, it was quite tantalizing.

I slowly walked up to her and stopped right in front of her.

Arwen didn’t step back and stood there, frozen.

When a quiet atmosphere settled between us, I reached out and gently placed my hand on her cheek.

Arwen noticeably flinched at the touch.

She slowly raised her head and met my gaze.

Her silver-gray eyes were full of deep affection.

'I've decided to become reckless...'

Accepting Arwen was easier than I had thought.

It was simply returning the love from someone who cared for me.

No, returning more than that—repaying with even greater love.

This was not just about feelings, but also included a physical connection.

Then, how should I show my love for Arwen?

Adelia, emotionally unstable, was enough simply by being near me, and Cecily was similar.

Marie and Leona didn't turn away, and I would keep showering them with love.

But Arwen...

'No, this is wrong.'

Trying to categorize it now was absurd.

I should first find out what "gift" Alvenheim had prepared for me.

With that, I slowly removed my hand from Arwen's cheek.

She let out a soft sound of disappointment.

"So, what's the gift you're going to give me?"

"G-gift? Oh, right."

Was it because my words made her nervous?

Arwen began to fluster, looking flustered.

To the citizens of Alvenheim, she's a stern, unyielding queen, but in front of me, she became a lovesick fool.

Can I really think she's not cute while seeing these two expressions?

At least, I don't think I can.

“Hmm! Hmm! The gift is prepared inside Elodia. If you want it, I can give it to you right now, but...”

After saying that, Arwen closed her mouth tightly.

At the same time, her pale face started turning red as if it might explode.

I could roughly guess what the gift was, and a faint smile escaped me.

But it's a bit too sudden to receive a gift in the middle of the day, and there's no mood for it either.

At the very least, we should go on a date, shouldn't we?

I spoke to her gently, who couldn't open her mouth.

“Then I'll take it later. It's not urgent, right?”

“Y-Yes, it's not urgent...”

“Then...”

I tapped my finger against my lips and hesitated.

If it were up to me, I would have liked to visit the Holy Land first and then go to the World Tree, but that would take too much time.

The thing is, I'd probably just end up reading books once we arrive at the Holy Land.

Since Arwen is like me, a bookworm, there was a high chance she'd read next to me.

Of course, I'd already read most of the books there since I can go back and forth freely, but I still have a “gift” prepared for her here.

I entrusted it to Siris just in case, but I was planning to give it to Arwen shortly.

That leaves just one more place.

After some thought, I asked Arwen.

“Can you guide me to the World Tree?”

“Are you saying...?” The World Tree...

“Yes.”

Heading toward the World Tree.

Arwen turned around after hearing my words.

When she turned, the World Tree appeared behind a building.

To approach the World Tree, even Arwen would need permission from a priest.

Of course, since my achievements are what they are, getting permission is easy.

But the problem arose from an unexpected place.

“Th-That... might be a bit difficult.”

“Huh? Why? Can’t I do it either?”

“If it’s you, it might work. But the World Tree is a sacred tree, almost like an incarnation of Hirt-sama. In other words, you need permission from Hirt-sama, not Luminous-sama or Mora-sama.”

I could understand that much. But then why was Arwen troubled?

Looking at her with a puzzled expression, she smiled faintly and explained.

“Hirt-sama is the goddess of nature. And nature is the world itself. Unlike other gods, to receive direct permission from Hirt-sama, preparation is required.”

“Preparation?”

“Have you ever seen or heard of priests who received too much divine power and ended up burning up in fever?”

I know that well. Kate went through that, and although the situation was different, I recently experienced it myself.

I nodded in understanding, and Arwen, seeing that I got it, continued with the explanation.

“Hirt-sama, being the goddess of nature, responds to prophecies through natural phenomena.

However, if a prophecy is given directly, the priest might die from it in severe cases.”

“Because they can’t handle the divine power?”

“Yes. Even for us elves, that’s a difficult task. So, to receive permission from Hirt-sama, a waiting period of at least a month is required. That’s why it’s difficult at the moment.”

“Hmm...”

I hadn’t expected this kind of situation.

But considering Hirt’s position, it wasn’t so hard to understand.

She is the mother of the twin siblings, Luminous and Mora, and a goddess who embodies nature itself.

She is the supreme god of this world, so it makes sense that it wouldn’t be easy to gain permission.

Though a bit disappointed, it’s understandable.

We have time anyway, so we can take it slow.

“Alright, then...”

Just then, a strong wind suddenly blew.

Whoosh!

My red hair and Arwen’s silver-gray hair fluttered wildly in the gust.

Flap!

“Chirp! Chirp!” Chirp!

“Kraaak! Kraak!”

At the same time, a large number of birds flew up energetically from the trees surrounding Elodia.

I watched them as they flew off into the distance.

The birds were heading directly toward the World Tree, which was located behind Elodia.

The direction of the wind and the direction the birds were flying matched. Leaves mixed in the wind confirmed the path.

It felt as if “nature” was guiding me toward the World Tree, as if there was no need for much thought.

