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판타지 세상에서
작가로
살아가는 법

Information

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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 161: Back to Helium (1)

Everyone probably knows this, but it's my second visit to Helium. However, last time I went there to investigate the high-profile theft case and had no time to explore before returning immediately.

So, if possible, I planned to explore various places in Helium this time. Cecily said we can visit the palace in the evening, so we just had not to be late.

The only disappointing thing is that I can't accompany Adelia. I asked Gartz, but he flatly refused, saying she wasn't part of the plan.

Adelia was still considered an outsider, so it's difficult to take her along. When I told her this fact, she seemed disappointed but cheerfully replied that she had already anticipated it.

Instead, she told me to take care of myself and enjoy without any worries, as she would be training under my father's guidance until my return. I felt relieved seeing her send me off with a brave expression.

Thus, I entered Helium after going through the immigration checkpoint using Gartz's teleportation. From then on, using Gartz's teleportation, I arrived at Helium's capital, Pandeum.

Apparently Pandeum means "cradle" in an ancient language. If you look at the origin of the demons, it is a perfectly suitable name for the capital city.

Pandeum was not only the location of the palace but also where Cecily's villa, which I visited during the high-profile theft case, was located. Being the capital, it is a place where people come and go as often.

"It has changed a lot in just a few months, hasn't it?"

"What do you mean?"

"There are not only demons, other races have increased significantly."

I realized that things have changed drastically. First of all, among the pedestrians walking around, one-third of them were not demons but different species.

Among them, half were humans, but there are also dwarves, beastmen, and surprisingly, a very small number of elves. When we arrived after the exhibition, there were only demons, but now various species mixed together.

It's a stark contrast to before the release of Xenon's Biography, where it was considered a place where devils lived, that other species wouldn't even take a step into.

“Well, that's natural. Thanks to diplomacy, the perception of demons has been improving day by day, and during the exhibition, they also learned about the artistic abilities of demons.”

“Talking about the Matrics Troupe? What are they up to these days?”

“They're doing the same thing as always. They travel around the world and perform magical theatrical plays. By the way, they announced that theatrical performances related to Xenon's Biography will only be held during the exhibition.”

“It's not necessary to limit it like that.”

“I completely agree.”

For some reason, Gartz vigorously nodded his head in agreement. Even I was amazed by the collaboration between the Matrics Troupe and the Lirus Orchestra during the exhibition, but being a demon, Gartz seemed rather different.

Although nothing has been confirmed about when the next exhibition will be held, it seems implicitly agreed that it will take place once a year. Moreover, since I have already mentioned my birthplace as the Michelle Territory, there is a high possibility that it will be held in the same location.

As I looked around the brighter streets of Pandeum, I suddenly remembered something and asked Gartz.

“By the way, what about Princess Cecily? Can you tell me when she'll arrive?”

“Princess Cecily is currently waiting at the palace. I received orders to guard you while you thoroughly explore Helium.”

“Should we go before dinner then? I also need to visit the temple.”

“I will inform the princess in advance.”

Gartz closed his eyes, as if transmitting a message telepathically to Cecily. After a short while, he opened his eyes again and conveyed the words to me.

“Princess also understands. However, she said that when you come to the palace, she will personally come to pick you up.”

“Thank you. So, until then, I can wander around anywhere, right?”

“Yes. If there’s any food you want to eat or items you want to buy, I will cover all the expenses.”

“That’s not necessary...”

“You didn’t bring any money, did you?”

“... ..”

Sharp as ever. I chuckled lightly, and Gartz nodded as if confirming. In the end, I decided to borrow some money.

Anyway, there was still time until evening. I began to explore Pandeum in earnest. If there’s anything worth referencing for Xenon’s Biography, I intended to note it.

First and foremost, the pedestrians walking along the streets. As I mentioned before, among the pedestrians, there were not only demons but also various other races. Especially among them, humans were the most abundant.

Up to this point, it might just seem like ordinary daily life, but what caught my attention was that there are many people who appear to be couples.

I could see them talking while crossing their arms or displaying affectionate gestures. The combination of demons and other races seemed to have a significant number of lovers.

‘I’ve heard that the number of couples from different races has increased compared to before...’

As I mentioned before, with the romance between Jin and Lily being highlighted, the popularity of demons soared. They are not time bombs ready to explode, but a race that

suppresses their inner evil and devotes themselves sincerely.

And when that sincerity turns towards love, it transforms into purity. Consequently, demons have become representatives of purity in people's perception.

Furthermore, demons are mostly beautiful like elves, and their individual power is also formidable. So far, they have been perceived as unpopular due to the image of being devils. However, objectively speaking, they were an unusual race.

'Besides, their bodies are also great...'

The men are tall with broad shoulders, and the women's chests and hips stood out remarkably. These are characteristics that one could observe every time you look at demons. Even Gartz, who appears thin, was slightly taller than me and had broad shoulders.

Perhaps this is also closely related to the black mana that only demons use. Even elves have various body types, but demons all have superior physical builds.

With curiosity in my eyes, I scanned each demon and couldn't resist asking Gartz. Although it was a bit embarrassing, I felt that I had to resolve my curiosity to calm my conscience.

"Gartz, may I ask you a somewhat awkward question?"

"It doesn't matter what it is. What are you curious about?"

"Well... Are demons naturally endowed with good figures? Even ordinary people seem to have exceptional bodies..."

"Ah, that is deeply connected to our history and way of life."

"History?"

At first, I was embarrassed, but when I heard that it was related to history, all those feelings disappeared. Only curiosity remained.

Gartz seemed to organize his thoughts for a moment, then he looked at me sharply and blinked his eyes before speaking. Of course, I couldn't confirm if his mouth was opening since it was covered by a mask.

"Benefactor probably knows as well, but our beginning was very difficult. We helped each other, but the situation was violatale like a time bomb that could explode at any

moment. I suppose it's because we were a generation directly influenced by devils.”

“That's right.”

“As a result, in the early days when there was nothing, only the strong could survive. The constant anxiety of when someone might turn into a devil, the severe restraint from other races, the harsh land, and the monsters that remained in the last land we could flee to. All these factors came together, and only those with strong power survived for men, while women survived by inheriting the seeds of such men and giving birth to children. Many people died, but the second generation of demonkind was far greater in number.”

Just like demons, humanity also gave birth to many descendants in ancient agrarian societies. Moreover, this custom can still be seen frequently in rural areas where agriculture takes precedence over cities.

However, I had one question that arose here. Cecily said that the chances of a demon getting pregnant were extremely low, but according to Gartz's explanation, it seemed otherwise.

I asked him, curiosity filling my question.

“I heard that the chances of pregnancy for demons are very low, right? Moreover, it's said to be even more difficult due to the overlapping of evil cycles.”

“That's why they were able to give birth to many children. We were mere savages with nothing at that time. Moreover, being the first generation, their bodies were closer to humans, and the evil cycles were also very short. Now, a long time has passed, and the race we now call demons has been born.”

“Well, that makes sense.”

Of course, it was immediately understandable. However, regardless, it seems that the underlying principle itself has been connected through the survival of the fittest.

While it could be said to be excellent in terms of the genes themselves, the ruthlessness contained within could never be ignored. The exceptional physique of the demons could be considered as scars that have been passed down from the past until now.

“By surviving like that and as civilization gradually established, now is the time to suppress the inner evil. Have you ever heard from Princess Cecily about how to suppress the inner evil?”

“I heard that self-control is practiced through meditation.”

“That’s true, but in order to deepen meditation, you must give stimulation or pain to the body. However, it is not appropriate to resort to self-harm, so we had to subject our bodies to intense training.”

“How is it done?”

“It’s simple. It’s something similar to stretching.”

“I’ve been consistently doing that too.”

“We are progressing far beyond that. One method is to support the balance of the body with one leg and stretch the remaining leg straight up to the sky, and there’s also pulling one leg behind the head. There are various other poses as well.”

Isn’t that yoga? Yoga indeed has excellent efficacy in mental cultivation.

Usually, if you deliberately make your body uncomfortable and meditate, it’s easy for your concentration to be disrupted due to the pain. However, if you endure the pain and continue meditating, naturally, your mental strength will also become stronger.

When your mental strength becomes stronger, your patience also increases, so it’s natural for demons to develop and progress.

‘It’s inevitable for one’s physique to improve.’

It’s not just empty words, demons have consistently developed yoga literally to “survive.” In addition, their genetic makeup has been passed down through the ages, continuing the survival of the fittest.

It might be considered natural for their physique to be exceptionally good. I expressed my admiration for the origin of demons that I newly learned and thanked Gartz.

“Thank you. I’ve learned something new thanks to you.”

“This much is nothing. I’m even more glad that it was helpful.”

“Then demons must be highly flexible, right? Since they meditate while doing challenging stretching exercises.”

“Yes. If you wish, I can guide the benefactor. It will be a great help for mana circulation as well.”

“I’ll ask Cecily later if she can help me with that.”

I should include this in Xenon’s Biography. Now it’s about time to shift the spotlight from only to Xenon but also to Jin.

When the reason for demons’ exceptional mental cultivation, which is yoga, is revealed, I wonder if it will spread worldwide. Or maybe it’s already gradually spreading.

Afterward, I began walking down the streets under Gartz’ escort. Thanks to this damn red hair, I received some glances from the people around, but I ignored them.

“By the way, Mr. Gartz, you mentioned that the security in Helium is not good in the evening, right? You said there might be demons coming out because they couldn’t withstand the evil cycle.”

“Recently, an antidote has been invented, so the situation has improved. Even if some demons come out due to the evil cycle, the followers of Mora quickly take them to the temple. Still, it can be risky during certain hours of the night, so it’s best to avoid wandering around.”

“Hmm... Doesn’t Mora’s temple open around 6 o’clock?”

The temple of Luminous in the Minerva Empire opens at 6 a.m. and closes its doors at 6 p.m. Of course, they operate for 24 hours in case of emergency patients, but it means one cannot pray during that time.

So, I think Mora’s temple might operate from 6 p.m., being the opposite. After all, Mora was the god of darkness, unlike Luminous.

“No, Mora’s temple is always open, at least in Helium. Perhaps because demons can be devoured by their inner darkness anytime, anywhere. Moreover, they can go without sleep for several days, just like elves.”

“I see.”

“Oh, speaking of which, it seems that Mora is looking for a benefactor, isn’t she?”

“...Yes.”

I remember that mischievous goddess calling for me to find her. Unlike the gentle and affectionate Luminous, Mora was rather playful and a bit restless.

She's clearly the goddess of darkness but has a much brighter personality than the god of light.

“How was Helium at that time?”

“It was a bit chaotic, because Mora was there, but we let it pass. Even on regular days, Mora plays mischievous pranks on her followers. Still, we did inform the media about it.”

“What is Mora like on regular days, anyway?”

“Just... Well, yes. Anyway, she is a merciful deity.”

Looking at how Gartz was avoiding answering, it seems like she has quite an extraordinary personality. I thought about postponing my visit to the temple, but I didn't want Mora to get upset.

Being known as the Goddess of Darkness and Rest, she shouldn't cause any harm to me. Although the likelihood of some strange mischief was high.

'But don't the Dark Elves also worship Mora?'

As I pondered whether the Dark Elves might be looking for me as well, a certain smell caught my nose. It was a savory aroma that made my mouth water involuntarily.

When I turned my head, I noticed a street vendor that one could commonly find on the streets. It could be considered unusual for a street vendor in Helium, but street food exists wherever you go in the world.

I was drawn to that smell and slowly walked towards it. Judging by the line of people waiting, it seemed quite popular.

And then...

“...Wh, What is this?”

As soon as I discovered the identity of the savory food, I couldn't help but be astonished. I expected it to be some kind of meaty dish, but it was completely different.

Insects. Yes, insects. Not just ordinary insects.

Would you believe that it's bigger than a rat but smaller than a rabbit? Occasionally, while browsing the internet, you might come across insects that are as big as large dogs.

However, right in front of my eyes, there was such an insect, cooked as if it were a lobster, and someone was selling its meat to people.

I'm not sure what kind of insect it is, but judging by its hard exoskeleton, it might be a species like a stag beetle or a longhorn beetle. It had a savory smell that was tempting to eat, but its visual appearance was so gruesome that it actually reduced my appetite.

“Oh, this is a lobkerk. It's one of the most popular street foods in Helium.”

“...You eat this? An insect as big as a rabbit?”

“Why not? If you think about it, even shrimp or lobster in the sea are technically bugs.”

It's strangely convincing, yet unbelievable.

“Does it have any historical significance?”

“Of course. In harsh lands where there's nothing to eat, you have to eat whatever you can. Not only insects, but Helium has a variety of dishes. To put it bluntly, if it has legs, you can eat it.”

It's not like it's China or anything. I hope they don't end up eating bats and catching some terrible virus.

Still, it's not entirely incomprehensible. After the Korean War, when there was hardly anything to eat in South Korea, US soldiers used leftover food and created a dish called “**꿀꿀이죽**(Korean grunt porridge(?))”. Helium must be similar. And since hygiene was considered more important than in other countries, they probably won't eat all sorts of grotesque food like in China.

The insect cuisine before me may look disgusting, but I didn't feel a sense of dirtiness. On the contrary, the flesh itself had a light pink color and looked delicious.

“Even though it looks like that, it tastes good. Please try it once. I'll pay for it.”

“Is it tasty?”

“If it wasn't tasty, it wouldn't have become famous in the first place.”

It's a bit suspicious, but trying it once wouldn't hurt. I hesitated for a moment, then stood in line, waiting for my turn.

They said it would be a different experience, and it was a bonus that I could learn more about the demon race.

After a while, the long queue quickly moved, and finally, it was my turn. As expected, the shop owner was a demon, and he looked at my red hair and spoke with a cheerful smile.

“Welcome, red-haired gentleman! Which part would you like?”

“Do you have different types for each part?”

“Of course. Just like how some people want legs from crustaceans living in the sea, and some want the internal organs, the same goes for Lobkerks. We have head, torso, and legs.”

“Please give me the torso part.”

My appetite was gradually diminishing. Do I really have to eat this?

Whether I liked it or not, the shop owner skillfully separated the flesh and exoskeleton from the torso part and handed it to me. As it could be hot, it was wrapped in paper as an extra precaution.

Honestly, the flesh looked vibrant and had a light pink hue, making it visually appealing. Well, that is if you don't consider that it came from an insect's body. While Gartz took care of the payment, I glanced at the lobkerk.

‘...Let's just think of it as silkworm pupae.’

Silkworm pupae may look grotesque on the surface, but they have a savory taste. Lobkerk might be similar. With that in mind, I closed my eyes tightly and took a bite.

“...Oh?”

It's delicious? It's not a lie, it really was tasty. The rich fragrance circulated inside my mouth, and even though I don't know what spices were used, I could taste the subtle flavors.

I'm not particularly picky about food in general, but even without considering that, it's definitely a style that suits my taste.

“It's delicious, isn't it?”

“Right? I shouldn’t judge solely based on appearance.”

“Hahaha. Since you say it’s delicious, I feel proud. Would you like to try the head part as well?”

“Um, that’s a bit...”

Still, if it’s not possible, it’s not possible. As I hesitated about Lobkerk, a question suddenly came to mind, and I asked Gartz.

“Is there anything else besides this?”

“We also have fried options.”

“... ..”

“Aside from insects, we have dishes made with monsters...”

“That’s enough.”

This is how different cultures can be.

Translators note:

Chapter 162: Back to Helium (2)

The cuisine of Helium was truly diverse. It ranged from insect dishes that emerged from impoverished lives to delicacies that evolved with the advancement of civilization. The traces of poverty were pitifully evident throughout, not only in food but also in the discriminatory cultures.

Starting from the conclusion of the Devil War 3,000 years ago, the demons, in order to survive, established their own civilization, which led to numerous differences from the foundation.

First and foremost, people possessed a positive, optimistic, and bright nature. When I asked Gartz about the reason, he said that having negative thoughts would only further immerse them in their inner evil, so they mostly maintain a positive mindset. Consequently, if someone manages to anger a demon, more often than not, it means the other party is at fault.

Secondly, they rarely get angry. This was roughly expected, as from a young age, they undergo training that demands patience, similar to yoga, resulting in a high level of mental cultivation.

Lastly, this is a recent change. Originally, demons were extremely cautious when dealing with different species, recognizing themselves as a potential danger that could transform into devils at any time and place. However, thanks to the emergence of Xenon's Biography, a sense of pride has developed, and they have become more proactive when dealing with other species.

Of course, just like how each individual has a unique personality, not all demons were the same. Just as there are people like Gartz who are blunt and try to restrain their emotions as much as possible, demons also have various personalities.

You can think of it as a kind of stereotype. For example, Koreans are known for eating spicy food well and having a culture of doing things quickly, which may give the impression that they have impatient personalities.

“Mr. Gartz.”

“Yes, please speak.”

“I haven’t asked until now, but do you have a family, Mr. Gartz?”

I paused my contemplation of Helium and sat on a nearby bench, asking Gartz. Following my request, Gartz sat next to me and blinked his eyes a couple of times upon hearing my question.

“A family... you say?”

“Yes. I’m asking about demons, but don’t know anything about the one next to me. So I became curious.”

Thanks to Gartz, I’ve learned a lot about Helium and demon culture, but I know very little about him specifically. I only know that he is a knight personally appointed by Cecily and that he is exceptionally skilled. Beyond that, I know very little.

Since there is still plenty of time, it didn’t seem like a bad idea to ask some questions before heading to the temple.

“I have parents and a younger sister.”

“You’re not married?”

“I have a fiancée whom I’ve promised my future to.”

“How old are you?”

“I am 132 years old.”

When a demon reaches 100 years old, they are recognized as true adults. It is a testament that they have lived as humans without becoming devils until the age of 100. Their physical growth is no different from humans, and socially, they each get their own professions around the age of 25. However, being 100 years old can be considered as a mental milestone of adulthood.

For this reason, demons can marry after the age of 100. It is because they believe that before taking responsibility for another person, they must thoroughly manage themselves.

By the way, as the representative of the long-lived races along with elves, the demons appeared much younger than they seemed. Cecil mentioned that she was 105 years old, so she was much older than me.

“I don’t know if it’s because I’m human, but you seem quite old. Among demons, you would be considered young, right?”

“I’m a rookie among rookies who have recently become adults. Especially among demons, there is a culture of respect for the older ones, so in reality, I am still young.”

The reason why elder demons are respected is probably because they have not turned into devils over all those long years. Still, a hundred years is unimaginably long.

I quietly observed the people of Helium wandering the streets. Their faces bloomed with smiles, and children were running around on the streets.

As I felt before, Helium was bright and lively. It wasn’t a place where devils live, it was just a place where people with horns live.

Was it the same even before the publication of Xenon’s Biography? While I glanced at a demon child that was happily walking holding their parents’ hands and asked Gartz.

“Mr. Gartz.”

“Yes.”

“Was Helium this bright even before Xenon’s Biography came out?”

In response to my calm question, Gartz answered in his characteristic blunt tone.

“It was bright indeed. But unknowingly, we carried fear with us. No matter how much patience we cultivated or lived positively, the evil within us was a practical threat to the demons.”

“... ..”

“But not anymore. Now we have gained the courage to face it head-on instead of avoiding evil. We have gained the confidence that we can do it and took pride in not yielding to our inner evil.”

If the previous Helium had some defense mechanism to avoid threats, now it is genuinely bright. There is a difference between a pure smile and a smile with intention. And the citizens of Helium are now enjoying life with pure smiles.

“... Huh?”

“... ..”

While feeling a sense of inexplicable pride, just as I raised the corners of my mouth, I suddenly felt a presence beside me. When I turned my head, there was a little girl standing quietly.

Long curly hair, red eyes, and a tightly clutched pink rabbit doll. She had horns similar to Gartz, but they were much smaller in size.

She was a little lady who truly deserves the adjective “cute like a doll,” and she was staring at me intently. I blinked my eyes and greeted the girl who had silently approached me with a warm smile.

“Hello?”

“Hair.”

As I greeted her warmly, the girl seemed startled and took a step back. Clutching her rabbit doll tightly, she exuded an irresistible charm.