“...”

“...”

We both stared at the birds flying far away for a while before looking at each other without anyone saying anything first.

Arwen had a dazed expression on her face, unsure whether she was dreaming or seeing reality.

I saw her face and shrugged my shoulders before casually speaking.

“It seems like permission has been granted, doesn’t it?”

“...”

“Shouldn’t we be able to go?”

Arwen nodded, as if in a daze. Then she murmured quietly.

“Nature...”

“Yes?”

I realized something belatedly.

“Nature... has never responded so directly...”

“...”

“Never before...”

Chapter 348: Hirt (1)

As expected from the name “Goddess of Nature,” Hirt granted me permission through a natural phenomenon.

The direction of the wind and the birds all took flight at once, heading towards the World Tree.

It was a scene that seemed like something out of a movie, and I couldn’t help but be genuinely amazed.

After all, the Goddess of Nature herself had given permission.

Could her creations really refuse it?

Naturally, the priests who guarded the World Tree also easily granted permission.

They, too, had realized Hirt’s will after witnessing the phenomenon earlier, and when I added further explanation, they looked at me with wide eyes in surprise.

“It’s extremely rare for Hirt to respond in such a way—no, it almost never happens unless it’s the Demon War! Are you not concerned?”

“I’ve never heard of that, so it’s hard to feel anything. But did that happen during the Demon War?”

As I walked towards the World Tree with Arwen, she exclaimed excitedly.

Since I had no idea what the previous event meant, I responded calmly.

According to her explanation, Hirt had only responded in that manner when handing over the seed of the World Tree during the Demon War.

Aside from that, there are records of Hirt aiding humanity by controlling animals, including monsters, to fight against the demons when humanity was in danger.

I had read about this in books as well.

‘Was it difficult to control all animals?’

I thought to myself as I overheard Arwen muttering.

The records stated that Hirt, as the Goddess of Nature, had passed on the World Tree, but aside from that, she hadn’t provided much direct aid.

As mentioned earlier, she had controlled animals to assist humanity, but this was on a very minimal scale.

Especially goblins, orcs, ogres, and the like—monsters considered part of the demonic ranks—had joined forces with the demons.

They were even modified to become more horrifying.

The orcs’ skin turned red and became even more vicious, while goblins’ intelligence, already high, increased, making them more cruel.

Ogres were the most terrifying; according to records, they could withstand even the full force of elf magic.

Fortunately, these creatures are now hard to find in nature, but if you were to encounter them, you’d need to run for your life without hesitation.

‘The Father of All Things...’

Suddenly, I remembered a phrase shouted by a demon worshiper just before they committed suicide: “The Father of All Things,” contrasting with Hirt, the Mother of Nature.

Though I was on my way to the World Tree and had little time to think deeply, I figured it wouldn’t be a bad idea to visit the holy site later and search for more records.

If my assumptions were correct, it could be an excellent source for a story.

Of course, I wouldn’t put it in the Xenon Chronicle but save it for a future work...

Thud! Thud!

“Hm?”

As I walked, lost in thought, I felt something tap the top of my head.

I looked up, but there was nothing there—just a clear blue sky.

Had I imagined it?

I blinked and raised my hand over my head. Something landed on my index finger.

“Chirp! Chirp!”

As I lowered my hand, a small, cute sparrow was chirping.

I was momentarily startled, then smiled gently.

Is this Hirt’s way of telling me to stop thinking and just go to the World Tree?

Seeing this adorable bird made my heart feel lighter.

“A sparrow, huh? They’re usually wary and don’t approach humans.”

As I observed the sparrow tilting its head or fluttering its wings, Arwen spoke from the side.

She looked at me and the bird alternately, amazed.

“Do they not approach elves either? I’ve heard elves are friendly with animals.”

“I don’t know where you heard that, but it’s a misconception.

We’re indeed close to nature, but that doesn’t mean we’re particularly friendly with animals. We hunt animals for meat and even set up farms.”

Though elves are often depicted as nature-loving in fantasy settings, this world is slightly different.

While elves are nature-oriented, they’re not vegetarians.

They enjoy meat, and they establish farms to meet their food needs.

They even harm nature sometimes when constructing villages.

But unlike humans, who expand their numbers indiscriminately, elves pray to Hirt and offer sacrifices to her.

I think the image of elves as nature-friendly may have come from the belief that they were chosen by the gods.

“So, do elves never communicate with animals? I’ve heard there are druids who do that sometimes.”

“Well... that’s a tough question. If you mean communicating with dogs or cats, yes, you could call that druidism, but raising wild beasts like lions is truly difficult.

In that sense, beastmen are closer to druids than we are.”

“I see.”

I understood what she meant.

While it’s possible to raise animals regardless of race, communicating with them as if they understood you is difficult for any race, elves included.

The only exception would be beastmen, as they understand animal instincts and would find it easier to connect with them.

As I learned various pieces of knowledge from Arwen, I turned my attention back to the sparrow. The moment our eyes met, the sparrow tilted its head.

“Arwen.”

“Yes?”

I pointed to the sparrow and said it resembled her.

Arwen was taken aback, her face reddening. I wasn’t joking—I genuinely thought it resembled her.

It had a white body and was small and delicate, just like Arwen.

It was cute, too.

“Wh-what do you mean by that? I-I don’t understand.”

“I just think it’s cute. Its behavior is similar to yours.”

“Ugh...”

Arwen's ears twitched up and down, almost like the sparrow was fluttering its wings.

Seeing Arwen blush so red, I gave a slight smile and raised my hand.

When I raised my hand, the sparrow flapped its wings energetically and flew up.

Flap!

“Chirp! Chirp!”

“...Is it not going?”

“Chirp!”

The sparrow landed right back on my head. I was a bit bewildered but left it be since it was cute.

‘That’s quite far, huh.’

I looked ahead, noticing that the World Tree still seemed close, but the road stretched endlessly.

The path was considered a pilgrimage of sorts, and teleportation magic was strictly forbidden, so we were walking.

Therefore, the only way to go was around Elodia’s back and keep walking.

The problem was that the path was incredibly long.

From the perspective of scale, I knew it would be far, but I never imagined it would feel this distant.

The area surrounding the World Tree was all vast plains, making it feel even farther.

Thankfully, I had company, so I wasn’t bored.

I glanced at Arwen, who was fanning herself to cool down.

It seemed like she was starting to calm down, so it seemed like a good time to talk.

“Arwen.”

“What... what is it?”

Arwen, still flustered from my sudden teasing, trembled as she spoke.

Her ears were still twitching, betraying her nervousness.

I smiled warmly at her embarrassment and stretched out my hand.

When I extended my hand, Arwen looked at me in confusion.

“Shall we hold hands and walk?”

“W-wha?”

“How about holding hands and walking?”

When I urged her again, Arwen’s face, which had just calmed down, turned bright red again.

Her pale skin makes it stand out, but it’s kind of funny since she does this often.

She alternated between looking at my outstretched hand and my face, before cautiously reaching out.

Her fingers were long and slender, like a well-maintained hand, though small due to her petite frame.

Despite her small build, there was nothing wrong with the proportions.

Swish—

“*Haa...*”

Finally, when our hands touched, Arwen exhaled the breath she had been holding.

She didn’t stop there, though, and even interlaced our fingers, feeling the sensation between us.

Arwen’s hand was soft and tender, like that of a baby.

Unlike Mari, her hand was also much larger, covering mine completely.

“Wow...”

Looking at my hand, which covered most of hers, Arwen muttered, impressed.

Her silver-gray eyes sparkled brightly, like a child who had just found a new toy.

With her appearance and actions, she felt far younger than me, even though she was much older.

I could feel her hand squirming in mine, so I smiled quietly and asked,

“Arwen, have you ever interlaced your fingers with another man like this before?”

“I have. With my father, often in human society. My father would always hold my hand and never let go. He said I shouldn’t ever be separated from him. I remember those times.”

“Besides your father?”

“You’re the first.”

Arwen answered that, then placed her empty hand on the back of mine, not the one still holding my hand.

Curious about how big my hand was, she gently stroked it, even feeling the raised tendons.

Unknowingly, her actions were stimulating my heart.

I wanted to take things further here, but since Hirt had asked us to come quickly, I couldn’t delay any longer.

So, we walked slowly toward the World Tree, hand in hand.

The cool breeze blew, causing our hair to flutter, and birds, including the wagtail above, chirped in the air.

Swish—

The good atmosphere continued until Arwen slowly pressed her body against mine.

The interlaced hands slowly loosened, and she grabbed my arm.

Without stopping there, she subtly pulled me toward her chest.

Although not as large as other women, the sensation of her chest, which was still substantial, reached my arm.

“...My dear.”

“Hmm?”

“If you hadn’t been here... would I have ended up like Elisha from the book? I wonder about that.”

Elisha, as everyone knows, is the Elf Queen from the *Chronicles of Xenon*.

She is also Xenon’s mentor and the lover of Kair.

A couple who met a tragic end without confessing their feelings to each other.

Rather than being flustered by Arwen’s question, I seriously pondered it.

‘It’s not impossible.’

Thanks to the *Chronicles of Xenon*, the Second Demon War had been delayed by thousands of years, and all futures were shifting toward a more positive direction.

Naturally, Arwen’s fate would have changed similarly.

Especially since she had just ascended as queen, she would have likely faced the Second Demon War.

She must have gone through difficulties similar to Elisha’s.

But this was a future where none of that would happen.

No one knew what would happen to her.

More than that, I was certainly not a prophet or a time traveler, as she seemed to think.

It was true that I came from another world, but it was a completely different world unrelated to this one.

“I don’t know either. The future can’t be recklessly predicted. Maybe you’ll end up like Elisha, or maybe you won’t.”

“.....”