Then, as if sensing my curiosity, she pointed at me with her finger and exclaimed,

“Red!”

“Red?”

“My mom said that it’s dangerous if black turns into red! Our hair is black, but yours is red!”

Is she seeing a human for the first time? Recently, there has been an increase in visits from different species to Helium, but it’s possible that she’s encountering one for the first time.

It seems she’s under the misconception that all demons have black hair, and she believes I’m a danger due to my red hair. Perhaps that assumption only applies to horns, and hair color doesn’t matter. With a gentle smile, I momentarily tugged on Gartz, who was trying to move forward, and continued the conversation with the girl.

“So, it’s because my hair is red?”

“Yeah!”

“But hey, I don’t have any horns, you know?”

“Huh?”

The girl blinked her eyes when I said I had no horns. Then she stared at my face intently and spoke in a startled voice.

“Huh? Why don’t you have horns? And your eyes are sparkling colors!”

“Sparkling colors? What’s that?”

“Sparkling colors are sparkling colors. They shimmer and shine, you know.”

Indeed, the innocence of children is incomparable. Especially when she called gold color “sparkling colors.”

Unable to hide the smile on my face, I continued the conversation with the girl. Although I didn’t know when her parents would come, they would likely arrive soon.

“May I ask for the name of the adorable young lady?”

“My name is Amy. What’s the name of the hornless brother?”

“You can call me Isaac. And I’m a human, that’s why I don’t have horns.”

“Human?”

“A person like me without horns.”

“Then do humans also have no horns and have bright red heads? And sparkling colored eyes?”

It seemed like the girl was asking such questions because demons all have black hair and eyes.

“No, humans can have red hair like mine, or they can have white or sparkling colored hair. Unlike demons, humans have a variety of hair and eye colors.”

“What does ‘a variety of colors’ mean?”

“It means many different colors. And…”

“Amy!”

While conversing with the girl, a desperate cry of a woman entered my ears. As I raised my head, I saw a demon woman who closely resembled the girl rushing towards me.

As soon as she saw Amy, the woman swiftly embraced her and faced me. Her expression was urgent, resembling her voice.

“I’m sorry. Did Amy say something disrespectful by any chance?”

“No, she didn’t. I think she was just curious about my hair.”

“Mom, mom, is it okay if the guy’s hair is red?”

“Sigh, Amy... I’m truly sorry. It’s the first time she has spoken to a human...”

“It’s okay. Thanks to that, it was interesting.”

I wondered if Lily, when she is born, will be as cute and adorable as Amy. The woman apologized again and left with Amy, while Amy waved her hand while being held by her own mother.

I also waved my hand to Amy, who was getting farther away. It seemed like one of the most memorable moments since I arrived in Helium.

‘Should I go to the temple soon?’

As I wandered around Helium, I noticed that the sky was gradually turning purplish-blue. Unlike the Minerva Empire, where the four seasons were distinct, Helium remained cold or chilly throughout the year.

Although the environment is harsh for people to live in or cultivate basic crops, demons have built a civilization with their tenacious vitality and excellent magic.

In many ways, ‘determination’ was one aspect that humans and demons alike had. Since their origin is human, it may be natural.

“Shall we go to the temple?”

“Yes, understood.”

“By the way, Mr. Gartz. Looking at that child, I suddenly had a thought. Do demons also go through adolescence?”

“They are usually called ‘imps.’ It’s a period of emotional instability and a very dangerous stage in their growth, so they are referred to as such.”

“It sounds cute in a way.”

“It sounds unsettling to me.”

Following Gartz’s guidance, we walked to the location of Mora’s temple. As evening approached, the weather suddenly turned chilly, and I could see my breath in the air.

Fortunately, wearing clothes enchanted with a warming spell, I wasn’t cold. By the way, these clothes were personally gifted by Cecily, but in Helium, they were widely available. They were expensive due to their attractive design.

If it were the Minerva Empire, one would have had to pay a hefty price for them, but in Helium, even ordinary civilians could easily use magic, so it was only natural for them to become popularized.

“A few months ago, Helium started engaging in diplomacy, right? I heard that the diplomatic envoy presented silk woven with magic as a gift.”

“You remember it well. That news spread, and many merchants are now conducting business with Helium.”

“With just this clothing alone, there would be a tremendous demand, don’t you think?”

“Yes, indeed. The Minerva Empire has already placed a substantial order for thermal clothing to be used for military purposes.”

It was a phenomenon I frequently witnessed since my previous life, so I could nod my head in agreement starting from the military. Seeing the endless stream of casualties due to chemical warfare, one can understand the importance of protection.

Perhaps Helium will take a position comparable to the Dwarven Kingdom Makina has for humans. Dwarves provide weapons, while demons would provide basic necessities like medical supplies.

By the way, Alvenheim primarily trades the main ingredient of elixirs, the dew of the World Tree. And for the country of beastmen, Animers, it was still somewhat ambiguous as to whether their civilization has developed to that extent.

“If you’ve started trading, were there any useful goods for demons?”

“I can’t say for sure since I value the act of trading itself. As for Alvenheim, although the queen has given permission, there is strong resistance from the Council of Elders, which is causing a headache. We still have a long way to go. Diplomacy isn’t something that can happen overnight.”

“Was there no suggestion to collaborate with Makina on creating magical locomotives? It would be quite helpful for demons.”

“I’m not sure about that aspect.”

As we engaged in various conversations while walking, we suddenly found themselves at the Temple of Mora. Indeed, being twins with Luminous, the form of the temple was also similar.

The only difference was the distribution of space. Luminous’s temple had a structure that allowed more light to enter, but Mora’s temple was enclosed from all sides.

With such an arrangement, wouldn’t it be dim even during bright daylight? Nevertheless, it was a design befitting the goddess of darkness and repose.

‘Funeral rites also take place here, right?’

Mora, as the goddess of rest, also presides over funerals. Even the followers of Luminous do not object when Mora’s disciples conduct funeral ceremonies. In fact, if Luminous worshippers interfere, in severe cases, Mora herself may retaliate instead of her disciples. Thanks to this, the authority between the two sects was strictly separated.

“Welcome. You have arrived at Mora’s sanctuary.”

As we entered a somewhat dimly lit temple, a priestess greeted us warmly. She had drooping eyes and a languid impression, as one would expect from a demon.

If the attire of Luminous disciples had a white base, Mora’s attire was very similar to that of a nun from my past life, except it was even darker, reaching a pitch-black level.

I politely greeted the somewhat drowsy-looking priestess.

“Hello. I have come to worship Mora. Is there a private room available?”

“Of course, there is. It’s just 5 silver.”

“Then I will wait outside while you’re praying.”

Gartz paid 5 silver to the priestess and moved outside the temple. I followed her and looked around the dimly lit interior of the temple.

The atmosphere was fitting for the temple of the goddess of darkness and rest, although it wasn't completely blocked from light. Light seeped through small openings, allowing me to discern the surroundings.

Moreover, candles were placed in various locations, creating an overall gloomy feeling. Strangely, if there was a bed, I felt like I would fall asleep immediately, feeling comfortable.

“This is the worship room. If it's too dark, you can light a candle as you please and make yourself comfortable.”

“Thank you.”

“It's the first time I've seen a human worshipping Mora. I hope it will be a relaxing time for you.”

The languid priestess bowed her head and firmly closed the door to the worship room. As soon as the door closed, I looked around Mora's private worship room.

Except for the faint light seeping through small, scattered holes, it was pitch black, unlike Luminous'. As the priestess had mentioned earlier, there were several candles placed in front of Mora's statue.

Unlike her twin brother, Luminous, who had small holes through which light gently emanated, Morrah possessed a mischievous personality and was depicted the same way in the statue. While her brother had a compassionate smile, Mora had her lips curled upwards, which was the defining feature.

However, one could see the meticulousness with which her statue was sculpted. Since the demons also had a deep appreciation for art, they must have carefully carved the deity they worship.

'I guess there's no need to light the candles right now.'

Maybe I could just bow my head towards the direction where the light seeped through the holes and pray. I knelt down on the floor, just as I had prayed to Luminous.

'...Lady Mora, are you there...'

[I'm here!!! You finally came!! Why are you so late?!]

Oh my.

Translators note:

Two chapters today

Chapter 163: Back to Helium (3)

In the world, there is a saying that goes like this: Luminous, uses a compassionate and dignified tone, more suited to the God of Darkness, while Mora is playful and chatters like a songbird, more suited to the God of Light.

Mora, the goddess of darkness and rest, is famous for having a more lively and bright personality than her twin brother Luminous. Even Gartz's demeanor seemed somewhat hesitant when describing Mora as a good god, emphasizing her energetic and lively nature.

However, due to the significantly smaller number of Mora's followers compared to Luminous, she had a deep affection for her own devotees. Especially unlike Luminous, Mora was uniquely associated with "death," but Mora wished for her followers not to die.

Although Mora outwardly displays a brighter personality than light, I've heard that her inner self was actually quite delicate. You can think of Luminous as having a strong exterior but a gentle interior, while Mora is the opposite.

[Do you know how long I've been waiting? You should have come find me as soon as you arrived in Helium!]

'Um... I'm sorry?'

I couldn't help but freeze for a moment at the resonating, clanging voice of a woman in my mind. Unlike the soft and low-toned Luminous, Mora had a resonant and high-toned voice.

From the start, comparing them was ambiguous due to their different genders, but at least I could tell that Mora's atmosphere, from voice to everything, was the opposite of Luminous.

[Hmph. I'll let it slide this time. At least, you still remembered to come here.]

'Well... thank you. May I ask why you're looking for me?'

After the conversation with Luminous, Mora had thrown a bit of a tantrum, asking to meet me. As a result, Helium, who made Mora their national religion, found themselves in a very perplexing situation.

However, I wouldn't have been summoned by a goddess just because she was bored. Luminous had already explained the whole situation before, but seeing Mora looking for me, I wondered if there was something she wanted to tell me.

With that thought in mind, I closed my eyes and waited for Mora's response. It was around that time when Mora gave a response that exceeded my expectations.

[Because I was sad.]

'What?'

[I called you because I was sad. If I hadn't said anything, you wouldn't have come looking for me, right? Isn't that so?]

'... ...'

Did you really turn the world upside down for such a petty reason? And even went so far as to send a divine oracle? My mind became dizzy with the answer that left me speechless.

Looking at her grumbling tone, it was a sincere response without a hint of falsehood. She truly embodied the keyword "mischievous," and yet, thanks to her honest answer, I didn't feel bad.

I managed to hold back the sigh that was about to burst out and finally, barely, spoke to Mora.

'...That's not true. I was originally planning to visit Helium, so I was going to pray to you as well.'

[Ah, now that I think about it, I was planning to spend the first night with the child I treasure. I completely forgot.]

'By the child you treasure, are you referring to Cecily?'

[Yeah. She's been praying every day for the salvation of the demons long before you were born. She's still doing it now.]

By the way, I vaguely remember hearing that even at the Academy, that Cecily consistently prayed. Once in the morning and once before going to bed, something like that. The content of the prayers was really touching when I heard about them.

In the morning, the prayer expressed gratitude for being able to see the sunlight, and at night, it thanked for being able to have a peaceful sleep without being swayed by evil.

[Lately, thanks to you, everything that was bothering me has been resolved. Even the salvation of the demons she longed for has been realized, and it has led to a connection with that benefactor. Hearing her pray every day also puts my mind at ease.]

'I feel a little embarrassed.'

[Tonight, you're going to do even more embarrassing things. But apart from that, you're unnecessarily generous. If Luminous hadn't warned you, I would have one more child to bless.]

'... ...'

By the way, I've been diligent about taking birth control pills. No matter what, accidents should be avoided, right?

When I was silently sweating and worrying, Mora, who was fiercely criticizing her twin brother, spoke to me in her distinct, bright voice.

[Anyway, let me start by saying thank you. As you know, most of my believers are demons and dark elves. Thanks to your book, the power that reaches me has become several times stronger than before.]

'Can you tell me what that has to do with it?'

[Before Xenon's Biography appeared, demons yearned for eternal rest as humans, not as devils. I had a hard time comforting their hearts. Wanting rest means there are many negative emotions in their hearts. I have to soothe those emotions or, if it seems impossible, even euthanize them. Because I am the deity of darkness and repose.]

'You must be under a lot of mental strain.'

Just listening to it made me feel overwhelmed. No matter how transcendent the existence is, it must be painful to accept negative emotions or comfort the dying.

With an excited voice, filled with my sincere words, Mora replied cheerfully.

[Right? You understand my heart. There must be a reason why that child marked you. It's only natural to fall for someone with such profound consideration.]

'It's embarrassing. Honestly, the biggest thing is probably that I'm the author of Xenon's Biography.'

[That's true. But the feelings that child has for you are genuine. If you were a worthless person, wouldn't that child have secretly despised you? She would have endured steadfastly until the day you died, thinking of repaying her debt.]

Even up to this point, I let it slide.

[Above all, you're handsome! Out of everything else, being handsome is the best, as expected!]

'...Cecily, aren't your standards as the princess of demons quite low?'

[That may be true, but you have exceptional individuality, don't you? The unique combination of rare red hair and golden eyes! Don't you know how attractive your face is?]

Upon hearing Mora's words, I could only let out a bitter laugh. As if it wasn't enough that this damn red hair of mine stands out wherever I go, receiving compliments didn't exactly make me feel good.

Still, I could find solace in the fact that my appearance was praised even by the gods. Like her words, being handsome is indeed the best.

[Don't you ever think of growing your hair out? I think it would suit you well.]

'Isn't that purely Mora's preference?'

[Hehe. Did I let it slip too soon?]

I'm a bit confused about whether I'm having a conversation with a goddess or a normal girl. When I talked to Luminous, we had serious conversations that put my mind at ease, but now I feel a sense of urgency.

Instead of a vertical relationship, it would have been more comfortable to have a horizontal relationship with his followers. Luminous had an indescribable charisma that made it difficult to interact with him, albeit unknowingly.

[Oh, right. You released the 14th volume this time, didn't you?]

'Yes, I sent it to the publisher before coming to Helium.'

[I heard you wrote quite an interesting story. It's about elves and dark elves transforming into a pure mana entity and subduing devils, right?]

'I see... um?'

Wait, what is that supposed to mean?

'Lady Mora?'

[Yes?]

'How do you know about it?'

[Well, I'm watching, so I know. How else would I know?]

'No, why would you, Lady Mora...'

The news that even a goddess is reading my book was enough to make me feel distant from reality.

Come to think of it, didn't Luminous occasionally mention the contents of my book in passing? At that time, I didn't realize, because the focus wasn't on that, but now I realize that Luminous was also aware of my book.

When my thoughts were tangled and confused, Mora asked me as if there was some problem.

[What's the matter? There's a child from a different dimension who wrote a book, so naturally I have to read it. If you wrote a book related to certain ideologies, it would be a big problem for us.]

'Then did you read all of them?'

[Yeah. I did read them all?]

I wanted to disappear into a mouse hole. I opened my hands neatly folded in front of me and covered my face with them. Despite that, I could feel my face getting hotter and hotter.

I should have expected that my book would cause a commotion in the world to some extent, but I was too careless.

[Why are you so embarrassed? You should be proud. ‘Even the gods read my books! ‘Be proud like that.]

‘...Just don’t say anything.’

[You’re surprisingly embarrassed about strange things, huh? How cute. So when is the next volume coming out?]

‘... ...’

I couldn’t say a word, and my lips trembled. Mora burst into laughter. If I were to mix my mother and Cecily’s mischievousness, it would feel something like this.

I focused on calming down my flushed face for a while. Since there was no way to undo what had already happened, avoiding it wasn’t right. Well, I wouldn’t have been able to avoid it in the first place.

Once the heat in my face subsided to some extent, I quietly spoke up. Clearing the atmosphere with a fake cough as an extra touch.

‘Yes. Yes. Thank you for reading it nicely. However, in the world I lived in, it was an exceedingly ordinary piece of writing.’

[It’s nice to be humble. Since we’re at it, how about writing down a song that existed in your world? I want to hear one.]

‘What are you talking about, wanting to hear one?’

[If you write a song in the book, naturally people will compose that song. Your world has many good songs, after all.]

‘Well...’

Indeed, there were many good songs. With the development of civilization and culture, music has naturally progressed countless times. Especially in South Korea, there were many songs related to love, so they could be utilized appropriately. But the problem is knowing when to include that song.

‘I’ll consider it. It’s not like I haven’t thought about it at all.’

[I’ll be looking forward to it.]

‘You don’t need to look forward to it...’

Now, even Mora started to burden me. Just the fact that she was reading Xenon's Biography was already overwhelming, and now she was adding expectations.

With a mischievous tone unique to Mora, she muttered somewhat hesitantly. However, the content was as serious as it could be.

[Don't worry, you don't have to feel burdened. We can't just go back and forth, and besides, I feel grateful to you right now. Just the fact that we delayed the devil invasion by 2000 years is something to be thankful for.]

'Is that really just a coincidence?'

[Yeah. Didn't my brother tell you? For example, let's say a passerby in danger coincidentally gets saved by an adventurer. Even if it was just a passing encounter for the adventurer, would the passerby not feel gratitude? There's a matter of scale, but it's the same principle.]

'It's the same story as what Luminous said.'

Mora continued with her lively voice, as if she understood what I meant.

[So, if you want, I can bestow grace upon you. Although I don't have powers as strong as my brother, I can give you the ability to hide in the darkness if you wish. Like a Dark Elf.]

'Is there nothing else?'

[If you have insomnia, I can help alleviate it or keep your mind clear. I can also free you from various worries and stress. Honestly, it would probably have a greater effect on demons than humans.]

Indeed, most humans believe in Luminous because his powers surpass those of Mora. Luminous is the god of light and hope with various merits.

On the other hand, Mora brings solace to people suffering from incurable diseases or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and helps them hide in the darkness, but there are some aspects where she falls short compared to Luminous.

However, Mora was an important goddess for soldiers with combat experience, in other words, PTSD patients. While Luminous cannot cure PTSD, Mora makes it possible and helps those suffering from nightmares to fall into a deep sleep.

My father was a devout follower of Luminous and retired early. If he had visited Mora's temple even once, he could still have been actively serving.

'I probably won't have to go into battle, but I'll keep that in mind. After revealing my identity, I have a feeling I'll be entangled in various incidents and accidents.'

[You've thought well. Oh, by the way, for now, I'll give you divine power. It should be quite useful.]

'Huh? Are you sure...'

In a moment when I was about to refuse, Mora spoke with a serious and earnest voice unlike her usual self.

[No. Aren't you going to have your first night with that child today? I will transfer my divine power to you and prevent accidents in advance.]

'Accidents? I brought the medicine with me.'

[It's not just any accident. When a demon enters the evil cycle, they become a creature similar to mantises. When a female mantis mates, it devours the male mantis, right? It's similar to that. That child will suck up your energy! So if I give you divine power, there won't be any problems.]

'... ...'

It was almost a big problem.

After the conversation with Mora, I came out of the temple immediately to head towards Helium's palace. However, it seemed that Gartz had already contacted Cecily, as she was waiting outside the temple.

Although the sun had completely set outside, enveloping everything in darkness, I could see Cecily thanks to the candles lit in the temple. With joy in my heart, I approached Cecily.

"You've come, Isaac."

"... ..."

As soon as Cecily and I met face to face, she waved her hand and greeted me warmly. I was too preoccupied with examining her attire to have the energy to respond.

Due to being an off-shoulder dress that fully exposes the shoulders, it revealed so much of her ample chest that it barely covered it. The dress's chest area precisely aligned with the border, practically exposing all of her chest. Moreover, the dress's black color contrasts even more with her fair skin, emphasizing what couldn't be seen during the freshman event a few months ago. It seems that the red dress she wore back then expertly concealed certain aspects.

No matter how much I tried, I couldn't prevent my gaze from constantly turning in that direction. Originally, Cecily alone had a powerful impact, but combining it with such revealing attire made my mind go hazy.

Whether she knew about my state of mind or not, Cecily slowly approached me and affectionately crossed our arms. A sensation of strong elasticity transmitted through my arm.