“Still, what has changed is definitely for the better. The existence of demon worshipers has been exposed, and the corruption of the World Tree’s roots was prevented.”

I said that and looked at Arwen.

At that moment, she also happened to turn her gaze toward me.

“Don’t you think we no longer need to worry about such things?”

“....”

“Yeah, I think you’re right. I mean, we should focus on what’s ahead. Don’t you think?”

“...Heh.”

Arwen lightly laughed at my response. Then, she smiled softly and spoke.

“I think I’ve said something unnecessary. Asking you a question like this makes me feel foolish.”

“Well, have you decided what to do next?”

“We’re doing it right now, aren’t we?”

Arwen answered clearly, without hesitation.

She must have made up her mind.

In response, I patted her head.

Her hair, shimmering like the Milky Way, felt pleasant to touch.

She didn’t seem to mind, pressing her face against my arm to enjoy the warmth.

Her chest pressed even closer to mine, and though it startled me a little, I wasn’t flustered anymore—it had become familiar.

“I’m glad you were born into this world, Isaac.”

“Yeah, I think so too.”

Though the world was born from the demon worshiper’s mistake, it was still much happier than my past life.

Plus, while dealing with the demon worshipers, I was connecting with beautiful women, so what more could I want from life?

We walked slowly toward the World Tree, arm in arm.

The World Tree had seemed far away, but like all things, the distance between us had gradually closed.

Before long, we were almost there.

[Finally, you've arrived.]

As I gazed at the World Tree, large enough to cover a whole city, a beautiful voice echoed in my head.

From the sound alone, I could tell it was likely a woman's voice.

But who it belonged to was what mattered.

I looked around in surprise, and once again, the voice rang in my head.

[Look up.]

At those words, I slowly raised my head.

The towering World Tree entered my sight, but what stood out even more was something else.

Shaa—

A light that wasn't too bright nor too dark began to gather in one place.

This light slowly took on a form, turning into a *figure*.

Arwen and I watched the phenomenon in awe.

We didn't know where the light was coming from, but it was clearly surreal.

Eventually, the figure of light began to fade, revealing its true form.

The first thing that caught my eye was her hair.

It sparkled like stars, in a soft green color reminiscent of nature.

Her eyes, too, were like stars, shining with a beautiful green glow.

And most importantly...

‘...She’s huge.’

Her bust was full, and her body had the perfect proportions.

The leaves that barely covered her private parts didn’t matter.

As an transcendent being, I didn’t feel any inappropriate thoughts.

But her size was another matter.

She was *huge*. Really huge.

I had to look up at her, so she must have been at least 3 meters tall.

I couldn’t even close my mouth as I stared at the woman.

Meanwhile, the woman, gazing down at me with her starry eyes, began to squat down.

It felt like a mountain was shrinking before my eyes.

When she adjusted her height to be closer to mine, she smiled brightly and spoke.

“Finally, we meet, Isaac.”

Chapter 349: Hirt (2)

When looking at gods depicted in myths, many of them, despite their differences, are often portrayed as “giants.”

After all, nothing conveys overwhelming presence more effectively than sheer physical stature—a presence so imposing that mere mortals wouldn’t dare to look directly.

Among them, gods of nature, often referred to as creator gods, are the embodiment of nature itself, so their massive size feels inevitable.

Just think of nature: the towering skies, the vast expanse of the earth, and the unfathomable depths of the seas.

It’s only natural that Hirt, the goddess of nature in this world, falls within this category as well.

“Finally, we meet, child.”

Hirt crouched down to meet my gaze, smiling warmly as she greeted me.

Her eyes sparkled like stars, radiating a deep affection.

Trembling, I met her gaze, oblivious to the concept of disrespect.

Even Luminous and Mora communicated through voices alone, but Hirt had manifested in person.

Though she barely covered her intimate areas with leaves, there was no trace of lustful thoughts within me.

Instead, I felt a childlike urge to bury myself in her embrace.

Even that impulse was subdued under the overwhelming atmosphere she exuded.

To reiterate, Hirt is the goddess of nature.

Humanity is but a weak existence before “nature.”

Simply gazing at a mountain inspires awe—how much more so before the goddess of nature herself?

I stared blankly at the smiling Hirt before cautiously opening my mouth.

“...Lady Hirt?”

“Yes, dear?”

“Are you really Lady Hirt?”

Some might call it a foolish question, but in my position, you’d understand.

A god, no less—a goddess of nature akin to a creator deity.

Unlike Luminous and Mora, who communicated through voices, Hirt had materialized in front of me.

How could I not be overwhelmed?

My confusion left me at a loss for action.

“Mother of all, revered goddess of nature, Lady Hirt! The descendant of the angels greets you!”

While I was floundering, Arwen took action.

She had been holding my arm, but at some point, she released it and prostrated herself flat on the ground. Her body trembled slightly as an added effect.

Even as the queen of Alvenheim, she was merely a created being before a god.

This applied to me as well.

Even as Xenon, I would be erased with a single word from her.

Only then did I begin to grasp the situation. Lowering myself to bow, I was stopped by a gentle hand.

Swish.

“...Lady Hirt?”

“There’s no need to force yourself, dear. Besides, you’re not yet familiar with this place.”

Hirt pressed a finger gently against my head and spoke kindly, her touch radiating warmth.

She softly stroked my hair, her gestures reminiscent of petting a beloved puppy.

Her simple action calmed my tense heart, even filling me with a childlike desire for more affection.

Was this why Leona enjoyed my touch so much? I closed my eyes, smiling.

“Greetings to the Mother of Nature.”

“My, my.”

“I felt it was only proper to offer a greeting.”

“How sweet,” Hirt chuckled warmly at my response.

She then removed her hand from my head and turned to address Arwen.

“You may rise as well. There’s no need to feel burdened.”

“Y-Yes...!”

It wasn’t an order but a gentle request, yet Arwen slowly raised her head, her tension still visible.

Hirt, noticing this, smiled softly, attempting to soothe her nerves.

“Lift your head, dear. There’s no need to be so tense.”

“But...still...”

“As you know, I am the goddess of nature. And nature does not ‘willingly’ harm anyone. Even if you were to be impolite, I cannot directly punish you.”

This was a notable difference from Luminous and Mora.

Unlike the twin sibling gods, Hirt couldn't summon lightning or mete out divine punishment artificially.

Even if she could, whether she would do so—or how severe it might be—was uncertain.

However, Hirt's words weren't meant to condone disrespect; rather, they were her way of encouraging us to feel at ease.

Perhaps understanding this, Arwen cautiously raised her head, her expression still wary.

Her tentative movements resembled that of a squirrel.

Hirt, finding her adorable, smiled as she had before.

Even though she encouraged us to relax, it was impossible not to maintain some level of decorum before a literal god.

“You took your time coming here. Was it because you didn't want to see me?”

Turning away from Arwen, Hirt directed her words at me in a tone that was both gentle and slightly chiding.

Her voice carried the combined essence of Luminous and Mora.

With my nerves easing, I responded.

“Things turned out that way. Unlike the other two, Lady Hirt is quite difficult to meet.”

“That's true. Even if you built a temple for me, it wouldn't have had much effect.”

Seeming to accept my excuse, Hirt nodded.

Like the other two gods, she had temples, but they held little practical value.

At most, they served for simple rituals and offered no divine power in return.

As I mentioned before, invoking Hirt's aid required using the magical power of rituals, like rain ceremonies. Her temples were largely symbolic.

“Well, now that we've met, none of that matters, does it, child?”

“Indeed, Lady Hirt.”

“So, how is life in this world? While adapting must have been easy, the differences in norms must’ve been quite challenging.”

I started to answer that everything was fine but hesitated, glancing at Arwen.

Whether intentionally or because she, as a creator goddess, felt no need for discretion, Hirt’s question effectively confirmed that I was from another world.

This revelation would surely provoke a strong reaction from Arwen, who had already been speculating about my origins.

Unsurprisingly, Arwen’s eyes widened at Hirt’s words, turning to me with shock.

Her gaze, wide as a rabbit’s, brimmed with astonishment and disbelief.

“Oh dear, was I not supposed to say that?”

Realizing her slip, Hirt covered her mouth with both hands, her eyes widening in genuine surprise.

It was clearly a mistake rather than an intentional disclosure.

But what was said could not be unsaid.

Since Arwen had already been suspicious, this didn’t change much.

Moreover, given that I planned to reveal my past life in the future, this early revelation could be considered a minor inconvenience.

“No, it’s fine. Arwen already had her suspicions.”

“Ah, so it’s true... you’re...”

“If you wish, I can turn back time or erase the memory entirely,” Hirt offered, embodying her role as a creator goddess.

But neither option appealed to me, and I shook my head.

Deciding to proceed with honesty, I looked up at Hirt’s large face and spoke calmly.

“I’ll decline. Thanks to you and the other two, I’m living a happy life—enjoying honor I never had before and forming bonds with women I love.”

“That’s wonderful. If you’d been living unhappily, we would’ve had to bear the guilt.”

The events that brought my soul here stemmed from the machinations of demon worshippers.

According to Luminous, such acts went against the reincarnation cycle described in Buddhism, causing chaos among Earth’s gods.

For me, however, it was a blessing in disguise.

In my past life, I had been an ordinary web novel author living a socially isolated existence after losing my parents in an accident.

Perhaps that history explains why I so readily accepted relationships in this new world.

“Do you have any questions for me?”

“Do you, Lady Hirt?”

“The reason I met you isn’t anything special. I just wanted to see you once. There’s also something I need to do, but I’ll save that for the end, so feel free to ask me anything.”

“Then…”

There is one thing.

Originally, I had planned to ask Luminous or Mora directly, but since the person is right in front of me, it should be fine.

“When I was trying to name this world, you, Lord Hirt, stopped me. Why was that?”

Zeno shouted the name of this world to boost the morale of his allies.