“Shall we go now? My parents are also expecting us.”

“...Yeah.”

I could feel it from Cecily's teasing smile. This succubus had indeed made meticulous plans.

'...I'm relieved.'

As mentioned earlier, Mora's divine power had an outstanding effect in maintaining composure.

Translators note:

The second chapter today

Chapter 164: Night at Helium (1)

If I had headed to Helium without receiving divine power from Mora, would I have been able to maintain composure? Suddenly, such thoughts come to mind.

Cecily walked slowly to the palace without using teleportation, keeping our arms crossed. She moved her steps as she conversed cordially, like a lover that had recently started dating.

I, too, suppressed the excited heartbeats with the divine power I received from Mora. Moreover, I was familiar with Cecily's physical contact, so I could handle it to some extent.

Of course, that doesn't mean I'm not excited. The deep collarbone that was clearly visible continued to captivate my gaze, and the aura emanating from her was extraordinary.

It could be called a kind of pheromone, or perhaps allure. The atmosphere was several times more intense than usual and felt sticky.

I had a strong premonition that if I fell for it, I wouldn't be able to escape.

'Now the horns have completely turned red.'

Except for the tips, Cecily's horns were filled with red color. It meant that soon, due to the evil cycle, she would no longer be able to control herself properly.

Will she be able to exert self-restraint until tonight? Last time, she had the worn-out necklace to rely on, but this time, there was no guarantee. So caution was necessary.

How much time had passed since I walked the road with Cecily? Before we knew it, we reached the entrance of Helium's palace.

"We've arrived already. I wanted to walk a bit more."

"Yeah, it's a shame."

“If you’re disappointed, do you want to walk a bit more?”

Cecily, with a subtle voice, urged me while pressing her chest against my arm. It was tempting, but I exercised self-control.

In my heart, I wanted to have a conversation with Cecily a bit longer, but it was already late at night, and there would be plenty of time after we entered the palace.

“No. Your parents must be waiting. Let’s go inside.”

“Tsk. Fine.”

At first, Cecily expressed disappointment, clicking her tongue.

“The long night will be long anyway.”

“... ..”

“So there’s no need to have a conversation outside.”

She whispered softly near my ear, her lips brushing against it and her mouth curled up. She even tightly hugged my arm.

In the midst of the dark night, I glanced at Cecily blushing, finding her adorable, and then my eyes caught sight of the Palace of Helium. Thanks to becoming accustomed to the darkness, I could make out its rough appearance.

The imperial palace of Minerva was gleaming like it was coated in gold, visible even in the middle of the night. On the other hand, the Palace of Helium was ordinary.

Historically, it had been exactly 2000 years since Helium had a ‘king.’ Unlike humans, they had consistently maintained their position since that time, so it was only natural for it to appear ordinary.

However, it looked solid enough to have endured for over 1000 years. It resembled a fortress combined with a palace more than a mere palace.

‘But are there no guards?’

Even though we approached the main gate, I couldn’t see any guards on duty. Or perhaps the surroundings were too dark for me to see.

Beyond the main gate, only the street lamps scattered along the path cast their light. The Helium Palace was generally dark and dreary. It wouldn't be surprising if a ghost suddenly popped out.

“Why are you looking around like that? Is it strange that there are no guards?”

“Yeah, usually there should be some strict security, right?”

“Don't worry. They are just hiding in the darkness, unseen. In reality, they are quite strict.”

“Hiding in the darkness? Like camouflage?”

“Not exactly camouflage, but they wear black clothes to blend in and not be easily seen. If they were walking around with a lantern, it would be like advertising their presence, right? You would only use the lantern when you can't see ahead, but darkness means nothing to our kind.”

I always think about this, but demons are a cunning race incomparable to elves. And in some aspects, they stand out even more than elves, making humans seem infinitely inferior.

It's fortunate that demons are friendly toward humans, otherwise, if they intentionally started a war, it would surely end in our defeat. It's a relief that such a thing hasn't happened.

Creak!

As I approached the front gate, the iron gate swung open wide, much like an automatic door. I looked around on both sides, wondering if there were personnel responsible for opening the gate, but all I saw was pitch-black darkness.

Curious, I expressed my doubts, and at that moment, Cecily explained from the side.

“This is a magic gate. It might not be easy to see at night, but there's a device in the center of the gate. It recognized me and opened the door.”

“What about other people?”

“People who reside in the palace or those who frequently visit usually show a token. Think of it as a key.”

Indeed, magic's uses are infinite. Some inventions seem unfit for their time due to the influence of such magic. As I gazed at the slowly closing door, I suddenly realized that Gartz had disappeared. It seems that Cecily must have sent him away for a moment.

Afterward, we began to make our way toward the main entrance, using the street lamps as the only source of light. In the meantime, I didn't forget to ask a question.

“Can demons conceal themselves in the darkness like Dark Elves?”

“It is possible, but it consumes a considerable amount of mana, and it is not as perfect as the concealment used by Dark Elves. The Dark Elves' concealment blends seamlessly with the surrounding environment, making it difficult to detect even through perception.”

“I see. Since both of you worship Mora, I thought it would be natural.”

“There is a reason why the Elves are a chosen race of the gods. Instead, she grants us peaceful nights and rest, so there is no need for jealousy.”

“Doesn't noona pray every day? Once in the morning when you wake up and once before going to bed?”

“Yes, I remember it well. Originally, before going to bed, I would offer a prayer of gratitude for providing us with a peaceful rest for tonight. But this time, it seems it will be slightly different.”

“What will be the content of the prayer?”

“Hmm~”

As I asked the question, Cecily looked at me with an intrigued sound escaping her lips. There was a hint of redness in her crescent-folded eyes, resembling a blush.

She followed by licking her lips seductively, then spoke in a husky voice mixed with a hint of allure.

“Should I tell you now, or should I show you later tonight?”

“Hmm... Show me later. It won't be fun if I know in advance.”

“Okay, you can look forward to it.”

I wondered what kind of prayer it was that made her tell me to look forward to it. I looked at Cecily with a smirk, as if unable to contain myself.

At that moment, Cecily, with a cheerful smile, leaned her face against my shoulder as if she was really excited about it.

Poke!

“Ouch!”

“Oh, oh my. I-I’m sorry. Are you okay?”

“Ow... No, it’s fine. Surprisingly, the end is sharp.”

There was a minor mishap where her horn accidentally pricked my arm. Fortunately, I was wearing thick clothes, so I didn’t get injured.

I reassured Cecily, who was making an apologetic expression, that I was fine. As I comforted her, we were able to reach the main gate of the palace located at the end of the road.

As demons have a deep appreciation for art, even the palace doors were beautifully carved. At the top, a woman, presumably Mora, was depicted ascending, while demons below were in prayer.

The dim light of the torches faintly illuminated the main gate, allowing us to observe it more closely.

As I stood still, gazing at the carved images on the door, suddenly, with a creaking sound, the main gate began to open slowly. It was my first time being invited to a palace instead of a mansion, so I felt a slight tension.

Above all, I must meet Cecily’s parents soon. Even though Cecily assured me that everything would be fine, I couldn’t help but feel nervous. No matter how much of a writer I am, meeting my partner’s parents is still nerve-wracking.

Sigh

Finally, the main gate of the palace swung open wide. And what caught my eye first was the color red. The entire floor was covered with a deep red carpet.

Behind that, there were stairs leading to the upper floor and several corridors lined up, but there was one person waiting behind the main gate. It wasn’t a maid but a woman in

a neat red dress, wearing a gentle smile.

Despite her beautiful appearance and the dress covering her, her figure caught my attention, but what stood out the most was undoubtedly her face, which closely resembled Cecily's.

While Cecily had bangs, the woman in front of me had her forehead clearly exposed, and she was wearing a silver circlet.

“Welcome. Thank you for coming all this way.”

When I vaguely guessed who she was, the woman politely bowed and greeted me. If Cecily had a seductive and sexy voice, the woman in front of me had a mix of maturity and sensibility.

She straightened her waist after bowing and introduced herself in a calm tone.

“My name is Eisilia Drat Vin. I am the Queen of Helium. It's an honor to host the benefactor of the demons.”

As expected, she was indeed Cecily's mother and the Queen of Helium. In fact, she looked so much like Cecily that it was not difficult to imagine them being sisters. But Cecily mentioned before that she was an only child.

“I am Isaac Ducker Michelle of the Minerva Empire. It is an honor to meet the Queen of Helium.”

After she finished her introduction, I politely greeted her according to etiquette. It seemed that she was already informed about our relationship, judging by the fact she was referring to me as a benefactor of demons and the fact that there was not a single maid accompanying the Queen.

Queen Eisillia nodded her head in response to my greeting and spoke with a gentle tone.

“So, you're the one with the attractive red hair and golden eyes that I've heard about.”

“Thank you. Your Majesty is also beautiful.”

“Hoho, thank you. Have you had dinner yet?”

“No, I haven't had dinner yet.”

“Well, that works out nicely. Let's meet our husband first.”

Referring to him as a ‘husband’ instead of a ‘king’ indicated a more informal meeting. After all, even if I was formally invited, I was here as Cecily’s lover, nothing more.

Cecily and I started following Eisillia as she began to guide us. Whether it was because we had entered the palace or for some other reason, Cecily kept holding my arm, even in front of Eisillia.

“I heard from my daughter that you’ve been a great help at the Halo Academy.”

“I don’t think I’ve helped her much, to be honest...”

“Well, good people tend to forget the good deeds they’ve done themselves. Only the recipients remember them.”

When did I ever help Cecily? Honestly, I don’t remember well. Until I revealed that I was Xenon, we simply had a mischievous noona and obedient younger brother relationship. I could only think that Cecily spoke kindly to me. Even if she had told me, there was a high possibility that I wouldn’t have known.

As we followed behind Eisilia, I diligently explored the interior of the palace. Unlike the somewhat ordinary and shabby exterior, the interior fully embodied the atmosphere unique to demons.

The floors were unified with red carpets, and now, in the evening, I could feel a sense of eeriness relying solely on candlelight. Perhaps it was because I had become too accustomed to darkness, I could discern my path even with the faintest light.

While demons might view it differently, it gave humans a slightly eerie feeling. The calm yet profound silence had settled to the point that nothing seemed out of the question, even if something were to jump out. Even the paintings installed on the corridor walls seemed to crawl and come to life.

“By the way, Lord Isaac, I have something I’m curious about. May I ask?”

“Yes? Ah, yes, you may.”

“You said that you had no connection to demons before meeting Cecily.”

“Yes.”

“But I was curious why it was described like that in Xenon’s Biography. As you know, before Xenon’s Biography, demons were more or less devils, right?”

Eisilia turned her head slightly and asked, drawing in a breath. In truth, I had received similar questions countless times before. I first received it from my parents, then from Marie, and finally from Cecily. Especially Cecily, who was a demon, asked in more detail.

The problem was that I couldn't remember exactly what I said back then. I pondered for a moment and then answered honestly.

No. It was exactly the moment I was going to do it.

“Perhaps...”

“What?”

“As rumor has it, you're from the future?”

“...”

Little did I know that I would hear those words from Cecily's mother. In my confusion, I wondered what I should say, but Eisilia gently spoke up.

“Actually, it's almost impossible for someone like Isaac, who hasn't even turned 20 yet, to have such thoughts. About 50 years ago, I've even seen a 5-year-old human child point a finger at a demon, calling it a devil. Originally, Prejudice is terrifying.”

“That's true.”

“But Isaac saw us demons from a different perspective. Especially when the fifth volume of Xenon's Biography came out, Isaac was 16 years old. That means you wrote it during your adolescence, a period of emotional turmoil for humans. It's only natural to have doubts about whether it's possible to write such a story during that time.”

Well, before the three consecutive hits, the world only regarded Xenon as a highly experienced sage. Not only does Xenon possess great writing skills, but the incidents and accidents within the Xenon saga are nearly impossible to write without diverse experiences.

However, vivid memories of my past life were deeply ingrained in my mind. I am a soul that crossed over from another dimension due to an accident in this place. I lived within the sea of information called the internet and indirectly experienced various civilizations. It is natural for my perspective to be broader than the people here.

Of course, I cannot simply state this fact outright. After listening to Eisilia's story, I pondered for a long time and responded with a question.

"I see. Then, do you think the Queen believes that I came from the future?"

"I keep that possibility in mind. Of course, only Isaac and the gods know the truth."

"For now, I can say with certainty that I didn't come from the future."

"I understand. Then, what do you think, Cecily?"

Eisilia sought Cecily's opinion next. Cecily, who had been standing with our arms crossed, lifted her face from leaning on my shoulder and looked up at me.

I, too, met her gaze directly with my eyes, which were as red as blood. The reddish energy emanating from her cheeks and sparkling pupils exuded a captivating charm that seemed to draw me in.

After staring at me for a while, she smiled lightly and tightly embraced my arm, responding energetically.

"It doesn't matter to me, Mom, no matter what."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, there's no need to complicate things, right?"

After saying that, Cecily continued in a sticky voice.

"Anyway, he'll become my man in a little while."

"... .."

"I don't want to think about complicated things right now."

Seems like she's completely absorbed in desire. As I looked at Cecily, who had started to emit a heart-like glow, I let out a bitter smile. At that moment, Eisilia murmured softly from the front.

"Is our daughter really Lilith..."

No, she isn't.

Translators note:

Chapter 165: Night at Helium (2)

As I followed behind Eisilia, I ended up meeting the King of Helium and Cecily's father, Descal Drat Eisilia Vin. He was staying in a private chamber, not the audience chamber, where he usually received guests.

Being the king of demons, it was natural for him to exude charisma, but he was also a handsome man with distinct facial features and a similar build to mine. At first glance, he looked young like Gartz, but in reality, he was over 300 years old.

Finding similarities between Descal and Cecily was quite challenging since Cecily strongly resembled Eisilia, but I could tell that both of them had identical horn shapes. Eisilia's horns extended straight back, resembling goat horns.

Nevertheless, as we sat facing each other while dinner preparations were underway, I started to engage in various conversations with Cecily's parents.

It was a somewhat nervous occasion, similar to a formal meeting, but fortunately, Descal made me feel comfortable on his side, allowing me to relax a bit.

"First and foremost, I want to express infinite gratitude for saving the demons. I feel like giving up the throne out of my heart's gratitude."

"To that extent... Honestly, I never expected such a change in the perception of your kind."

"Even in unexpected circumstances, thanks to Xenon's Biography, our people have begun to see the light. Even if someone happened to rescue us by chance, it doesn't mean we're not indebted to them."

Luminous and Mora's words echoed in Descal's mouth, making me feel peculiar. Now, I think I can humbly accept the role of savior for the demons.

Until now, I've been slightly burdened and avoided clearly acknowledging it, partly because it doesn't suit my nature to bask in glory. But it seems better to recognize it clearly from now on.

“But, Your Majesty.”

“Oh, you can speak freely in private. It feels awkward for me to hear honorifics from a benefactor.”

“Well then... Lord Descal?”

“If possible, I would prefer that you call me father-in-law.”

Another thing I learned is that Descal possesses a somewhat gentle temperament. I couldn't help but wonder if Cecily's personality was inherited from Descal.

Anyway, since I'm uncomfortable at the moment, I decided to refer to Descal as “Lord Descal.” I also said that it's fine for Descal to call me however he feels comfortable.

“So, what do you want to ask?”

“About Her Majesty, the Queen...”

“Please call me mother-in-law.”

As soon as the word “Queen” left her lips, Eisillia smiled and corrected herself. “... Lady Eisillia...”

“Mother-in-law.”

“...Mother-in-law.”

“Hehe.”

Could it be that Cecily inherited both her father and mother's mischievousness? If not, then Cecily's occasional mischievousness, like a little devil, remained unexplained.

When I referred to Eisillia as my mother-in-law, Cecily seemed pleased and discreetly grabbed my hand under the table. She was sitting on my right side, and her hand naturally reached for my right hand.

And it would have been fine if she only held my hand, but she focused on a small pen mark on my middle finger. It felt strange to have someone fixate on a tiny pen mark.

“...I'm curious about how mother-in-law's name ended up being the middle name. Is it a tradition unique to Helium?”

“That’s right. In Helium, it’s a tradition for the queen and her children to have the queen’s or princess’s name as their middle name. If you and Cecilia have a child, well... do you have any names in mind, by any chance?”

“...I don’t have any.”

I was taken aback by the sudden question, but I calmly replied.

“That’s a shame. Let’s say the name is Jin. It would be Jin Drat Isaac Vin. By the way, Drat and Vin are surnames only used by the royal family.”

“I see. What do Drat and Vin mean?”

“Drat is the name of the founding king, and Vin means ‘king.’”

I have gained a lot of information in various ways. By the way, let’s overlook the fact that Descal used the name ‘Jin’ as an example.

“What about our Helium? Gartz said you liked it because it smells like a place people live.”

“That’s exactly right. Helium is where people live, nothing more and nothing less.”

“I see. As you say. Helium has never ceased to smell like people since its founding. They say it’s a place where demons live, that once you enter, you can never leave. But we are human.”

Descal’s eyes, looking at me, were warm beyond measure, as if he had always kept me in mind. Though they were as red as blood, his pupils were filled with infinite gratitude, making me slightly embarrassed.

Meanwhile, Cecily didn’t stop touching my hand under the table. When I glanced at her, she was smiling brightly.

Is this moment of happiness? I held her hand without saying a word. Then Cecily’s face blushed slightly.

“It’s fortunate that you seem to have affection for our daughter. When I heard that you were the benefactor of demons, I thought it would be okay, but I couldn’t help but worry a bit.”

It seems that Cecily and I have been caught in the act of affection under the table. Surprised, I looked at Descal and noticed his face with a satisfied smile.

Eisillia sitting next to us was the same. She spoke in her distinctive mature voice, as if she was relieved.

“To be honest, I felt the same way. I can’t tell you how surprised I was when I heard that Cecily found Xenon and they even became lovers. And on top of that, Isaac has his fiancée, Maria.”

“Ah... Yes, that’s correct.”

“My husband and I respect our daughter’s choices. To our kind, it may be a fleeting moment, but it’s better to leave beautiful memories rather than painful regrets.

had a similar theme, didn’t it?”

“Mary said she would live a life full of longing instead of regret.”

The response came from Cecily. Then she slowly pulled up the hand that she had tightly held under the table and showed it to the two people in front of her.

I was initially taken aback, but it seemed like I didn’t have to hide anything, so I obediently did as she wished. Eventually, our hands, intertwined like lovers, were raised onto the table, and Cecily’s parents also turned their gaze in that direction.

“Mom, Dad, I will never regret it. No matter how many women are by Isaac’s side, I will love Isaac. Even if Isaac leaves me for Mora’s embrace in the future, I will live while missing him.”

“Noona, I have no intention of adding more women after you.”

Although Adelia might have some plans, for now, I have almost no thoughts of adding more women after Cecily. It is uncertain whether Marie will agree or not too.

However, Descal’s thoughts seemed a bit different. As soon as Descal heard my words, he firmly rebutted in a resolute voice.

“Well, it may be difficult realistically.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Reconsider your value once again. From now on, even the leaders of countries could not deal with you lightly, considering the contamination of the World Tree’s roots and the signs of demon summoning. In Savior, to honor you as a saint even a cardinal was dispatched. The moment anyone touches you, not only Helium but even Xavier would

join forces and thoroughly destroy that country. So, rather than interfering, they would choose persuasive tactics. And that persuasive tactic is...”

“Political marriage, right?”

After Descal, EAisilia spoke calmly. In response, Descal nodded and explained the situation in which he could stand up.

“There is nothing as beautiful as a marriage formed through love. However, marriage can also become a relationship bound by a kind of contract. I heard from Cecily that you have a deep interest in history.”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

“Well then, you can see why strategic marriage can be a ‘shield.’ You mentioned that you were engaged to the future Duchess of the Minerva Empire. If your true identity were to be revealed, the Ters Kingdom could aim to restrain you. In severe cases, they might even attempt assassination. Even for your own sake, you should consider strategic marriage.”

“Hmm...”