Just as he was about to settle on that one name, Hirt intentionally caused an earthquake.

At first, I thought it was simply because he was embarrassed, but upon further reflection, that couldn’t have been the reason.

Causing an earthquake over just one name didn’t add up.

“That’s our divine rule. Don’t name the world after your own name. Doing so would allow one to monopolize divinity.”

“Even though you’re the Goddess of Nature and the Creator?”

“Exactly because I’m Nature itself. If the power of Nature grows too strong, it becomes hard for humans to live. Imagine storms raging every day, lightning pouring down like rain, and volcanoes erupting every time they find a crack. Moreover, because I am Nature itself, I can’t even control it.”

“Ah...”

It’s not so much terrifying as it is magnificent.

So, when divinity consumes Nature, it leads to this. I’ll definitely remember that.

Upon further reflection, the highest gods in mythology didn’t name the world after themselves either. There was a hidden reason behind that—truly fascinating.

I think I now understand why Hirt caused the earthquake on purpose.

If that name had appeared in Zeno’s story, Hirt would have monopolized divinity.

I nodded, marveling at the thought. In that case, it’s better for me to create a name myself rather than borrowing from the gods.

“Do you have any other questions? I’ll answer as much as I can.”

“Is it possible for others like Lord Hirt to incarnate? It seems like you borrowed the power of the World Tree...”

“It is possible, but I told them not to come.”

“Why?”

I’ve wanted to meet them at least once.

Especially Mora, because I wonder if she looks like Cecily.

Hirt smiled gently at my question and answered kindly.

“You’re fine, but this child might struggle.”

“Are you referring to... her?”

She pointed at Arwen, who looked flustered when she was singled out.

“You’re not like this child. Even now, you’re sweating coldly, and if your children were to show up, you’d probably faint.”

“Cold sweat? Huh?”

At Hirt’s words, Arwen wiped her cheek with her hand.

Although she borrowed the power of the World Tree, a god is still a god.

Unknowingly, she was consuming her spiritual energy, causing the cold sweat to pour.

If Luminous and Mora had appeared in this state, she would have fainted from the pressure. Thanks to that, I became more aware of how abundant my divinity is.

“Is there anything else?”

“To talk to Lord Hirt like this, do I have to visit the World Tree every time?”

“That would be the most convenient. You could also possess that child, Leona, but that would be difficult for her.”

“How hard is it?”

“She’ll suffer from fever for an entire week. Once she gets used to it, it won’t be an issue, but that’s not your nature, is it?”

Of course not.

If Leona would suffer, it would be better for me to visit the World Tree directly.

“Understood. I’ll make sure to visit often.”

“There’s no need to do that. I’ll have my children pass on my will. And since it’s also hard on the World Tree, please be careful.”

It’s amazing that even the World Tree, which drove out the demons, feels burdened.

Even meeting face-to-face like this is tough.

But why did Hirt go so far as to incarnate?

She could have simply conveyed her will with her voice like Luminous and Mora.

I don't understand why she took such a risk.

Just as I was about to express that doubt, Hirt gave a warm smile as though she had read my mind.

A smile that made my heart feel at ease just by looking at it. It felt almost as comfortable as lying on thick soft fur.

“Child.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you so much for saving our world from crisis.”

Hirt spoke these words and extended both her hands towards me.

I didn't react when she took action.

Then, she supported my backside with one hand and my back with the other, pulling me closer to her face.

With our faces at the same level, I found myself looking directly at her beautiful face.

Her eyes, sparkling like stars, seemed to have no depth at all, which made them feel somewhat intimidating.

It felt as though I was being overwhelmed by the universe itself, and I couldn't move or do anything.

Then, Hirt slowly closed her eyes and began to chant quietly.

[Mother of all, Goddess of Nature, declares...]

Unlike before, Hirt's voice amplified greatly.

It didn't reach my ears, but instead, it seemed to resonate in my mind.

This was different from what Luminous and Mora had done. Each word felt like a sharp needle driving into my brain.

It was almost like a hypnotic trance, and by the time my mind began to dull, Hirt continued.

[You shall receive the pure blessing of Nature.]

At that moment, Hirt pulled me closer to her face.

Smooch.

She kissed me lightly.

But due to her size, her lips enveloped my entire face.

The kiss from the Goddess of Nature... it was, how should I put it... strange.

Although there was contact, there was no lingering sensation afterward.

But what stood out more than that was the sheer bewilderment.

I had no idea what Hirt had just done to me.

“...Lord Hirt?”

“Hehe.”

When I asked with a dumbfounded expression, Hirt smiled kindly and stood up, straightening her knee.

Even though she simply straightened her knee, it exuded a majestic air, as though a great mountain range was rising.

“I’m sorry to my children, but it seems this is the only way to stop their fight.”

“...”

“Please continue to work hard for this world.”

Wham!

Hirt said this and, in the blink of an eye, turned into particles of light, disappearing.

The light particles rose into the sky before scattering into the air.