Hearing such reasonable words, deep contemplation was inevitable. Strategic marriage seemed like a story from another country, but hearing it directly made it feel completely different.

If I were to marry Marie as Descal mentioned, I would practically be affiliated with the Minerva Empire. Therefore, from the perspective of the rival Ters Kingdom, it would naturally become a source of animosity.

The Minerva Empire, as well as Helium and Xavier, would undoubtedly protect me. However, the affairs of humans are unpredictable. Of course, they would need to be prepared to face collective punishment if the Ters Kingdom decides to take action.

‘It’s not a problem that can be easily resolved.’

The power of strategic marriage, which takes place between countries rather than within one’s own country, is incredibly formidable. The moment a leader invades a country where their close relative resides, their reputation will rapidly decline, and the trustworthiness of their nation will plummet.

You might have heard the news about the princess of the Ters Kingdom transferring to the Halo Academy. It's because they felt threatened by my mentioning the Michelle Territory as my birthplace.

“Especially in your case, since you have accomplished feats that even a nation cannot ignore, such qualities will be even more prominent. Isn't it better to have more allies than enemies?”

“So... Are you suggesting that I should enter into a strategic marriage for my own safety?”

“If you prioritize your position. We will protect you, but there are clear limits.”

“It's complicated.”

“That's how politics works. Well, you don't need to think about it complexly right now. I've just informed you of the most likely situation.”

Descal responded as if to reassure me, but I didn't feel reassured at all. Perhaps Descal was right that, for the sake of my safety and the safety of those around me, I should accept a strategic marriage without any reservations.

However, the problem lies in the subject of the strategic marriage. If I were sent as a target for a strategic marriage not only by another country but specifically by the Minerva Empire to ensure their dominance, my position would become extremely precarious.

It wouldn't be appropriate to make a princess a mere spy. Even Marie, who is savvy in politics, would likely consider it unavoidable, but she would still feel disappointed.

Therefore, if I were to accept the strategic marriage, I would need to handle it carefully to continue a smooth family life. It's a decision that carries great responsibility in many aspects.

“Well, it's probably best to stop with the bothersome political talk here. Let's move on to another topic. Whatever you're comfortable with, feel free to talk about it.”

“Ah, there's something I'd like to ask. Isaac, may I?”

“Yes? Ah, yes, please go ahead.”

“What do you like about our daughter, Isaac? Since you have affection for her, as her mother, I’m curious about your acceptance of her.”

“Hmm...”

Upon hearing Eisilia’s question, Isaac turned his head towards Cecily. Cecily, as if suggesting that he should speak, gave me a mischievous smile and looked at me.

Meanwhile, I carefully examined Cecily’s appearance. The alluring red eyes shining with maturity. Even a slight downward glance revealed a chest that boasted an intimidating presence, as if a valley had deepened.

That alone is enough to feel affection for Cecily, and more. Even if Cecily only gives me a playful smile, there is no need for further explanation in my heart.

Any man would fall for Cecily, let alone if she were the one openly displaying affection first, it would be even more peculiar if it didn’t please one’s heart.

With an embarrassed smile, I responded quietly.

“...It’s difficult to pinpoint. She’s a woman without any flaws, each and every aspect of her. Her face and... yes.”

“Hoho. I like your honesty.”

“Cecily is indeed an exceptional girl.”

Eisilia elegantly laughed with her hand covering her mouth, and Descal wore a somewhat satisfied expression. Fortunately, it seems that they accepted it favorably, perhaps because they had a favorable impression of me from the beginning.

When a sense of satisfaction welled up from the front, I felt relieved inside. As if signaling me to look at her, Cecily tightened her grip on my hand. I shifted my gaze toward her.

She was gazing at me with warmth and affection, her chin resting on her hand. It was as if she was looking at me with eyes full of tenderness, like a painting that momentarily took my breath away.

If Marie energized me with her unique vivacity, Cecily drew me in with this enchanting atmosphere.

“Well, it seems like the meal is ready now.”

Cecily spoke after we locked eyes for a while.

“Is there anything you can’t eat? Let me know beforehand.”

Descal opened his mouth, as if receiving telepathy. Both Cecily and I instinctively turned our heads toward Descal.

“I can eat just about anything.”

“That’s good to hear. Well then, let’s get up from our seats...”

“Oh, wait. Before that, may I ask you for one favor? Is it okay?”

In the moment Descal was about to stand up, Eisilia hurriedly stopped him with an anxious voice. With a careful gaze, she lightly flicked her finger.

Surprisingly, a book popped out of thin air. It seemed like she used magic related to spatial teleportation.

Then, Eisilia handed me a book that looked somewhat familiar and excitedly asked me for a favor.

“Could you sign this before the meal?”

“I don’t mind signing, but this is...”

“It’s the fifth volume of Xenon’s Biography which contains the final moments of Sakran. It’s a book I always carry with me in Helium.”

Upon careful consideration, I realized that Gartz had conjured five books out of thin air using teleportation magic. Since then, I signed them for him as well. As I looked at the expectant Eisillia, her eyes gleaming, I chuckled and took out my trusty magic quill. I proceeded to inscribe the name “Isaac” in Korean on the first page of the book.

“Here.”

“Thank you so much. Did you also get a signature, Cecily?”

“No, she didn’t say anything...”

After glancing at Cecily, I cautiously asked her.

“Do you want me to get one for you too?”

“No, it’s okay. I’ll just receive the confirmation stamp(on the marriage certificate) anyway. What’s the point of getting a signature?”

“... ..”

Indeed, it seemed impossible to surpass her sarcasm. While I laughed at her response, Eisillia held the book close to her chest and spoke joyfully.

“So, I’m the first one to receive your autograph? I’m really happy.”

“Well, actually Mr. Gartz received it first.”

“What?”

As I revealed the truth, Eisillia’s eyes widened in astonishment. Not only her, but Descal and Cecily also showed similar reactions.

Confused by my expression, Cecily quickly asked in a slightly flustered voice.

“Balak received it first? When?”

“Um... He signed it when I first came to Helium. Before going to Noona cottage.”

“I see... But without saying anything...”

“Hmm...”

Cecily muttered under her breath, while Descal lightly stroked his chin, deep in thought. I started feeling uneasy, thinking that I may have said something unnecessary. However, not long after, Cecily smiled and spoke as if she didn’t care.

“It’s probably not a problem right now. Let’s go have a meal for now.”

“...Alright.”

“Oh, by the way. Since we’ll have dessert again tonight, there’s no need to force yourself to eat it, okay?”

“Dessert? What kind of dessert?”

Just as I was curious and about to ask, Eisilia, who was in front, seemed to notice something and exclaimed with an “Ah!” Descal was scratching his cheek, lost in his own thoughts.

As I became even more curious about their reactions, Eisilia raised the corners of her mouth and spoke cryptically.

“It’s a dessert I specially made. It’s the only kind of dessert that exists in Helium.”

“There’s something like that?”

“Yes.”

Eisilia nodded her head and left a significant remark.

“It’s going to be really delicious.”

“...?”

The true meaning of those words became apparent only after dinner, as night fell.

“Didn’t mom say that before we had our meal? That it’s the only dessert available in Helium.”

“Yeah...”

Inside the bedroom, with only a faint moonlight seeping in, I couldn’t help but stare wide-eyed. I had cleaned myself up neatly and was waiting for my first night with Cecily, but my eyes couldn’t help but be bewildered.

Despite the divine power I received from Mora, my heart was pounding madly, and I felt like I could be swayed by desire at any moment. Why? Because...

Swoosh...

“How is it? The dessert personally prepared by my mom.”

Black lingerie and a garter belt. That alone would suffice as an explanation.

The black lingerie failed to fully cover Cecily’s ample bosom, causing her flesh to spill out, and the garter belt underneath stimulated primal male desires.

Furthermore, until a moment ago, it was covered by a gown, so now she stood there sexily, as if suggesting that she might take off the gown. Thanks to that, not only her breasts but also her ample hips are accentuated, rivaling those of Arwen.

Could Cecily really be the descendant of a succubus? I swallowed hard and quietly opened my mouth.

“It looks incredibly delicious.”

“Doesn’t it?”

She approached me slowly while saying those words, as I sat on the bed. Cecily’s figure, barely concealed even in darkness, came into sharp focus in my sight.

Before long, as she got closer to me, she began to straddle my thigh. My heart started pounding like crazy, and my gaze moved up and down repeatedly.

“Isaac.”

“...Yeah. Noona.”

“Don’t you have anything you want to say to me?”

What more words were needed? I smiled softly as I looked into her red eyes, brimming with desire.

“I love you, Noona.”

“Hmm~ Besides that?”

She was such a demanding succubus. While gazing at the trembling Cecily, I uttered the words she wanted to hear.

“I’ll eat well.”

“Okay. Then... mmm!”

Cecily’s words were cut off. Because I sealed her lips with mine.

Mwah~

Starting with a passionate deep kiss, the real night began.

Translators note:

WARNING

Next 3 chapters are NSFW!

Chapter 166: Deep Night at Helium (1)

Churup Chuup Churup

“Uh... Isaac. Isaac... chu-eup...”

Cecily straddled Isaac's thigh and greedily sucked on his lips as if devouring them. Their tongues intertwined deeply, exchanging saliva.

Although her body was already heating up due to her arousal, it grew even hotter as they began kissing. Not only that, but Isaac's presence below, revealing his arousal, was gradually stimulating her.

Just from kissing, her brain was melting, so what would happen if they went further?

Now, belatedly speaking, Cecily, caught up in the rhythm of desire, was ultimately a virgin with no prior experience with men. They continued kissing, driven by instinct, but there were inevitably some inexperienced moments.

And Isaac was well aware of that fact.

Swoosh

As Isaac continued the intense kiss, holding Cecily's face, he slowly swept his hand downward. From her slender neck, past her arms and armpits, all the way to her delicate waistline.

Cecily's whole body trembled and grew more sensitive as his gentle touch roamed. Despite that, their lip-lock didn't break, but her trembling couldn't be contained.

And then, when Isaac's beautifully delicate hand passed her waist and caressed Cecily's buttocks.

“Haak!”

Cecily let out a moan of pleasure. As soon as her lips parted, the silver thread that had been stretching out between them snapped.

Isaac's mouth was now free, but he didn't stop caressing her buttocks. Instead, he used his other hand to delicately handle Cecily's heated body like a work of art.

After his experience with Marie, Isaac had learned one thing: when a woman is properly aroused, her body becomes highly sensitive.

Especially in the case of Cecily, her excitement had reached its peak to the point where there was no need for extra caressing. As evidence, Cecily's thighs, on which she sat, were not only moist but rather lively.

In his heart, Isaac wanted to take off his pants and explore Cecily to his heart's content, but today was their unforgettable first night. He had planned to do his best to create unforgettable memories and pleasure for her.

“Mmm...”

“Haa... Huhh...”

While the caressing continued, Isaac pressed his lips against Cecily's neck. Cecily trembled and let out a moan at the soft lips she felt on her neck.

Following that, Isaac continued to kiss, marking a trail as he gradually moved downward. From the neck to the collarbone, and from the collarbone to the breasts with marked dots.

Just as he was about to kiss the nipple, which was barely covered by her underwear, Isaac stopped there. He circled around as if he were stoking a fire, no longer intending to go further down.

“Ah, Isaac...”

“Do you want more?”

Isaac, who detached his lips from Cecily's breast, asked mischievously with a playful smile. When his low and husky voice entered her ears, Cecily looked at Isaac with an expression of complete relaxation.

Even in the darkness, Isaac's golden eyes shone brightly as he stared directly at Cecily. In response, she struggled to control her accelerated breathing and swallowed her

saliva.

“Make me a mess. Make me scream with greater pleasure than now.”

Cecily’s heart cried out powerfully.

However, the response that came out of her mouth was completely different. Reason still remained as desire had not yet taken over her mind.

“Well, I want to. So...”

“But shouldn’t we pray first?”

“P-Pray?”

Cecily was momentarily bewildered by Isaac’s sudden request to pray, but soon she understood the reason.

Before entering the palace, when Isaac and she were having a conversation alone, they had mentioned it. They had said that tonight’s prayer would be quite different.

And she could look forward to the content of the prayer. Cecily herself had mentioned it.

“Do we... have to do it now?”

“I won’t do it until I hear it.”

“...How wicked.”

“Until now, I was only teasing you. If you don’t say it...”

“Haang!”

Isaac gently grasped Cecily’s large chest. With the sudden surprise attack, Cecily let out another moan.

While Cecily was momentarily distracted, Isaac violated her ample chest hidden beneath her underwear. If Marie’s chest was soft like marshmallows, Cecily’s chest was exceptionally elastic.

Moreover, its size was enormous, perfect for playing around like a toy. Isaac couldn’t help but want to do various things with those breasts.

He held his words for a moment, sensing an addictive sensation, and leaned close to Cecily's ear. Then he whispered in a soft voice,

"I'll just tease you like this and leave it at that."

"Mmm..."

"Noona didn't you say? You can devote your body and heart for my sake. So, hurry up."

As Isaac murmured, Cecily pondered amidst the confusion. It was rebellious and demeaning. To receive affection from the man she loves and pray to God. What would Mora think if she saw this?

'Just this once... Will she close her eyes?'

However, her mind was already consumed by desire, making it impossible to think straight. Besides, the situation was where Mora was showing great favor to Isaac.

Unless she defiled the temple, Mora wouldn't even give a glance. With that in mind, Cecily brought her hands together neatly and quietly began to pray.

"Oh, Goddess Mora of Darkness and Rest... Tonight..."

Click

While praying with her eyes closed, Isaac skillfully unhooked Cecily's bra. The bra, which had tightly enveloped her large breasts, fell weakly as soon as the hook was undone.

Cecily's body twitched momentarily as the bra was released. It was a relief that all the pressure on her chest disappeared, but a greater sense of embarrassment overwhelmed her.

The fact that the bra had come off meant that her bare chest was fully exposed. Feeling embarrassed, she instinctively tried to cover her breasts with her arms, but it was impossible to hide her ample bosom.

However, Cecily, unaware that the more she acted that way, the more it tempted Isaac, struggled to recite her prayer.

"...Oh, thank you so much for allowing me to spend my first night with the man I love. I hope that man..."

Is it greed or desire? Cecily couldn't bring herself to finish her final words and her lips trembled.

Thud!

“Haeng!”

“Prayers should be completed, right, Noona? What about that man?”

While Cecily was still contemplating, Isaac grabbed her bare breast and asked in a soft voice, gently rolling his finger over her nipple, stimulating her desires.

With his other hand, he caressed her buttocks and lightly touched her intimate area. Even though it was covered by a garter belt, he touched it enough for her to feel it.

“Haan... That man...”

“That man?”

“Me- Hooeng...!”

“Me?”

Isaac imitated every word and, at the same time, comforted Cecily...

“Oh, a mess...!”

“... ..”

“Let us make a mess...!”

She finally let out her restrained desires passionately. When Cecily finished her prayer, Isaac smiled deeply and grabbed her chin as she blushed and lowered her head in embarrassment.

He slowly lifted her chin, making their eyes meet. Cecily's red eyes were already filled with sticky lust.

“Well done, Noona. Now...”

I'll do as you wish.

As soon as Isaac finished speaking, he pressed his lips against Cecily's. Cecily, too, now surrendered to her instincts as Isaac kissed her.

“Mm... Mm... Isaac... Mm!”

The deep kiss began once again. However, unlike before, Cecily moved her body gently back and forth, touching Isaac's private parts.

Sensing Cecily's desire for his belongings, Isaac slid his buttocks back and, feeling uncomfortable, removed his tight pants. As he took off his pants, only his underwear remained, which was not enough to conceal Isaac's belongings.

Thanks to that, Cecily stopped kissing when she felt something foreign around her pubic area and took her face away. As she looked down, she sighed with a dazed expression.

“Ah...”

It is large. Just as Marie mentioned, it seemed like it would penetrate through the underwear and come out grandly.

Isaac's object hidden inside the underwear will soon enter her own genitals. Although she is already wet, can it really go in?

And if it does go in, how would it feel? I heard that if only the secretion of love juices is abundant enough, an unforgettable pleasure will strike.

I want to put it inside right away. Whether it's the first night or whatever, I want to satisfy my deep desire immediately.

Just imagining it is thrilling, and my lower abdomen trembles. It's already like a flood down there, with water flowing incessantly.

Like during the previous exhibition, it was Cecily's innermost thoughts that couldn't suppress her instinct when the evil cycle of desire found her.

“Noona.”

“... ..”

“Do as you wish now. I'll help you.”

Isaac preemptively handed over the initiative to Cecily. Originally, he intended to take the lead, considering it was the first night, but looking at Cecily, it didn't seem

necessary.

Cecily was already consumed by desire. It would be more intense than Marie, who had accumulated sexual desire, and certainly not less.

Moreover, since it was said that succubus blood was flowing in her, I plan to watch over her. I will only help when she needs comforting or to prevent excitement from subsiding.

Cecily diverted her gaze from Isaac's face and looked down towards his groin. She noticed the prominent bulge still standing strong without losing its vigor.

“...Hmm.”

Cecily licked her lips as if she had caught her prey, and her red eyes sparkled with anticipation. She then moved away from Isaac's thigh, on which she had been sitting comfortably, and stepped back. Isaac awaited Cecily's next move with a relaxed expression.

First, she lowered the frilled black panties, and then, she unfastened and lowered the garter belt, which could be considered the main dessert. Finally, Cecily stood before Isaac completely nude. Isaac thoroughly admired Cecily's naked body.

Her breasts, frequently mentioned until now, maintained an attractive shape without any sign of sagging, despite their size. Her waistline and the curvature of her hips below formed soft and sculpted lines. Moreover, thanks to consistent yoga practice as a demon, there was not a trace of flab anywhere, and her arms and legs extended slenderly. Lastly, there was even a modest tuft of black hair growing below her lower abdomen.

Is this what they mean by celestial beauty? The object that had already been burning hot seemed to grow even harder.

“Mmm...”

While Isaac indulged in his admiration, Cecily let out a seductive hum and took a step forward. Then, she knelt down provocatively and grabbed hold of Isaac's underwear.

Isaac, who noticed that she intended to undress him just like that, complied with her wishes. As he slightly lifted his buttocks, Cecily took the opportunity and began to remove Isaac's underwear. Although there was a momentary snag with the underwear, it didn't take long for Cecily to completely strip Isaac of his underwear.

“Wow...”

“... ..”

When Cecily saw Isaac’s thing rise proudly towards the sky, she let out a genuine sigh filled with admiration. Although Marie jokingly referred to it as a claymore, seeing the object in front of her, it was definitely no exaggeration.

Perhaps it was due to the succubus blood flowing within her, the scent emanating from Isaac’s thing stimulated her sense of smell. It had a sweet and intense aroma that evoked thoughts of “delicious.” Cecily brought her face closer to Isaac’s thing, inhaling the scent deeply.

“Sniff, sniff. Haah... This is Isaac’s cock... It smells so good...”

“Where did you hear such words?”

Isaac asked with a trembling voice when Cecily uttered such vulgar words. He never thought she would blatantly refer to it as a cock.

However, with an expression as if questioning what the problem was, Cecily tilted her head and retorted.

“I called it a cock because it is a cock. Is there any problem?”

“...No.”

Seeing her innocent expression as she referred to it as a cock... it excited him uncontrollably.

The situation where the princess of Helium, despite being noble, smells his own belongings and speaks vulgarly. It’s impossible for anyone not to find it distasteful.

Swish...

Cecily’s hand cautiously enveloped Isaac’s belongings. The size was too big to wrap with one hand, so she had no choice but to hold it with both hands. Cecily wrapped her hands around it and slowly, gently moved it up and down.

It felt like touching a piece of metal heated by fire, and the sensation traveled through her hands.

“It’s hot... and hard...”

“Hmm...”

Isaac let out a weak groan as Cecily took care of his belongings. Just the fact that Cecily was attending to him was stimulating, even without the sensation of the training of his martial skills. She was an inexperienced maiden, but her alluring presence and bold actions were driving him crazy.

Lick...

While attending to him, Cecily licked the pillar. Then, she pursed her lips as if savoring the taste and briefly blinked her eyes. It was delicious. It wasn't a lie, it truly tasted good.

The manifestation of succubus blood flowing through her body, combined with the rhythm of wicked pleasure. The unique strong scent and taste emanating from the man's belongings excited Cecily's palate.

She swallowed her saliva and opened her mouth wide, taking the entire head inside.

“Hmm. Chyup. Chuup. Hehe. Chyup. Lick.”

“Ah...”

Cecily sucked, licked, sucked, and licked repeatedly. She carefully handled the object as if eating an indestructible candy, so as not to cause any damage. Not stopping there, she diligently went back and forth with her hand in the part that couldn't be swallowed. Thanks to the saliva that made everything soggy, she was able to move even more smoothly.

Usually, being inexperienced is normal when it comes to fellatio, but Cecily was exceptionally skilled and agile, unlike a beginner. Despite the fact that fellatio can be an act that induces repulsion, Cecily took the initiative in her actions.

Whether the blood of a succubus flowing through her body engraved such behavior or not, as Isaac, it brought great pleasure.

“Noona...”

“Slurp. Suck. Swallow.”

When Isaac placed his hand on the horn, Cecily was momentarily taken aback but didn't stop the act. On the contrary, it seemed to stimulate her even more, urging her on.

Since the length was long, the maximum was only half, but the occasional contact with the tip of her nipples felt truly exquisite. In his heart, he wanted to use the horn as a “handle” and forcefully insert it, if possible.

However, the situation now is that Cecily has given in to everything, and it would be too much for her as well. For now, she needs to focus on the service she is providing...

“Gulp.”

“Ugh... N-noona?”

“Gulp. Chug.”

Despite such irrelevant thoughts, Cecily was the first to take action. She didn't just swallow about half of Isaac's penis, she took it even deeper.

At first, she struggled and swallowed deeply, then slowly pulled back as she sucked in. But as Cecily repeated the process, the pillar gradually began to disappear.

Deeper and deeper. Until the entire large object vanished inside her throat.

Normally, one would feel nauseous and be unable to continue, but Cecily was forcefully pushing Isaac's organ deeper and deeper. Like diving, she plunged her face into Isaac's crotch.

And finally, his large object completely disappeared into Cecily's throat. Cecily's nose collided with Isaac's pelvis.

Isaac, experiencing an unfamiliar pressure that only occurred in his mind, raised his head with a rough groan. I think it's commonly referred to as “deep throat” with vulgar language, and I can guess why they call it that.

“N-Noona.”

“Mm... Yes?”

Cecily looked at Isaac with confusion as he pushed his face away. Meanwhile, she didn't remove the member in her mouth.

In the meantime, Isaac calmed his pounding chest and looked down at Cecily, then suddenly grabbed her horns.

“I'm sorry... I can't do it anymore.”

“...?”

Cecily blinked at his apology. Just as she was about to withdraw her head, wondering if she should continue.

Swoosh!

“Mmh?!”

Isaac tightly gripped Cecily’s horn as a handle, pulling with great strength. As a result, Isaac’s erect member disappeared entirely beyond Cecil’s throat.

Cecily trembled at Isaac’s sudden and unexpected action, but soon realized what he desired and relinquished his resistance, allowing Isaac’s thing to glide effortlessly past her tongue.

As her tongue slid against it, the object filling her mouth felt vividly real. Isaac’s member emanated a hot and rich scent, arousing her senses.

Delicious. It truly tastes delicious. It feels even more intense because it belongs to the man I love.

Slurp, slurp, slurp, slurp...

“Ah, ah! Mm, mm! Chu-rip! Chu-eup! Jju-wup!”

As Isaac held Cecily’s horn and moved back and forth, Cecily reciprocated without pause, skillfully rolling her tongue and sucking with firm pressure, bestowing new sensations.

Without a single gag, Cecily received Isaac’s member through her mouth and down her throat, leaving almost no trace behind.

Furthermore, as if emphasizing his innate lewdness, Cecily lowered her hand and vigorously stimulated her dripping pussy. Isaac grew even more excited by the fact that Cecily was eagerly swallowing her member while pleasuring himself.

Slurp, slurp, slurp...

“Chu-wup! Chup! Ah, ah! Mm, mm!”

“Noona. Now...!”

Cecily felt Isaac's member filling her mouth and throat growing larger and harder. This was undoubtedly a signal of climax.

She eagerly watched as Isaac's essence was about to be expelled into her mouth, intensifying her desire. The act of exploring her lover's rod like she was pleasuring herself provided Cecily with even greater pleasure.

Although having the object entering and exiting her mouth and throat was uncomfortable, it strangely heightened her sense of pleasure. As she touched her wet private parts, the fluids flowed abundantly.

“Uh!”

“Oof!”

Suck, suck, suck.

Isaac forcefully pulled Cecily closer, ensuring that his semen reached her throat. As Cecily expelled the semen from her mouth, her eyes, which had been tightly shut, opened wide.

Upon opening her eyes, he realized that the reddish color in her irises had faded away lightly. Her mouth was filled with her beloved man's semen, flowing down her esophagus, and below, her nether regions were drenched with her own secretions, forming a puddle.

With this, it became clear that Cecily, with her vulgar yet lascivious nature, had inherited the succubus bloodline.

“Mmm...”

Cecily slowly withdrew Isaac's member from her throat, which she had dominated like sucking on a candy. Isaac still held onto her horns like handles.

Plop.

Finally, Isaac's sturdy member came out completely from Cecily's mouth. It was covered in saliva, but it remained erect and proud.

“Phew...”

Isaac, who couldn't overcome the immense pleasure, let out a refreshing breath. He had been complacent, thinking she was an inexperienced virgin.

Cecily was a demon with succubus blood running through her veins, and she was caught up in an evil cycle of desire. She possessed abilities that humans couldn't easily achieve and her body was consumed by lust.

What had just happened was part of it. Isaac brushed his hair back and looked down.

“Kiss-. lick-.”

“... ..”

“Mmm. Ahh. Mm.”

Isaac noticed Cecily, who was still licking and kissing his belongings or performing fellatio. She delicately caressed it with her hands while moving her mouth like she was eating ice cream.

Thanks to that, even though he had reached climax once, he felt that his erection had become even stronger. Isaac decided that he couldn't let things go on like this.

Just as he had given himself pleasure, he wanted to give a gift to Cecily. He gently touched her horns and opened his mouth.

“Noona.”

“Mm... Yes?”

“Shall we start going in slowly now?”

Cecily blinked her eyes slowly at Isaac's suggestion. With his erect member towering high in the sky, alongside her face, his heart throbbed even more.

Cecily held onto Isaac's belongings with one hand and seemed lost in thought before gently shaking her head.

“Later. Right now, I want to taste it more.”

“...Really?”

“Yeah. I feel like I'll get addicted. Isaac's penis is so delicious. Mmm.”

With those words that drive men crazy, Cecily resumed fellatio. Isaac stroked her head in appreciation, but he felt sorry for receiving service like this.

At the very least, he should give her the same pleasure. Isaac momentarily stopped, as if indicating for her to look up at his face.

When her face was raised, Cecily looked at Isaac with a skeptical expression.

“Noona, come up on the bed.”

“Why?”

“I have something to do for you.”

Cecily hesitated for a moment, but since they were already instinctively exploring each other due to their desire, she carefully listened to his words.

Soon, the two of them ended up in the middle of the bed. Even as Cecily moved towards the center of the bed, she never let go of Isaac’s penis.

“Make your buttocks face my face.”

“Like this?”

Without a hint of embarrassment, Cecily positioned her buttocks as Isaac desired, bringing them closer to his face. Thanks to that, Isaac was able to closely observe her intimate area.

Hair growing densely in black, unlike Marie’s. And the entrance, which was wet and sticky in between.

Thud, thud.

The mucus was secreting enough to drip like water droplets. Isaac sighed with admiration and then lowered his gaze to the sensation he felt from below.

“Chewp. Chewng! It’s delicious... chewp.”

Cecily, who performed fellatio without any shame, showing it to a man who loved secret places. Just by looking at this, she seemed to have a much greater lewdness than Marie.

Isaac let out a bitter laugh and then shifted his gaze back to Cecily’s secret region. And using both hands, he grabbed her buttocks and slowly pulled downward.

Finally, as the pink flesh came near Isaac's mouth, he extended his tongue and gently licked it.

Lick

“Aaahk!”

As soon as he licked the vagina, Cecily let out an adorable moan and trembled vigorously.

Translators note:

There are 3 chapters today! Don't wanna leave you guys hanging

Chapter 167: Deep Night at Helium (2)

The position commonly referred to as the “69 position” is one that Marie and Isaac have tried many times before. Unsurprisingly, it was Isaac who first suggested it, as this position is not well-known.

Initially, Marie felt embarrassed about assuming a position where her genitals, including the anus, would be presented in front of a man’s face. However, after becoming accustomed to it, she began to enjoy it. In addition, they have been exploring various other positions that complement each other well.

However, it is important to maintain cleanliness, as a lack of hygiene could result in unpleasant odors. This position should always be performed after thorough cleaning.

Lick!

“Ah!”

As Isaac lightly licked Cecily’s vagina with his tongue, her body trembled, and there was a momentary surge of strength in Cecily’s hand holding his erection.

It was a completely different sensation from when she masturbated just a moment ago, as if electric currents were flowing through her brain. She had long since cast aside any shame, but the act of her beloved man licking her genitals was a powerful stimulus for Cecily.

Momentarily stunned by the unfamiliar pleasure, she regained her breath and used her tongue to lick the object in front of her eyes. She lovingly touched it with both hands and used her tongue and mouth to savor it like candy.

Lick!

“Ah!”

“Mmm... slurp... mmm...”

“Ah! Huh!”

But as Isaac began to lick her clitoris, Cecily found it difficult to contain herself. She could feel a tingling sensation in her lower abdomen, and her juices flowed profusely.

Her legs weakened to the point where she wanted to surrender her body completely. The patience she had cultivated to overcome her inner demons was meaningless.

This wasn't some inner evil, it was the “pleasure” that her beloved lover was bestowing upon her. It was the first time in over a century that someone other than herself was using their mouth to pleasure her.

'It has a subtle sweetness to it.'

As Cecily buried her face in Isaac's crotch, Isaac savored her nectar as he licked her mound. The taste and aroma of love juices vary depending on the person.

If Marie's love juices were salty and tangy like lemons, Cecily emitted a fruity scent or rather, a sweet taste.

As a princess of Helium, she must have eaten various kinds of food, but the sweetness wouldn't have played a significant role in her origin. It was a persuasive hypothesis since she sucked on Isaac like an ice cream, claiming it tasted delicious.

With his eyes closed, Isaac greedily devoured Cecily's love juices. Instead of falling drop by drop like water droplets, they flowed continuously like a faucet, quickly saturating the area around his mouth.

“Churp, chwup, jyup!”

“Hahk! Hahng! Ahh!”

Now Cecily only moaned instead of sucking on Isaac's penis. Although he could bring her to climax by licking her mound, Isaac was experienced in countless sexual encounters with Marie.

He knew that a woman's climax doesn't explode all at once like a man's but builds up slowly like climbing stairs until it reaches its peak. Unlike the so-called “post-sex nap” that men experience, a woman's climax lasts for a long time.

So when Cecily stopped fellatio, Isaac would stop as well and, once she regained her senses and took something into her mouth, he would lick her clit.

Although she didn't explicitly demand it, by now Cecily must have realized that if she didn't caress Isaac's penis, this pleasure would disappear forever.

“Uguk! Oooh! Jyup! Chup!”

As soon as Cecily became aware of that fact, she tightly closed her eyes and accepted Isaac's member deeply into her throat. Cecily, without forcibly inserting his rod, moved her head back and forth as if diving underwater.

At the same time, Isaac was also fervently exploring her pink treasure. Not only did he caress her with his mouth, but he also handled her delicate curves like fragile glass. Her peach-shaped buttocks were so well-formed that even the act of caressing them had an addictive quality.

Slurp!

“Oo-goo-wup!”

Before long, as if becoming accustomed to licking with his mouth, Isaac widened the entrance of Cecily's vagina with his thumb and pushed his tongue deep inside. Cecily widened her eyes and stiffened her body as soon as Isaac's tongue penetrated her insides.

The sensation inside her was not like something hard and rigid but rather the soft and pliable texture unique to a tongue. It was a completely different sensation from when she had masturbated just moments ago.

Cecily firmly gripped Isaac's erect member, plunging it deep into her throat, and clenched her fist tightly. The electrifying sensation rising from below traveled through her lower abdomen, up her spine, and pierced her brain.

This was dangerous as it was. However, she couldn't stop.

With her eyes wide open, Cecily awaited the signal for Isaac to release...

Pop!

“Ooo-oooh! Puh-ha! Hoo-aahh!!”

As soon as Isaac touched her swollen glands with his hand, it exploded intensely.

Squelch! Squelch! Squelch!

“Haa-aaah! Haa-ng! Uwaa-ang! Aa-ang!”

When touched, Cecily, released a scream that was soaked in delight. From her depths, love juices burst forth like a fountain, dampening Isaac’s face.

However, Isaac remained undeterred and kept his tongue inserted at the entrance of Cecily’s intimate parts. Instead, he stimulated her nether region by using his index and middle fingers, savoring the love juices as if they were holy water.

As if a dam had burst, Cecily trembled sporadically, reaching the climax. The climax gifted to her by another, a man she loves, deviated from self-pleasure, taking a different course.

“Ah... hah... haa...”

Cecily buries her face in Isaac’s groin, controlling her breath. Her jet-black hair flowed like a curtain, and her crimson eyes lost focus.

Yet, Isaac’s member, firmly grasped in her hand, revealed Cecily’s lewdness. Even in the midst of a chaotic mind caused by the climax, she extended her tongue and skillfully stroked the pillar.

Isaac appreciated Cecily’s lasciviousness, which may rival Marie’s or even exceed it. They haven’t even entered the main event, but she was already thirsty for more.

Thus, he cautiously shifted Cecily’s buttocks to the side. Even when moving her legs onto the bed, Cecily never once considered detaching her face from his erection.

“Noona, I understand you want to continue sucking, but we should stop now.”

“Meanie... I want to eat more cock... I haven’t had enough... I’m drooling.”

Despite being absent-minded, Cecily continued to seek only Isaac’s member. Perhaps it’s because she’s a succubus, but her resilience is no joke.

Marie couldn’t even move after reaching climax, but Cecily seemed completely fine. Isaac chuckled wryly and restrained her with a gentle voice.

“I’ll feed you more without restraint later, so for now, let’s stop.”

“Heehee...”

Isaac harshly pushed Cecily away, causing her to fall helplessly on the bed. Her expression was gloomy, but her gaze remained fixed on Isaac's crotch.

Suddenly, Isaac grabbed Cecily's slender shoulders and spun her body around. Cecily turned her head and faced Isaac's face.

Even in the darkness, Cecily blinked her eyes a couple of times at Isaac's shining golden eyes and then smiled mischievously. Then she extended her lips, demanding a kiss.

Although his own desire had waned, Isaac fulfilled her request willingly. After all, his semen would reach its destination and satisfy the woman he loved, so he had no hesitation.

Furthermore, Cecily's mouth exuded a sweet fragrance, reminiscent of a unique fruity aroma that was also present in her saliva.

As if comparing herself to a dessert, Cecily's body was like a sweet fruit dessert itself.

"Mm, softer... deeper... mm..."

While kissing Isaac, Cecily arched her back, feeling the softness of the bed enveloping her head.

Isaac laid Cecily on the bed and continued kissing her for a while before silently parting their lips. A trail of silver saliva stretched and then weakly broke apart.

Eventually, he gazed at Cecily lying on the bed. Her large and perfectly shaped breasts, despite lying down, maintained their roundness, and the curve of her waist and hips was truly a work of art.

In addition to this, the secret garden, soaked with the nectar. Isaac swallowed his saliva and gently placed his object on Cecily's abdomen.

"Wow..."

Cecily marveled at the size of the object, which almost reached her belly button. Could that really enter inside her? If it did, how would it feel?

Could she experience a more intense pleasure than the one she felt earlier? With an expression of anticipation, she pressed Isaac's object against her abdomen.

As Isaac's object touched her flawless abdomen, she could feel the sensation perfectly. She had thought about it before, but it was hot and solid like an iron rod heated in fire, just as Marie had described.

'Marie... She said she couldn't take it all, right?'

Could she really accept all of that? She was taller than Marie and her pelvis was well developed, so maybe it was possible. Cecily lovingly caressed Isaac's penis, then raised her gaze. Isaac was smiling gently, as if waiting for permission.

"...Isaac."

"Yeah, Noona?"

"I love you. So..."

Suddenly, with a trembling voice, Cecily confessed her love and used both hands to widen her vaginal entrance. The fluid that had been lingering inside her vagina poured out.

Then, with an expression that seemed consumed by desire, she earnestly begged Isaac. Her red eyes emitted an even more intense gleam.

"Please... ravage me completely, Isaac."

"... .."

"You can handle me however you want. Treat me roughly. So, please... please put it in."

Just these words were enough to make Isaac's object throb with anticipation.

"My body and heart... belong to you, Isaac ♡"

With a quick decision, Isaac took action, breathing heavily. Normally, he would have caressed, but with the flood that occurred, there was no need for foreplay.

Without delay, he grasped the rod with one hand and began to search for the entrance. As an experienced person, finding the entrance was easy.

Finally, the tip touched the entrance, and Cecily tightly gripped the bedsheet in anticipation of the imminent pleasure. Her heart pounded violently, and her breathing

became rapid.

“... Nuona.”

“Yes, yes. What is it?”

“You’re really a pervert, Noona.”

As he spoke, Isaac smirked.

Sst!

Without hesitation, he pushed the penis inside.

“Ah...!”

As Isaac’s object filled her, Cecily’s tongue slipped out of her mouth. Her waist arched like a bow, and her grip on the bed sheets tightened.

Due to the rapid and penetrating entry without taking it slowly, there was some pain, but it became meaningless due to the pleasure that came like a tidal wave afterward.

The sensation of a hot iron rod, hard yet fiery, filled her lower abdomen completely. Cecily trembled and then forced her gaze downward with difficulty.

Most of that enormous erection had disappeared. She shifted her gaze with a happy smile, knowing that she had become one with the man she loved.

Isaac, too, looked down at himself with his characteristic deep smile.

“Ah, Isaac, you’re...”

“Yeah, noona.”

“I love you... really... I love you...”

Cecily confessed her love once again, spreading her arms wide. Isaac obliged by lowering his upper body, embracing her as she desired.

As their bodies entwined, Cecily’s ample bosom also became beautifully wrinkled. Isaac appreciated the wonderful feel of her breasts and enjoyed breaking down her barrier.

Naturally, it was tight like a virgins, but it also felt soft as it wrapped around him. The thick secretions provided a different sensation from Marie's.

Most surprisingly, Cecily accommodated Isaac's massive girth for the most part. While there was a slight remnant at the base, she didn't feel his glans touching her cervix.

This aspect gave Isaac a new stimulus. Gently wiping Cecily's face, he asked quietly,

“Does it hurt?”

“It just feels good... so please, move...”

“Yeah, got it. Here we go.”

Isaac lightly kissed Cecily and raised his upper body slightly. Instead of pulling back, he moved forward slightly.

Squelch—

“Kyahh!”

With that, even the remaining base disappeared completely, and the glans collided with Cecily's cervix. Cecily felt a sensation as if electric currents were flowing throughout her body.

Thud—

“Uhh...”

After Isaac pulled his hips back, the cock that had filled her insides also disappeared. Cecily, while emitting a satisfied moan, felt a sense of emptiness as the bat scraped against the walls and retreated.

It's natural to feel empty when something that had filled every space disappears. Finally, just before the glans was fully withdrawn.

Jiggle—!

“Aaahh!!”

Isaac forcefully thrust his waist and penetrated inside once again. The glans collided with the cervix once more, and Cecily let out a scream filled with pleasure.

Thud—

“Uhhung...”