I stared at the scene absentmindedly, then suddenly shifted my gaze to the spot where Hirt had been.

Where she had been sitting, there was a “seed” left behind.

It wasn't an ordinary seed. It was much larger than a grown man's fist.

“...”

Could it be?

Chapter 350: Hirt (3)

The seed that had fallen on the floor where Hirt had vanished.

It was much larger than an adult male's fist, and its appearance was anything but ordinary.

First, could you believe that the seed sparkled like gold?

A regular person might not believe it easily.

Moreover, its size was so large that it could be mistaken for a fruit rather than a seed.

It was even solid enough to be used as a hammer.

In fact, there was a place where such a description appeared.

As someone who enjoys mythology and history, there's no way I wouldn't know it.

It was a seed much larger than an adult man's fist, shining with the light of gold, and strong enough that not a single scratch would appear even if struck with a stone.

The seed of the World Tree that Hirt had given to the elves.

Every time a description of this seed appeared, it always included the above words.

In other words, it was highly likely that this seed, which Hirt had presumed to have given me, was also the World Tree's seed...

'How am I supposed to grow this?'

In the myths, there are records of planting the seed, but there's no mention of how it was nurtured.

It seems like it could be as simple as planting it in the ground and providing water and nutrients, like any other plant, but this one is presumed to be the seed of the World Tree.

I couldn't think of it too simply, and the real problem is who will grow it.

It's already decided that it will be planted in the Myshal Territory.

But I had no clue just how immense the impact could be.

This seed was from the World Tree, which had only appeared in myths.

That seed had played a major role in driving out the demons when the World Tree grew, and this happened over 3,000 years ago.

It was a story that could be considered a distant legend even for the long-lived demons and elves, yet I received that very seed?

My reputation had already reached such heights that it felt like it had pierced the universe.

Surely, impossible titles would follow me now.

When the new edition of the Zenon Chronicles was released, I could somewhat predict it, but the seed of the World Tree was entirely beyond expectation.

I could only wonder what news would follow.

'Also, who's going to grow this?'

I leaned against the wide trunk of the World Tree, deep in thought.

It was such a huge issue that even after Hirt vanished, I didn't return to Elodia.

Now, I was holding what I presumed to be the World Tree's seed, which looked suspiciously like a coconut.

Not a metaphor, but purely in appearance, it resembled a coconut.

The funny thing was, it shone like gold. And being someone with large hands, I had to hold it with both hands.

'Was it meant for me to grow?'

I lifted my head to look at the World Tree.

It had grown steadily for 3,000 years into a sacred tree, large enough to form a city.

If it grows like this in the Myshal Territory, would it get this big too?

That would be a problem. Our territory isn't exactly that large.

Of course, Hirt must have had a plan, so the possibility of it growing into something like the current World Tree was low.

But the World Tree is the World Tree.

It's a priceless, one-of-a-kind tree in the world, and if it's planted in our territory... just imagining it made my head spin.

"Hmm..."

I was deep in thought when I felt a gaze from beside me.

Turning my head, I saw that Arwen had woken up and was now looking at me with her silver-gray eyes.

She had just woken up, and her gaze was still hazy, though it carried another kind of drowsiness.

"Did you wake up?"

I greeted her with a warm smile.

Even her dazed look was irresistibly cute.

Arwen blinked a few times, then blushed and shyly replied.

"It seems I've caused trouble. Sorry."

"No, I was resting too, so don't worry."

"Ah, ah."

When I treated her kindly,

Arwen awkwardly cleared her throat and slowly moved away from me.

Perhaps she was trying to avoid being a bother, as her shoulder that had been touching mine gradually pulled away.

But it didn't last long. I shifted my position to press closer to her.

“Are you really going to stay like this? Are you embarrassed now?”

“Ah, but you are with Hirt-nim...”

Is that all?

Given that she had received blessings from gods higher than Luminous and Mora, I could understand the reaction.

Even Kate had been specially cared for by the Order after receiving Luminous's blessing, but I had received the blessing of the higher deity, the Goddess of Nature.

More importantly, I had been given the seed of the World Tree directly from her, so the difference in status was natural.

But all of that was meaningless.

Even though I received blessings from a god, there was no reason for me to change.

If anything, I could be bolder. I wrapped my arm around Arwen's slender waist.

‘She has such a small waist.’

Her waist was incredibly slender, and feeling it in my arms made it even more apparent.

Despite that, her hips were mature, which only made the contrast more noticeable.

“Eeek!”

Surprised by my bold move, Arwen stiffened, and her tension traveled through my arm.

As she pressed closer to me, I stared directly into her face and spoke.

“So, now you're not going to come?”

“Ah... It's not that...”

“Not that, huh?”

“...You're so mischievous.”

Arwen, who had been using formal speech, murmured in a small voice, her face flushed.

Even her grumbling was so cute that I couldn't help but smile.

I kept my arm around her waist without letting go, and for a while, Arwen's body remained stiff, but eventually, she relaxed.

Meanwhile, the birds hovered around us or perched on our bodies, creating a picturesque scene.