Slowly pull out.

Thrust!

“Ah-ahh!!”

He thrust forcefully.

Squelch!

“Ah, mmh...”

He withdrew slowly once again.

Squish!

“Uhhhh!!”

He thrust even harder once more.

It was a process to become accustomed, and every time, Cecily let out moans of pleasure. She had already fully adapted to Isaac’s actions, accepting nothing but pleasure.

In response, Isaac moved slowly and teasingly, arching his lower back. Mixed with the flow of fluids, evidence of her virginity, blood trickled out.

However, Cecily seemed to have a body that had already experienced this several times, whether due to her innate nature or not. It seemed fine to proceed as they always did with Marie.

Normally, he would proceed with care and consideration, but Cecily seemed not to require it. Nevertheless, he had to make her feel the climax.

Thrust!

“Mmhh...!”

Isaac lifted his upper body completely and firmly grasped Cecily's breasts, which he had longed to play with. His hands were buried in the vast mound of flesh.

While teasing her plump chest freely, he gently moved his waist. He would delicately touch or pull on her pointed pink nipples with his fingers.

To make it a mess just the way she wanted, he began to handle her roughly.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thud!

“Ah! Oh! Ahh! Yeah!!”

As her chest was being teased, Cecily moaned continuously while repeating the waist movements. Due to excessive arousal, the sound of moistness started to emerge.

Isaac tightly grasped Cecily's large breasts as handles and eagerly devoured them. Based on their previous sexual encounters, he incorporated not only simple repetition but also controlled the rhythm.

If he sensed that Cecily was approaching climax, he deliberately slowed down, and when she seemed to relax a little, he thrust forcefully.

It wasn't only a crude exercise like their first night with Marie, but Isaac also added techniques to provide Cecily with extreme pleasure.

Thud! Thud! Slap!

“Ah! Mmm! Mmh. Mm. Mwah! Ah...”

To prevent boredom, they occasionally kissed. As Isaac explored her mouth, Cecily responded willingly. Moreover, she wrapped her legs around Isaac's waist to further stimulate him.

Even amidst the intertwining of their tongues, like entwined snakes, Isaac relentlessly thrust into Cecily's vagina. Her mouth was teased with kisses, her breasts were handled with both hands, and finally, her lower entrance was occupied by Isaac's penis.

The three rhythms harmonized perfectly, gradually reaching their limit. Tears welled up in Cecily's eyes, and her vaginal walls contracted forcefully.

Isaac gradually realized that the climax was approaching and examined her face. Her red eyes were rising, revealing the whites.

If that's the case, everything left will be released. While maintaining the kiss, he lowered the hand that had been gripping her chest.

Passing her lower abdomen, which was already wet with fluids, he arrived at Cecily's clit. He lightly touched the sensitive spot he had confirmed earlier.

“Ah! Hng!”

As soon as he touched her sensitive spot, Cecily's body trembled. It felt like an electric current running through her spine, striking her brain, just as before.

But this wasn't the end. Isaac strengthened his grip on her muscles, making her more tightly held, and he roughly stimulated her core with his hand.

Throb! Throb! Twitch! Twitch!

“Ah! Ah! Huh! Haah! Kyaaaah!”

Cecily was now writhing and screaming almost uncontrollably. Something was building up from her head, signaling the imminent climax.

In response, Isaac withdrew his hips and forcefully thrust them back in an instant.

Squelch!

“Kyaaaah!”

The feeling of their genitals colliding with each other finally brought Cecily to her climax. Her waist arched like a bow, and the bed, unable to withstand the strong force, shook vigorously.

Pusshii!!

Cecily's long, slender legs that wrapped around Isaac's waist were trembling, and ejaculation gushed like a fountain from the still-filled vagina.

There was a significantly larger amount compared to what was done orally, and the bedsheet was soaking wet.

Cecily had reached orgasm, gasping for breath.

“Hmm...! Ahh...! Mmm...”

Squelch~

“Huh!?”

But the issue wasn't Isaac. It was Cecily realizing that Isaac's waist wasn't moving slowly and deliberately while she was catching her breath.

Only then did she realize that Isaac hadn't climaxed yet.

The real show was about to begin.

Isaac gently stroked Cecily's cheek, which was trembling with fear. Cecily, who was already highly aroused due to the orgasm, trembled as he wiped her cheek.

A woman's orgasm isn't easy, and even coming down from it is slow. So Cecily's lascivious body is currently in an extremely sensitive state.

It means that she's suitable for continuously experiencing the pleasure that feels like her brain is melting.

“Didn't you say, 'Make a mess of me'?”

“Ah, Isaac...”

Cecily called Isaac's name with a trembling voice. Isaac affectionately wiped her cheek and then put his finger in her mouth.

A few months ago, when Cecily and I were alone at the cafe, she was the one who sucked on my fingers first. However, now Isaac directly put them in her mouth.

Cecily faced Isaac while sucking on his fingers, from which a sweet scent spread due to the saliva. His penis, which had entered her vagina, still remained firm and proud.

“Ah... Mmm... Agh...”

Thump!

“Oof!”

Isaac's waist jerked once, causing her to widen her eyes. However, her mouth was blocked by Isaac's fingers, preventing her from making any moaning sounds.

Thump! Thump! Squelch! Slurp!

“Huff! Ooh! Ahh! Eeuung!”

Isaac continued to tease Cecily’s mouth with his fingers, back and forth. With each insertion, water sprayed in all directions.

Cecily, already sensitive due to the peak of pleasure, sensed another wave building up. Not only was the act of insertion pleasurable, but also teasing her mouth brought delight, and squeezing her chest was no different.

She wondered if she might actually die. The stamina of a demon mattered in terms of endurance and wounds, not this kind of climax. If anything, it seemed like succubus blood prevented her from easily descending from such heights.

Moreover, with the overlapping evil cycle, her current state of orgasm made her entire body feel like it was filled with erogenous zones.

“Eeung. Ahh. Isaac, you are...”

“Why? What’s wrong, Noona?”

“I said something wrong. I was wrong...”

Due to the unexpectedly strong stimulation, Cecily eventually apologized. However, Isaac countered with a smirk.

“But why are you laughing?”

“Uh... it’s nothing...”

Despite denying it, Cecily had a happy smile on her face. Her words were merely a facade, as her true desires were evident.

In response, Isaac removed his fingers from Cecily’s mouth and decided to change positions. First, he temporarily removed the rod from her vagina and then flipped her body over.

Due to the relentless pleasure that repeatedly surged, Cecily had no strength left to resist, and her face was pressed against the bed.

Then, Isaac wiped the peach-shaped, beautifully contoured buttocks before inserting himself. Before penetration, he wore a devilish smile and extended his hands towards Cecily’s horns, not her waist.

He forcibly grasped her horns like handles and lifted them up. As Isaac held onto the horns and forcefully lifted, Cecily, in her frenzy, used both arms to support her upper body.

Thud!!

“Ah...ahh!!”

Without any warning, Isaac inserted himself into Cecily’s vagina. Once again, an overwhelming sensation pierced through her brain, causing Cecily to let out a moan. Since it went deeper than usual and stimulated the pleasure receptors inside her vagina properly, this position brought even greater pleasure.

Slap! Slap! Thud! Thud!

“Uh-heung! Ah-heung! Ah-aang! Hoo-ang!”

Isaac watched Cecily’s back as she writhed in pleasure. Her back muscles, extending in a straight line down the center, and the peach-shaped buttocks that flowed beneath her slender waistline were captivating.

Every time he struck, her large breasts jiggled and swayed, a truly magnificent sight.

‘First, let’s give it a try.’

Thanks to Mora’s divine power, excluding the calming effects, Isaac’s erection had been going strong for a long time. However, he couldn’t leave it as it was, so he thought it would be good to release once.

Above all, one reason Mora granted divine power was to transmit it to Cecily as well. The method of transferring energy through sex has existed since ancient times.

Instead of delivering the final thrust, Isaac’s attention was suddenly drawn to Cecily’s tempting buttocks. They were plump and seemed incredibly inviting.

Well, he had asked her to make a mess anyway. A mischievous expression crossed his face. Besides, even with just one hand, it would be enough to hold onto the horns.

Then, raising his arms high towards the sky, Isaac...

Slap!

“Kyaaaah!!”

He forcefully smacked Cecily's peach-shaped buttocks. As soon as her buttocks were struck, Cecily let out a mixture of a scream and a moan. At the same time, the tightness of her inner walls increased significantly. Unable to contain his excitement, Isaac continued to spank her buttocks.

Snap! Slap! Smack!

“Oooh! Aaah!! Uh-heung!!”

Every time Isaac spanked her buttocks, Cecily let out a scream of pleasure. Her vagina also contracted and relaxed repeatedly.

Thus, Isaac learned one thing. As if proving her plea to be violated in disarray, Cecily enjoyed being tormented.

She was nothing but a lascivious slut, not a demon princess, not anything other than a succubus itself.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Slap!

“Ah! Isaac-nim! Isaac-nim!! I, I...”

Cecily cried out, calling Isaac's name. Seeing her tongue sticking out was evidence that she was reaching another climax.

As the signal of his release approached, Isaac momentarily stopped spanking and shook his hips. Then, gripping her buttocks tightly instead of her horns, he thrust backward, lengthening his movements before violently pulling away.

Thud!!

“Ahhh!!!”

Cecily, with her tongue sticking out, experienced her third climax.

Drip... Drip... Drip...

Isaac also released his seed deep into Cecily's uterus. It was his second release, but the quantity was by no means small; it had actually increased.

Looking down while catching his breath, Isaac ejaculated inside Cecily, not Marie. Her buttocks were stained red, and Cecily's body trembled in excitement.

On the first night, could it feel this good? He slowly pulled out and slapped Cecily's buttocks coolly.

Smack!

“Haeng...”

Isaac felt the climax as Cecily trembled when he spanked her buttocks. Despite having ejaculated for the second time, Isaac still looked at his erect member.

Still not enough. With the accumulation of steady effort and the divine power from Mora, it was only natural.

The night is still young. Isaac pressed his face against the bed and approached the trembling Cecily.

“Noona, can we do more?”

“Yes... we can do more.”

Just moments ago, she seemed like she would faint, but for some reason, she quickly regained her stamina. Could it be that succubi regain their strength with the intake of semen?

If not, perhaps the divine power received from Mora was transferred to Cecily. It's possible that Cecily, not Isaac, is the dangerous one.

Isaac extended his member, feeling a sense of satisfaction in conquering Cecily, who is much stronger than himself and is even slated to be the next Demon Lord.

As a massive object approached her face, Cecily raised her body, flinching.

“I'll help you.”

“Yes? Ah!”

Without any further conversation, Isaac grabbed Cecily's horns and began the act. Cecily's eyes widened as his penis filled her mouth, and she soon started trembling.

Push—

A distinct sound of bodily fluid being discharged could be heard below. Isaac grasped her horn and moved it up and down.

“Oog! Ooogh! Jyuup! Chwak! Ooguk!”

Tonight, there was no esteemed princess of Helium. There was only one lewd woman left.

“Ah... I’ll go again.”

“Chuwup! In... in my mouth...”

Plup plup

Isaac enjoyed a long night ejaculating inside Cecily’s mouth.

“It tastes good... More... Give me more...”

“As you wish.”

“Kyaaaah!”

Cecily, who had an unforgettable first night, was no different.

Translators note:

Didn’t think they would be into this...

Also decided not to change the sfx in those chapters as I had more than enough of my share looking up sfx for sex before.

Chapter 168: Morning at Helium (1)

The long night stretched until the break of dawn. When Isaac had his first encounter with Marie, it at least ended by dawn, but Cecily was a succubus. She possessed exceptional physical abilities.

Furthermore, Cecily's stamina was exceptionally high, unlike Marie's, who was an ordinary human. Cecily had undergone various forms of training, including yoga, which greatly enhanced her endurance. The calloused, rough skin on her hands was evidence of that.

Of course, this is the story of Cecily when she was still an ordinary demon, but her case is slightly different. First and foremost, as the evil cycle accumulated and needed release, her body became more sensitive. Even though she only took Isaac's member into her mouth, one could tell by the intensity she reached that she had reached her peak.

Secondly, the succubus blood flowing within her body. The succubus blood that had been dormant for over a hundred years had manifested, but the problem was that its concentration was very diluted. If it had been even slightly stronger, Cecily would have been able to easily absorb Isaac's essence, but over time, the blood had weakened. Ultimately, it only served to further arouse Isaac's excitement, leaving Cecily in a mess as she desired.

Both of the aforementioned conditions were currently fulfilled, and Cecily's entire body was as sensitive as erogenous zones. No matter how strong her physical stamina may be, if her mental endurance was drained, it was meaningless.

Mora's divine power, as he learned only at dawn, was not only for Isaac, but for Cecily.

“Mmm... Is this okay?”

“Move your tongue a little more. Mm-hmm, like that.”

“Mmm... Ah...”

Even though the morning sun had risen, the two lovers were completely engrossed in sex, without a moment's rest. Cecily inserted Isaac's member between her large breasts and fervently sucked on the tip that protruded between them. Despite the considerable size of Cecily's breasts, which were well worth their weight in gold, they couldn't completely hide Isaac's member.

Isaac, lying on the bed, leisurely enjoyed the service provided by Cecily. The shaft disappeared entirely within the softness of her breasts, leaving only the tip stimulated, as if it would release at any moment.

The position known as "Boobjob" required both the man and woman to have above-average proportions. Given that Marie was a well-fed and well-rested noblewoman, she had large breasts, and it was a favorite position of theirs.

However, Cecily's breasts were not average, they were truly at a heavenly level. While her nipples were exposed, they were surrounding the pillar, providing a refreshing stimulation.

Furthermore, unlike Marie's soft and fluffy breasts, Cecily's breasts were highly elastic. With a different texture, the stimulation would naturally be different as well.

The night of pleasure that started late at night did not end even when morning came.

'Is this also thanks to divine power?'

Isaac thought as he watched Cecily caress her protruding tip that emerged through her chest. Even if he claimed to have received knight training, his stamina was not as strong as hers.

Although there were times when Cecily took breaks due to occasional fainting spells, it was unbelievable that not even a sign of fatigue could be felt.

Surely, the divine power given by Mora had produced some kind of effect. As a bonus, Cecily's energy was also replenished, resulting in a win-win situation for both of them.

Swish~

"Chuup. Cold. Hehe."

As Isaac gently stroked her horns, Cecily removed the tip from her mouth and trembled. She used both hands to move her breasts up and down, applying pressure to the pillar buried in the valley.

The skin itself was very smooth and not roughened, and thanks to occasionally spitting out saliva, it was not lacking in quality either. With a warm gaze, Isaac stroked Cecily's horns and then lowered his hand towards her breasts.

And he pinched the still erect nipples and pulled them slightly harder.

“Kyaah!”

Isaac pulled on Cecily's nipple, causing her to let out a moan of pleasure. Even such minor pain became a source of delight for her.

Isaac teased and pinched Cecily's enticing nipple, helping her to become even more aroused.

“What are you doing? Keep sucking.”

“Mmm... slurp. Plop. Mmm.”

Cecily obliged Isaac's wicked demands, taking his penis into her mouth. With her hands, she fondled her breasts, while her mouth lavished attention on the remaining parts.

Meanwhile, Isaac did not cease his action of pulling on her breasts. Through the continuous sex that lasted until dawn, he discovered one thing about Cecily: she had masochistic tendencies.

Whether he spanked her buttocks forcefully or pinched her nipples like this, Cecily only let out pleasure-filled moans without experiencing any pain.

Isaac didn't particularly possess sadistic tendencies, but witnessing the sight of his beloved woman immersed in pleasure made it difficult for him to hold back. After all, it wasn't an easy sight to see Helium's Princess, who received the admiration of demons, succumbing to pleasure.

‘Given that her horns have turned black again, it must truly be her preference.’

While tormenting Cecily's breasts, Isaac confirmed the color of her horns. Just last night, they were filled with red, but now they were completely black.

From this, it could be deduced that Cecily had completely satisfied all the accumulated desires. Considering the number of climaxes she experienced during the night, surpassing two digits, it was no wonder.

Therefore, now that all desires had been fulfilled, it meant Cecily was in her purest state. In fact, compared to the evil cycle, there wasn't much difference.

“Noona, I'm ready now.”

“Ung, hurry and wrap it up. I want to have Isaac's semen. Pout.”

When Isaac gave the signal, Cecily pulled out the glans that was in her mouth and stuck out her tongue. It was as if she was savoring a candy. Unable to hold back any longer, Isaac ejaculated.

Squirt! Squirt!

“Kyaa♡”

Although the quantity and concentration were light due to multiple previous releases, it was enough to dirty Cecily's face. As the beloved man's semen splattered on her face, Cecily made a cute sound. Eventually, as the milky white ejaculate smeared on her face, she wiped it off lightly with her hand and put it in her mouth.

“Mmm, it's tasty. Slurp. I want to eat more.”

“Hmm.”

While Cecily savored the semen in her mouth, Isaac turned his head towards the window. Even though it was winter and the sun rose late, it was now completely dawn, heralding the beginning of the day.

They had explored Cecily's body all night, but thanks to Mora's divine power, their vitality was still abundant. However, both Cecily and Isaac felt unsatisfied with ending it like this. Something special was needed to conclude.

“Noona.”

“Yeah? Why?”

“You said you do yoga, right?”

“What's yoga?”

Cecily asked back, grabbing his rod, which had sagged from having just ejaculated. Holding the cock with that face, innocently asking, it felt like my blood was rushing in

again.

“Ah! I stood again. Yum!”

As Isaac’s cock gained strength and rose, she put it in her mouth as if she was aiming for this moment. Isaac laughed bitterly at her almost poisonous greed.

I’m a little worried that she might not be able to even continue her daily life normally. Isaac nudged Cecily’s head as she indulged his cock between her breasts.

Cecily also pulled his cock out of her mouth as he pushed her head away. Making a puzzled expression was a bonus.

“Listen to what people say. Yoga, so you said you do stretching, right? I heard from Mr. Gartz. Demons do high-difficulty stretching.”

“Yes. That’s right.”

“Then can you do what I want?”

“I’ll do anything Isaac wants. Instead, this is mine. Yum♡”

What kind of obscenity is this? Isaac almost gave in when Cecily responded sexyly by kissing him on the tip, but he managed to contain it.

It was said that when the cycle ends, the desire quickly fades, but it seems like a weird switch has been flipped in her. The future of staying at Helium and having sex all the way through the vacation opened up.

However, everyday life must go on. Isaac pondered how he could stop Cecily’s rampage and came up with a good idea.

“Let’s make a bet. It’s related to the stretching we talked about earlier.”

“What kind of bet?”

“If you can hold the desired posture for 5 minutes, then today, you can do whatever you want.”

Isaac suddenly regained his energy and pointed to his penis standing tall. The red pupils of Cecily’s eyes lit up at the idea that she could freely handle Isaac’s manhood for the day.

At first glance, it seemed to be emitting a heart-shaped light, indicating a properly aroused state. Then, while Cecily looked at him with loving eyes and caressed his manhood, Isaac made a condition.

“But if you can’t hold it, that’s the end of it today. I want to continue, but I can sense someone’s presence.”

“Don’t worry. I’ve already told Mom everything. I might not come out until tonight.”

“Well, it might be fine for a succubus, but I’m human. I need to eat. Besides, I have to go to the temple as well.”

“Ugh... I understand.”

As Cecily playfully touched the object with her finger, expressing her regret, she suddenly had a question and tilted her head.

“Come to think of it, strangely enough, I don’t feel hungry. It feels like I’m even full.”

“Maybe it’s because of your succubus bloodline? Could it be related to that?”

“Is that so? Well, considering that succubi feed on male essence, being with Isaac should prevent me from starving to death.”

“Instead, I’ll probably wither away from dehydration.”

After a frivolous joke, both the man and the woman got out of bed and stood up on their own two feet. Despite it being their first experience, Cecily, unlike an ordinary person, was able to stand up due to her trained physique as a demon.

The pain of past sins had long vanished due to the pleasure. What remained now were only remnants of sticky desire.

Isaac admired Cecily’s naked body, which looked much better in the morning than before. Her splendid breasts, slender waist, and hips were always captivating. Even if one were to draw a picture, you couldn’t depict them as exquisitely.

Furthermore, as evidence of their passionate affair last night, various secretions were still clinging around her intimate area. Semen, love juices, saliva, and even traces of virgin blood.

Although she could use cleansing magic to eliminate everything, Cecily didn’t do it right away. Why bother using magic when it will get dirty again anyway?

Thinking about the fact that he had indulged in wild passion with a woman who possessed such a provocative figure and shamelessly uttered lewd words, Isaac's lower body began to throb.

Cecily chuckled at the sight of his erect state and teasingly touched it with her hand. She swept her palm along his pillar and delicately grasped it, moving up and down.

"I feel a little jealous that only Marie knew how good this is. You're staying in Helium for the entire vacation, right?"

"That's right, so should we start stretching now?"

"Yeah. What do you want to do?"

"Well..."

Isaac conveyed the desired position to Cecily, who listened attentively and promptly took action.

First, one leg stretched high into the sky, exhaling a long breath, she firmly anchored it with one hand. If she had been wearing clothes, it might have been hidden, but thanks to that, her private parts were clearly exposed.

However, whether Cecily didn't feel any shame or not, she innocently asked Isaac with a naive face.

"Like this?"

"...You're incredibly flexible."

"This is just the basic foundation."

Isaac carefully examined Cecily's posture, regardless of her answer. The posture she adopted was commonly referred to as the "I Balance."

It was a posture that only someone with extreme flexibility could achieve, and it easily made one feel embarrassed due to the exposure of their private parts. However, Cecily had long since discarded such feelings of shame.

Swallowing his saliva, Isaac slowly approached her. His member was already hard as it could be.

"Should we proceed like this?"

“Yes. If you endure for just five minutes, victory will be mine, big brother.”

“Hmph. I’ve gotten used to it now... Huh!”

With a swift motion, Isaac took advantage of Cecily’s heightened state and immediately penetrated her. Cecily almost lost her balance due to the unexpected surprise attack, but she narrowly averted disaster.

“If your posture loosens, you lose. Got it?”

“T-That’s... cheating... Who does this... Ahh!”

Cecily shook her body as she protested, and Isaac responded by jerking his hips. Ejaculate flowed out of her vagina, staining the ground. It was a sensation that penetrated deeper inside, more than any position they had tried before. Moreover, it was the first time they were doing it standing up with both legs.

Cecily trembled as unexpected sensations emerged, and she looked at Isaac with trembling eyes. He wore his characteristic gentle smile.

“Let’s begin.”

“Just a moment... Ahh!”

Stab, stab, thrust, thud.

As Isaac started moving his hips more vigorously, Cecily let out a moan. The amount of vaginal fluid secreted increased as the muscles inside her filled and contracted.

As Cecily felt the strength in her waist gradually waning, she bit her lip and endured it. If she could hold on for just five more minutes, she would be able to control Isaac’s penis as she pleased.

“Ugh! Ugh! Heuk! Haah!”

She kept her moans to herself and maintained her balance, but she didn’t anticipate that it would further excite Isaac.

Feeling as if it was being forced, Isaac moved his hips faster and stronger, thoroughly ravishing Cecily’s vagina.

Each thrust caused ejaculate to splatter in all directions, dripping down her legs or falling like droplets. After sincerely exploring Cecily’s vagina for about a minute.

Stab, thrust, stab, thud.

“Ah! Ahh! Aaahh!!”

In the end, Cecily, who couldn't resist the fresh stimulation, released the arm that had been restraining her and let her legs down. Her legs, which had been straightened in an upright position, now rested on Isaac's shoulders.

Cecily, who was defeated by pleasure in less than a minute, didn't care about the fact that this would be the end of their encounter today. Right now, she was only focused on feeling Isaac's member filling her completely. After all, they had plenty of time during the vacation.

“It hasn't even been a minute, and it's already over? Isn't that too disappointing?”

“Mmm... No... Ahh. Isaac... Isaac is just... Mmm!”

Although it was an uncomfortable position, Cecily steadfastly maintained her balance with one leg and deeply accepted Isaac's member inside her. Unlike on the bed, the member was stimulating her upper region and occasionally touched her cervix. They had tried various positions from last night until morning, but each new position brought a new sensation.

“Oh, ah!”

“Ah!”

Isaac playfully thrust into Cecily's inner depths, then changed his position. After lowering the leg that was resting on his shoulder, he swiftly embraced her.

Surprised, Cecily naturally had no choice but to place both legs on Isaac's waist. As Isaac held her up, his member delved even deeper inside her.

“Ah...!”

“Is something pushing against you?”

“Mmm... You're cruel. Really...”

Even without that, I was already at a level where I had a little energy left, but now that I've used it all up, I vividly feel my uterus shifting. This position, known as the “squatting posture,” is challenging unless a man has strong muscles, but Isaac once

received knight training, so his body was prepared for it. Moreover, he has rapidly grown and strengthened his muscles in recent months.

Cecily was not a beastwoman but a demon, so she was relatively lightweight. Although she may be heavier than a normal person due to her height and chest, it didn't pose any difficulty.

“Then I'll move.”

Squeeze. Choo. Chewp.

As Isaac spoke, Cecily began to passionately kiss him. Utilizing her arms and legs, Cecily firmly embraced Isaac and accepted his tongue.

Finally, Isaac skillfully moved his hips, and Cecily trembled even more as she felt a deeper penetration compared to their previous position.

Thud, thud, thud, thud...

“Ah! It's too... de-deep! Ahh!”

Every time the tip of Isaac's penis hit her cervix, Cecily let out moans of pleasure. The strength in the arms and legs that enveloped Isaac increased, and their fluids flowed like a faucet.

While embracing Cecily, Isaac thrust into her with all his might. She had asked him to make a mess of her, and he intended to keep that promise until the end.

Even if her cervix pushed against his tip, even if Cecily let out unique moans from the stimulation, even if her strength was waning in the arms and legs that embraced him.

Isaac did not stop moving his hips to provide the ultimate pleasure to Cecily until the very end.

Slap, thump, squeak, squelch.

“Ah, Sir Isaac! I, I...!”

Cecily spoke respectfully while sticking out her tongue. It was her signal that she was about to reach climax soon. Sensing that he would also reach his limit soon, Isaac covered Cecily's mouth. Cecily, in response, teasingly played with her tongue as they kissed passionately.

Thump, thump, thump, thump.

Huff! Squirm! Chew! Slurp! Moan!

Cecily welcomed her beloved man's tongue with her upper mouth and accepted his intimate part with her lower mouth. Being simultaneously attacked from both ends, she began to approach her limit. Before long, Cecily tore her mouth away and screamed in ecstasy.

“Huaaaah! Let's go! I'm coming, Sir Isaac! Kyaaaah!!”

“Ugh...!”

Kuwong!

As if those words were a trigger, Isaac thrust his hips to the very end. The forceful push left no room for her cervix as it was pushed upward.

Vweep, burp, sob, sob.

“Aaaaaah!!”

Cecily let out a scream of ecstasy as the semen penetrated beyond her cervix and into her uterus. Her body trembled intermittently, and her legs, wrapped around Isaac's body, grew tense.

Her arms were in a similar state, unable to withstand the intensity, she scratched his back with her nails, leaving marks. However, even in the aftermath of climax, Isaac couldn't feel the slightest pain.

Thud... Thud... Thump...

After a moment, a mixture of love juices and semen dripped from Cecily's vaginal entrance onto the floor. The floor already had puddles of love juices she had released earlier. Now, the fluids from both the man and woman marked the surface.

Isaac caught his breath and checked on Cecily's condition. She could only tremble and shake due to the intensity, unable to even raise her face.

Splurt...

“Ah...”

As he pulled out from her, a sound reminiscent of removing a cork was heard. Simultaneously, a mixture of semen and love juices splattered.

Isaac carried Cecily in his arms and moved towards the bed. He laid her down and faced her, looking into her flushed face as she tried to catch her breath. With an affectionate smile, Isaac caressed her horn.

“Noona.”

“...Yes.”

“I love you. Truly.”

A deep, lingering kiss followed the confession of love. This time, it was a short and intense kiss to confirm each other’s feelings.

Cecily, who had kissed Isaac, smiled happily and gently caressed his face before quietly speaking.

“I love you too.”

With the love confession of the two individuals coming to an end, it marked the end of their first night together, extending until morning.

“Master♡”

“... ..”

It seemed that the night would continue a bit longer after all.

Translators note:

I’m starting to fear what the other girl’s are into... Marie is super lewd, Cecily a maso, and Rina is into voyeurism...

Also there are 3 chapters today in case someone didn’t notice.

Chapter 169: Morning at Helium (2)

Until just before lunch, Cecily and I messed around. Frankly, the remark she put into her mouth, “Master,” was enough to rekindle dying embers and even linger on.

Clearly, she must have done it on purpose to provoke me. I can be sure of that.

It was exhausting, as if I had been exercising intensely for over 12 hours, but thanks to Mora’s divine power, I didn’t feel physically drained. However, the divine power couldn’t prevent the physiological effects, so I still felt hunger and thirst.

Fortunately, Cecily seemed satisfied enough that she wouldn’t want to continue any further, so we barely managed to conclude. Then we affectionately washed each other’s bodies in the bathroom and came out dressed in bathrobes.

As I stepped outside, I found the maids who had arrived in the bedroom, tidying up the beddings and its surroundings diligently. The beddings were in such a filthy state that they seemed beyond reuse, and they would have to be completely burned.

I gazed at the mess of bodily fluids on the beddings and asked Cecily.

“Noona, can magic clean something like that thoroughly?”

“Yes, it can be done, but why bother? Even with magic, the discomfort would remain the same. It’s easier to just get new ones.”

She gave a smile filled with various meanings and continued.

“Besides, it’s going to get dirty again throughout the vacation. Is there really a need to clean it up with magic? I don’t think so.”

“Yeah, you’re right.”

“By the way, it’s really dirty. It’s hard to believe most of it came from my body.”

She looked at the soiled beddings with a more curious expression than embarrassed. Cecily had no reservations about saying explicit things, likening herself to a dessert or asking to be messed up. Towards the end, she even discarded shame and embarrassment and called me 'master'.

Marie had been shy about sexual desires until recently when she opened her eyes to pleasure, but Cecily was not like that. If this continued, I worried that I might have to deal with both of them at the same time.

I absentmindedly traced the now entirely black horns of hers and cautiously asked in a hushed voice. The maids who were tidying up the beddings and its surroundings had already left.

“Noona, I’m curious, is this prolonged arousal only during the evil cycle, or does it happen regularly?”

“Well... Let me think. According to what I heard from Mom, the evil cycle is when desire, or you can say sexual desire, is the strongest. Before that, it varies for each individual. It’s like everyone has their own differences.”

“Then, what about you?”

“I’ve already fallen for you, so I’m not quite sure~ Maybe after the vacation, Marie and I might fight frequently?”

Cecily replied playfully in her unique tone. With mischievous smiles, it seems the future was promising.

Perhaps I should visit the temple more often. However, I feel a bit awkward since I don’t know how Luminous’s divine power will affect Cecily.

I patted her horns, which she cutely nudged against me while pouting. As I showed affection, Cecily smiled and enjoyed the feeling.

“Noona, does Luminous’s divine power have a negative effect on demons?”

“Hmm? No, not really. Although the efficiency is much lower compared to Mora, our origin is still human. If Luminous’s divine power was harmful to demons, then even Mora’s divine power would cause harm. Why do you ask?”

“Actually, last night, Mora granted me divine power. It seems like it was to help me not get tired and also to share it with you.”

“Really? No wonder you kept feeling energetic even though you seemed tired. That must be the reason. The fullness in my stomach is from the succubus’s blood, not the divine power, right? And I feel like my mana has increased even more.”

As Cecily gently caressed her abdomen, I couldn’t help but chuckle. After a full 12 hours, her belly protruded slightly.

While some people get thirsty and hungry after such a night, she gets her hunger satisfied and mana increased. Moreover, with her skin glowing, she’s undeniably a genuine succubus.

‘I must visit Mora before doing anything with Cecily.’

If that’s not the case, then it occurred to me that I should either build up my stamina to last 12 hours or consider getting knight training from my father again.

It’s not just something I could do haphazardly, but it’s quite a good option because now I have to deal with not only Marie but also Cecily. If the two of them don’t compromise, there’s a possibility of facing both of them at the same time.

Increasing my stamina might become a necessity rather than a choice. I can’t rely on divine power forever, it seems like I shouldn’t postpone it any longer.

‘Polygamy isn’t all that great, after all.’

Of course, it’s not to say that it’s bad or that I’m not happy. Marie and Cecily have both made concessions to each other, so we can continue to live a happily fulfilled life.

Afterward, both of us changed into our regular clothes instead of bathrobes to have a combined breakfast and lunch. The maids had prepared clothes that fit us perfectly in advance.

Cecily wore an off-shoulder dress like yesterday but with her chest completely covered, revealing only her shoulders and collarbone. I, on the other hand, just wore a simple black suit. Nevertheless, since it was made in Helium, the comfort was unparalleled.

While changing clothes, due to our exposed bodies, Cecily’s desires were about to lead us into the second round, but I vehemently stopped it. The effects of the contraceptive pills had worn off, and we couldn’t predict how much more we would do, so we needed to be cautious. The power given by Mora and Cecily’s fertility period ending completely made it better to endure until then.

“Do you want to eat anything? Tell me in advance.”

“I just want to eat anything. I’m thirsty too.”

Afterward, I moved my feet to the place where the meal was being held with Cecily. Thanks to her telepathy, the meal was prepared in advance.

Unlike street food, the meal served at the Helium Palace consisted of ordinary dishes, such as steaks or simple chicken dishes, stews, and so on. They particularly used stimulating spices that perfectly suited my taste. Demons have enjoyed using spicy spices as a means of mental cultivation since ancient times.

In the past, people enjoyed spicy food for mental training, but now it’s merely a matter of gastronomy.

“Are you awake? Please take a seat.”

As I entered the dining room, Eisillia was already seated at the distinct long table’s end. However, Descal was nowhere to be seen. When I questioned it, Eisillia read my expression and promptly answered,

“He’s briefly away due to work. He has a lot of tasks piled up lately due to recent diplomacy. He barely managed to find time yesterday too.”

“I see. I understand.”

Indeed, Helium is currently busy with diplomacy with neighboring countries. Naturally, the top officials, including the King, would be stretched thin even if they had two bodies.

Upon hearing the reason for Descal’s absence, I took my seat. Naturally, Cecily sat beside me in an elegant manner.

On the table, there was steak with a red sauce already prepared. From its color, it looked like it would be spicy, but it actually boasted a delicious and piquant taste. It is one of the spices that Helium has been steadily developing since its founding.

In my past life, being Korean, it seemed to fit my taste perfectly, so while living in Helium I thought I would eat it often.

“So, did you enjoy the dessert I prepared for you yesterday?”

“... ..”

At the moment when I was about to grab the tableware, preparing even the napkins, Eisillia asked with a subtle voice. I was momentarily taken aback and turned my gaze to her.

Eisillia wore a smile that was hard to read, waiting for my answer. Until yesterday, she even used honorifics like “Mr. Isaac,” but seeing her drop the formal speech, it seemed that she had started treating me as her son-in-law from today.

I was at a loss as to what to answer her smile when Cecily came to my rescue in that situation.

“Oh, Mom. Is that even a question? You can probably guess from what just happened.”

“This child. Can’t you give your mom a break? Do you know how much your mom and dad went through to prepare the dessert?”

“Isaac is feeling awkward. Stop with the teasing.”

“Hmph. That’s why raising a daughter is useless.”

At Cecily’s scolding, Eisillia grumbled with a pouting expression. I felt like I should comfort her, feeling a bit guilty because of me.

“Don’t worry. I enjoyed it. It was one of the best desserts of my life.”

“Oh my, really? I’m glad. Since you said it was one of the desserts, the other one must have been prepared by the Requilis family, right?”

“...Yes.”

Once she actually said it, embarrassment overwhelmed her. However, seeing Eisillia smile gracefully seemed to ease her mind.

“Can I ask Requilis how he prepared the dessert? By the way, I personally prepared it yesterday.”

“... ..”

“...Mom.”

Due to the follow-up question, I lost my words. Thankfully, Cecily called out in a cold voice, ending any further questions.

Eisillia also seemed to realize her slip of the tongue and bowed her head in apology. Indeed, as a son-in-law of the demon race, I had to be cautious.

Though the atmosphere became a bit awkward, I opened my mouth first to quickly break the tension.

“Ahem. Ahem. By the way, what is the name of this dish? The sauce seems a little different from yesterday’s.”

“Ah, that’s a good question. Have you heard of a monster called Ringkel?”

“If it’s Ringkel... I heard it’s a mollusk covered in flames. It’s known to mainly live in volcanic areas.”

“And it’s filled with the energy of fire, especially rich in nutrients for men.”

“... ..”

“There’s also a vegetable next to the broccoli that looks similar. It resembles broccoli, but it’s called Cadid. It’s also good for men.”

Moreover, the ingredients used in the soup are said to be good for vitality, and the dessert also contains ingredients that are good for energy, and so on. Eisilia did her best to support and advance my relationship with Cecily as it was. At first, Cecily was uncomfortable with it, but after realizing that it was also beneficial to herself (?), she didn’t say anything. On the contrary, she even offered it to me, saying she was full.

I, too, couldn’t refuse, although I felt embarrassed. She had prepared it for my well-being, and there was no reason to decline, as it was like returning the favor and providing great help to me.

We cannot rely on Mora’s divine power forever, so from now on, I need to consume what is good for my bodies in advance to ensure a comfortable future. Above all, it perfectly suited my taste, so I could eat it without hesitation.

“Thank you. I feel energized already, thanks to you.”

“You’re welcome. The grace given by a son-in-law to our demon race is something that can never be repaid in a lifetime. If you wish, you could become a Buma, you know?”

‘Buma’ is a term that refers to the husband of a princess, in other words, the son-in-law of the king. Technically, I am already a Buma, but what Eisilia means is settling in

Helium, leaving the Minerva Empire. Therefore, it would mean being naturally separated from Marie, so I don't want that. This wouldn't just be crossing a line, it would be betraying Marie ruthlessly.

I feel sorry for Cecily, but it's best to politely decline the position of a Buma.

"I'm sorry. As Mother-in-law already knows, the decision has already been made."

"That's right, Mother. I'm happy just being Isaac's woman, so there's no need for you to do that."

"Hmm. If you say so, then I suppose that's the case. Still, come visit Helium occasionally. If you want, I can install a teleportation magic circle in the mansion for you."

"That's fine too, but I think it would be much better if I personally visited. After all, inheriting the throne will take a few hundred years anyway."

"Alright then, that should work. However, our future son-in-law might have some difficulties, so let's make arrangements in advance. We should ensure that we can contact each other if needed."

The mother and daughter were happily chatting away about me. Although I wanted to interrupt and join the conversation, they started talking about magical topics, so I just listened with one ear. The unfamiliar jargon makes it hard for me to intervene.

I vaguely understood that they were trying to find a means of communication between us. I'll just have some tea as a dessert.

Eisillia mentioned that this tea was good for vitality, and it tasted similar to green tea. It feels like it would be perfect for someone with sinus problems.

"Oh, speaking of which, the son-in-law."

"Yes?"

"You sent the manuscript for Volume 14 to the publisher, right?"

While sipping my tea without a word, Eisillia asked me a question about the soon-to-be-released Volume 14.

It caught me off guard when Xenon's Biography was mentioned out of the blue, but I answered her question first.

“Yes, I sent it, and it should be released soon.”

“When exactly?”

“I’m not entirely sure, but usually, the first edition is printed about 3 to 4 days after sending the manuscript.”

“I see. Then I should ask lord Balak to start preparing soon.”

It seems like they were planning to buy the first edition as soon as it was released. Although the publisher had announced the release schedule, it would still take some time for the news to reach Helium.