"...Isaac."

"Yes?"

"Hirt-nim also said it. You're from another world."

Arwen asked, looking at the canary perched on her finger.

Since Hirt had confirmed it directly, I had no intention of denying it.

I nodded, and she waved her hand lightly, sending the canary flying off.

The canary soared into the sky and headed towards the World Tree, a place whose height could not be measured.

"Then how did you come to this world? I won't ask what kind of world you came from, but I am curious about how you arrived here."

"Nothing special. I came here because of the devil worshipers."

"Devil worshipers?"

"Yeah."

At my calm answer, which held no lies, Arwen's eyes widened in surprise.

I flapped my wings energetically and gave a light tap to the sparrow fluttering in front of me, then began explaining roughly.

"The devil worshipers messed up their summoning, and I ended up suffering greatly because of it. So, the gods called me here."

"Great suffering... I see..."

I couldn't help but wonder what our elven queen was thinking now.

I glanced at Arwen, who had a serious look on her face.

I had refrained from mentioning that I had experienced death, fearing it would make her misunderstand, but now it seemed like that misunderstanding was heading in a strange direction.

No matter how I explained it, it seemed like she was bound to misunderstand, so I didn't feel the need to clarify further.

What was important right now was something else.

I pointed to the seed, which I had carefully kept between my legs, and asked.

“What should we do with this? Do you know how to grow it?”

“Hmm... I'm not sure if it's accurate, since it's an ancient record, but it says that the clergy grew the World Tree's seeds. The World Tree grows by absorbing holy power.”

“Holy power... So, if we plant it in our territory, it will just grow on its own?”

“With the Luminous and Mora's orders now established, the land itself shouldn't be lacking.

The real issue is who will take care of it... Do we have someone we can trust?”

“Well, there is one person...”

I could ask Kate, but doing so would create a gap.

After being directly threatened by the devil worshipers, I couldn't leave Kate and Adelia's positions vacant.

That meant I would have to entrust it to someone else, but aside from my family, I didn't have anyone in mind who could be trusted.

However, my father was busy, and my mother couldn't leave her duties of caring for Lily.

So, who could I trust...?

‘...Maybe I should ask Musk.’

I wouldn't directly ask Musk to grow it, but rather ask him in a supervisory role—someone to ensure no one does anything foolish and that the clergy are doing their job properly.

Since it was most likely the World Tree's seed, there shouldn't be anyone reckless, but still, I would need someone reliable.

“Let's think about it slowly for now. It's not urgent right now, right?”

As I said that, I tightened my arm around Arwen's waist. Arwen blushed and smiled shyly before nodding.

“Well... Isaac?”

“Yeah?”

“May I ask... when do you plan to receive the gift...?”

Arwen asked me, seemingly hesitant but gathering courage.

“I'm ready anytime.”

“Isn't it a little too early?”

The sun, which had been high in the sky, was gradually descending, but there was still plenty of time before nightfall.

During this time, I could visit the sanctuary and read books or give her the “gift” I had prepared.

But it seemed Arwen had a different thought. She shook her head and gave a reason I could understand.

“It's because of our elf's old traditions. Preparing takes up unnecessary time. It will take at least a few hours just for preparations.”

“A few hours? What could take that long?”

“It takes an hour to cleanse oneself at the Spring of Life. Including other small rituals, it will likely take over three hours.”

“Have you finished?”

When I asked, Arwen nodded. So that's why she had been so tired earlier.

After thinking for a moment, I made up my mind without delay.

We had plenty of time.

More importantly...

“Alright.”

“If... If so...!”

“I'll come to receive the gift.”

We had plenty of time, and the night would be long.

Arwen's face lit up with a bright expression at my willingness. But that smile didn't last long.

Smack!

I suddenly stole a kiss from her lips.

Arwen froze, not knowing what had just happened. I smiled at her reaction, stood up, and dusted myself off.

Just before returning to Elodia, I said with a teasing tone:

“Then I'll be looking forward to it?”

“Aaaaah...”

Before even receiving the gift, Arwen had already collapsed in embarrassment.

★★★★★

Since then, the typical elf customs, as Arwen had said, continued in their usual tedious manner.

They washed for an hour in a place called the Spring of Life, and after that, a series of trivial customs followed, wasting a whole three hours.

Thanks to that, I clearly realized why elves had such a low birth rate.

This is why they end up passing out even before the main event.

It's a good thing my physical stamina is stronger than most, or else I would've passed out before I even received a proper gift.

Anyway, I headed to Arwen's "chamber," where I was supposed to receive a gift, wearing only a gown and underwear...

"Have you come?"

"Wow..."

I wonder what the gift is.

"As you may have guessed..."

"I am the Queen of Alvenheim, and the very symbol of Alvenheim itself."

And how vulgar and lewd the gift will be.

"In Alvenheim, we will gift you..."

Facing Arwen, dressed in red underwear, I realized the gift was truly something outrageous.

"We will give you... Alvenheim itself."