Nonetheless, the situation in Helium seemed to be better. The race that showed the second-highest purchasing power after humans was the demons.

According to what I heard from Cecily, even when the demons had a bad reputation, there were still those who traveled to Helium, and through these individuals, they obtained Xenon’s Biography.

No matter how much Helium’s demons were stigmatized as a nation of demons, there were always people willing to risk their lives for money in the world. And such people were not much different from ordinary humans, which made them reliable contractors even to this day.

“But Mom, what happened to Balak?”

“Oh, that? We seized the original copy for now. The signed version itself was not a problem, but the issue is that he didn’t report it. We will decide whether to return it or not based on his future behavior. Ah, if our son-in-law wants it back, we might return it soon.”

“... ..”

Poor Gartz. Just the thought of him getting punished over one signed copy brought tears to my eyes. I imagine his usually gruff face distorted with sadness and gloom, and I empathetically spoke quietly.

“...It might be best to just return it.”

And after the morning in Helium, the day passed ordinarily.

“Did you go to the temple? How will you torment me today?”

“...Wasn't the evil cycle over?”

“Even if the evil cycle is over, my heart has already fallen for Isaac, hasn't it? I think I know why Marie is acting like this.”

It wasn't night, but I had a strong feeling that it would be a memorable vacation in various ways.

While Isaac was spending a thrilling vacation with Cecily in Helium, the release of Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography was just a day away.

Fans who had been eagerly awaiting the release news were already waiting in front of bookstores, and some even had people lining up for them. Originally, Xenon's Biography was limited to one purchase per person, but that restriction was lifted after the introduction of new printing technology.

The reason for the one-per-person limit was that Xenon's Biography frequently sold out, leaving many unable to purchase them. Now that there was no need for hoarding, an official announcement was made to allow multiple purchases.

Some high-ranking nobles paid hefty sums and secretly received the first edition from the publisher. Additionally, the top officials, who travel around the world, invested money to make contracts that allowed Xenon's Biography to be sold in other countries.

As a result, if you don't buy them directly, it takes time for Xenon's Biography to be available in countries other than the Minerva Empire. For your information, the country farthest away from the Minerva Empire geographically was the Elf nation, Alvenheim.

Thanks to Arwen's speech, Alvenheim was handling the issue of half-blood tensions well and entering a stable period. Furthermore, they had practically no issues since they managed to stop the contamination of the World Tree.

What changed was the significant increase in interest towards Xenon's Biography, and more importantly, a shift in feelings towards Xenon. Since they had saved the World Tree, it was only natural for them to feel that they had received a divine gift.

Because of this, there was a belief that they must find Xenon and repay the favor. This certainty that Xenon must be the Prophet caused Arwen a headache, but it was something she had to let go of.

“...I wish we could relax the immigration screening criteria a bit more.”

“Hmm.”

Inside Alvenheim’s audience chamber, not for official duties, Arwen was sitting on the throne, receiving a report from Keir, the immigration inspector.

Even if they were not part of the Council of Elders, those responsible for important tasks had to come to the audience chamber and report. The same applied to the overseer of immigration, Keir.

He was currently giving a report about Alvenheim’s strict immigration screening criteria and requesting a relaxation of the rules.

“I understand your request well. It might be worth considering easing the screening criteria. However, it will likely take some time.”

“Is it due to the trade issues?”

“Yes. Easing immigration screening means more diverse races can come and go. Not to mention various organizations. We’ll have to discuss this separately with the Council of Elders.”

“But those stubborn folks are likely to reject it...”

In the midst of talks about attending a council meeting, Keir grumbled. Despite his position as an advisor to the queen, he was uncharacteristically carefree for an elf.

Arwen could only smile wryly because she knew how much Keir resented the council. The reason he had withdrawn from active duty and became an immigration inspector was also due to the council’s influence.

“It’s not like I can handle everything alone. I know very well that you dislike the council. But it would be better if you could separate personal feelings from official duties.”

“Sigh... I understand. I suppose I have no choice but to trust you, Your Majesty.”

“That being said... Can you tell me about the current situation of Ikher, the former warrior commander?”

Arwen inquired about Ikher, the ex-warrior commander of Alvenheim and Keir’s former superior. Once hailed as a hero who almost saved Alvenheim from defeat during

the racial wars, he was betrayed by his homeland and imprisoned due to the council's interference.

Since the end of the tribal wars, he had been living in seclusion, never leaving his residence. However, recently, there were occasional sightings of him showing his face or engaging in training in his martial arts dojo. There were signs that he might be considering a comeback, which garnered a lot of attention.

"I'm not sure about Ikher. I don't know if it's really because of that book or if there's another reason... Anyway, if Ikher returns, I would welcome him. I can't predict how the council will react, though."

"People's hearts can change for various reasons. It would be a good sign if he returns."

Elves, like soldiers for example, typically devoted their whole lives to one profession unless there are special circumstances.

Especially the elves who become warriors tend to stay in the military until the end unless they suffer severe injuries. Ikher, who felt disillusioned after being betrayed by the Council of Elders, was a special case.

As a result, elves can be seen as having all their strength displayed outwardly. Skilled individuals retiring and living their remaining years like humans or other races are rare.

'This must be thanks to Xenon's Biography.'

Anyone with even a slight interest in history would know that. The elven hero appearing in Xenon's Biography was inspired by Ikher.

The hero in question was betrayed in the past by their homeland, but they come to realize that what they protect is not the noble families but the nation itself, and they stand against the devils. In the process, they meet the Dark Elves and join forces.

To someone unfamiliar, it might seem like just another setting, but for those who know Ikher well, the story takes on a different meaning. In reality, Ikher only felt disillusioned with the Council of Elders and went into hiding, but his affection for Alvenheim remained unchanged.

If the Devil War had actually broken out, everyone acknowledged that Ikher would have acted in the same manner.

'Is Isaac truly a prophet?'

Arwen couldn't easily dismiss the contents of Xenon's Biography from her mind. She had been contemplating this since the last time she heard from the Council of Elders, and Xenon's Biography truly felt like a prophecy.

The pollution of the World Tree's roots, the summoning of demons, and the succession of "coincidences" like Reapers, to be honest, should be seen as almost impossible. Luminous also mentioned that while they may be coincidences for now, they would become inevitabilities in the future.

Since many people may have mentioned the 'constraints', Arwen couldn't easily overlook it. Moreover, as the council had mentioned, Isaac was showing endless favor to Arwen. Reason dictated that it was just Isaac's pure nature, but emotions were telling a different story. All of this felt like the story that was almost about to come true.

If that's really the case...

Kwoong!

Just before Arwen could immerse herself in her own delusions, the tightly closed door of the chamber suddenly swung open with force. Both Arwen and Kair turned their gazes towards the direction of the door, startled.

As they looked, a member of the council, Fieren, was approaching sternly with a determined expression. There were no other council members present, only Fieren.

No matter how chaotic the council might be, they still follow some basic rules. They wouldn't rudely and loudly open a door like just now, especially the door to the Queen's chamber.

Normally, they would have been scolded and reprimanded for such behavior, but Arwen noticed that something was off in Fieren's expression, so she waited silently.

"... What's this? Have you already made up your mind to leave?"

"Shut your mouth and get out of here. There's something important to discuss with the Queen."

Even when Kair asked in a sarcastic tone, Fieren uttered harsh words that he rarely used, ordering them to leave the audience chamber. Kair's eyes widened in surprise.

Fieren usually spoke politely, but there was no trace of that aspect now. It meant that a serious situation had arisen.

Moreover, the fact that he came alone to see the queen without gathering the members of council indicated that it was urgent. Keir observed Arwen's reaction with a surprised expression.

Arwen, too, seemed curious about Fieren's unusual behavior, so she refrained from reprimanding him and remained silent. Then, after locking eyes with Keir, she quietly instructed.

"It's better to discuss this later. Please go inside."

"Yes, understood."

Keir politely greeted and then gave Fieren a sly smile before stepping out of the audience chamber. Eventually, only Arwen, sitting on the throne, and Fieren, standing before her, were left inside the chamber.

Arwen pierced through Fieren's stiff expression and softly spoke.

"Fieren, esteemed member of the council. I assume this is an important matter, given that you made the breach of etiquette."

"Your Majesty, please pardon my impertinence, but I have one question,"

Fieren said, even though the queen had asked the first question. For a moment, Arwen's lower eyelid twitched, but she could tell that he was holding something in his hand.

Judging by its square shape and slight thickness, it seemed to be a book. As Arwen became suspicious again, Fieren asked a strange question.

"Your Majesty, do you truly have no connection with Xenon whatsoever?"

"What nonsense is this you're talking about? I have already said there is absolutely none."

"In that case, please take a look at this book. It's the 14th volume of 'Xenon's Biography,' recently released by the Minerva Empire."

As Arwen had expected, the item clenched in Fieren's hand was a book, and it happened to be Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography. She couldn't help but wonder why an unreleased book in Alvenheim was in his possession, but she soon realized one crucial fact.

On a previous occasion, he had sent someone to the publishing house to find Xenon independently. With the help of those resources, he must have obtained the book.

Meanwhile, Fieren used magic to levitate the book and handed it over to Arwen. Though she felt skeptical at first, she accepted it without a word of complaint.

The book that Firren delivered was undoubtedly Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography. From the brand-new cover to the honest inscription of "Volume 14," there was no doubt about it.

"You can start reading from page 100 of the book. If you wish, you can read it from the beginning as well."

"Before that, I doubt why you're asking me to read this. First, tell me the reason. This is an order."

Even in this situation, Arwen had no intention of giving up her initiative. No matter how urgent things were, some principles had to be upheld, right?

Fieren knew this well and nodded before speaking in a composed tone.

"The book contains forbidden magic."

Translators note:

Chapter 170: Forbidden Magic (1)

“Forbidden Magic? Are you talking about Necromancy?”

Arwen responded with a puzzled expression to the term ‘forbidden magic’ that Fieren mentioned. In the world, there are various types of magic, and among them, some are so dreadful that their use is prohibited. One of the most prominent examples is ‘Necromancy.’ Necromancy is a form of magic that resurrects the deceased as ‘undead,’ and in the past, devils mainly favored it during the Devil War.

Especially, the higher the proficiency in Necromancy, the stronger the abilities of the resurrected undead, and it can also inflict significant psychological pressure. Moreover, the undead, by their very nature, can engage in an endless battle, while the opponent’s strength diminishes over time, whereas the undead’s power keeps increasing.

Fortunately, through the existence of ‘Divine Power’ and the ‘World Tree,’ they managed to repel the undead with great effort, but remnants of their existence still linger in this world. The most significant example would be the Demons.

Demons possess the ‘Black Mana,’ enabling them to use Necromancy. However, due to the great harm they suffered from demons, they strictly forbid Necromancy, even though they might possess the ability to use it.

Recently, there have been traces of Devil worshippers clandestinely using Necromancy, and it was mentioned in Xenon’s Biography. Even in Xenon’s Biography, Necromancy was considered a magic that should never be attempted.

In addition to that, black magic, which gains power through human sacrifices or spreads terrible curses and plagues, was also forbidden. In fact, since Necromancy is included within black magic, it is right to view black magic itself as forbidden magic.

“It isn’t like black magic or necromancy. It’s the purest form of magic, but it’s forbidden due to the dreadful carnage it can cause.”

“Hmm... It’s hard to understand just by listening.”

After hearing Fieren's response, Arwen looked puzzled and gazed at Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography. It was difficult to predict why Fieren was saying such things based solely on what she heard.

If it's not like black magic, then what kind of magic could it be? Moreover, there was something else that she couldn't comprehend.

That was about one of the criticisms of Xenon's Biography – magic was activated without proper explanation. So, it only describes what magic was cast, without teaching the detailed principles. If there's a flaw in Xenon's Biography, it's the weak depiction of magic, but it's understandable since Isaac was not a magician. Moreover, magic is not properly standardized among humans.

So, why exactly did Fieren describe forbidden magic in such a way? Arwen, with her stern expression, waited for Fieren and then opened the book.

Since it's come to this, it might not be a bad idea to read Volume 14 of the Xenon Chronicles to grasp the situation.

'Elvenheim has indeed been completely occupied.'

Due to the contamination of the World Tree and Lucifer's wicked scheme, Elvenheim has been completely incapacitated and invaded by demons. Naturally, the warriors of Elvenheim resisted repeatedly, but it was difficult to stop the devils who swarmed like a tidal wave.

If the warriors of Elvenheim defeat 5 devils, the devils send 10 more troops, and if they block that too, they send an additional 20 troops. The situation was the worst of the worst since the contaminated World Tree became a sort of coordinate and turned into a gateway, even nourishing Diablos. Elvenheim was practically on the verge of destruction. The Xenon's party happened to encounter Dark Elves and fought against the demons in Elvenheim, but they were forced to retreat due to the presence of the Seven Sins.

'The council... has been completely annihilated. That's really unfortunate.'

In Xenon's Biography, the council that could be considered the equivalent of the council of elders was shown to have expressed extreme disapproval towards Xenon's group, even going as far as imprisoning them on the pretext of Jin being a demon. In many ways, it portrayed the negative aspects of the elves in an exaggerated manner.

After Kair's death, Elisha, who had become partially disabled, took charge of governing the nation, but under the pretext of investigating Xenon's party, she expelled them from Elvenheim. The group even included a warrior named 'Ruden,' who had been a thorn in the council's side.

However, the council was unable to fight devils properly and was easily defeated. Furthermore, they were resurrected as undead and continued to chase after Xenon's party until the end.

Just from this, there were sufficient reasons for the council of elders to be furious, but this alone was not enough. There were still many pages left, as mentioned by Fieren in the first place.

'But what will happen if Diablos is resurrected? Won't it all end then?'

If this continues, the Great Devil Diablos would be resurrected. In the World Tree, there are enough nutrients to even resurrect the Great Devil, so it first invaded Elvenheim.

Furthermore, Diablos possessed an incredibly powerful force according to the settings. With a single gesture, it can shatter mountains and even reverse the heavens and earth, so one could easily imagine the extent of its power.

As Arwen immersed herself in the increasingly serious situation, she briefly glanced at Fieren. He was still standing there with a stern expression, waiting.

Finally, she reached the page he had mentioned, wondering what kind of magic would be there. Arwen delved deeper into the story as she turned the page.

'...Power fusion with Eir?'

Eir was one of the representatives of the Dark Elves and one of the warriors mentioned in Volume 13. Among the Dark Elves, Eir held the title of 'Dark Guide,' given to the most exceptional warrior among them.

In other words, someone like Ruden, the leader of the elven warriors, who has extraordinary and unmatched strength. This warrior has started fighting to protect Elvenheim.

Even though the Dark Elves in the real world were once exiled after a terrible civil war, their deep affection remained. Alvenheim was their homeland, a place where the roots of their hearts were planted by the gods, so it's only natural.

Therefore, it's not at all surprising that the Dark Elf in Xenon's Biography fought for Elvenheim. Despite lingering conflicts between different races, 'Ruden' and 'Eir' have become one for the sake of Elvenheim.

Their united hearts are directed towards the corrupted World Tree, which was originally a gift from the gods but now must be destroyed. If they were to step back, Diablos would resurrect, and this world would head towards destruction. The two heroes are well aware of this fact, leaving them with only one choice.

'But breaking through the Seven Sins would be difficult...'

Just dealing with Lucifer alone would be a challenge, not to mention the other Seven Sins. Other elves were supporting them in clearing a path, but it's clear that it's impossible. So, there's only one option left: 'Cooperation.'

And not just any cooperation that would combine their strength into a power of 2, but one that produces a power of 10 to incinerate the corrupted World Tree.

The Elven hero, Ruden, and the Dark Elf hero, Eir, both understood this and thus proceeded with their final decision.

'Fusion... you say? What kind of ability is this?'

It was the ability to truly become 'one,' a 'fusion(?).'"

Over hundreds of years, they accumulated mana, knowledge, divine power, and finally transformed even their own essence into pure energy.

Using their bodies as kindling, they changed the mana into a raging fire that could burn everything.

Ruden followed the God of Light, and Eir followed the Goddess of Darkness. Despite their different natures, they belonged to the same race.

[Submit to overwhelming power!]

Eventually, the two heroes transformed into one massive energy entity and began their march towards the contaminated World Tree. Neither Ruden nor Eir, but a pure energy being emitted a mixed voice as they moved forward.

With a single wave of their hand, even high-ranking devils were devoured by the mighty energy and obliterated, not to mention the lesser devils beneath them.

If the limit of a person's power output is 100, then the pure energy entity exceeded that limit. Furthermore, since it would naturally perish once all energy is lost, it possessed a quality of absorbing all surrounding energy.

And that energy was replenished by absorbing the nearby devils. Even the black mana infused by the devils was simply considered 'energy,' so there was no difficulty in advancing.

The problem was that this ability did not discriminate against allies. The description mentioned that even the Elven warrior supporting the surroundings was sucked in.

When faced with an entirely unexpected situation, even the Seven Deadly Sins were left bewildered and unable to act recklessly. Meanwhile, the energy entity had already reached the World Tree.

Feeling the crisis, Diablos hurriedly gave orders to the Seven Deadly Sins, but the energy entity was one step ahead. Subsequently, they, or perhaps the 'one', reached out towards the contaminated World Tree and murmured in a low voice.

[For Elvenheim.]

The appearance of the Energy Entity marked the end here. From then on, the perspective shifted towards Xenon and his companions.

Xenon's group, who had been sheltering the remaining residents of Elvenheim, immediately turned their attention to the flow of enormous mana detected from the World Tree.

What they witnessed was a massive explosion that enveloped the entire World Tree. A blindingly bright flash burst forth for an instant before gradually subsiding.

As the light faded, the World Tree, which had stood firm for 3000 years, vanished without a trace, leaving behind only a giant mushroom cloud. It was a moment when the heroic sacrifice of the two protagonists slightly delayed the resurrection of the Great Devil.

“... ..”

After one volume came to an end, Arwen blinked her gray eyes. As expected of the Xenon's Biography, she found herself deeply engrossed and lost track of time while reading.

However, she couldn't deviate from her original purpose. She tore her gaze away from the book and looked ahead.

“Did you read it all?”

Perhaps noticing that Arwen had read the crucial parts, Fieren asked in his distinct, elderly voice. Arwen felt a bit embarrassed by the fact that she had been so absorbed in reading Xenon's Biography and replied with a forced cough.

“I've read all the parts you mentioned. The scene where Ruden and Eir became a pure energy entity to destroy the World Tree was quite impressive. But is this becoming a problem?”

“... My Queen, 3000 years is an exceedingly long time even for us Elves. Just as the water in the upper reaches of a river dries up, revealing the bottom downstream, history and traditions also follow the same pattern. If our ancestors were to destroy all records, there would be nothing left for future generations.”

Fieren used a metaphor that anyone, even children, could understand to explain to Arwen. Arwen initially had a puzzled expression but quickly caught on to its meaning.

It meant that the ancestral records were intentionally erased to make them disappear. Indeed, most of the records of the civil war with the Dark Elves were lost, but a small portion was still preserved in the sanctuary.

However, completely erasing the records themselves meant that the ancestors considered it a very serious matter. Arwen urgently asked Fieren while showing him the 14th volume.

“So, does the content written here mean it's a lost magic from the past?”

“Yes. The magic described as 'Fusion' is the name of that magic. It was also used in the Devil War 3000 years ago. It transforms people into pure energy beings and combines that energy to give birth to a massive living organism. The book only mentions two people becoming energy beings, but in reality, it is possible with several people.”

“Really...”

Arwen was stunned and couldn't find the words to speak. At the same time, she was filled with questions.

Is Isaac, who even knows about the lost magic, truly a prophet or someone from the future? And how does Fieren know about the existence of this magic and why it was forbidden?

Various doubts swirled in her mind, but for now, she had to start with how Fieren knew about this magic. She hesitated for a moment before asking Fieren in a hushed voice.

“...Then how do you know that this magic is forbidden? If you know about it, you must also know why it was prohibited.”

“Of course. This is one more reason why I am convinced that Xenon is a prophet or a regressor. It’s the effect that occurred after becoming an energy being. A formless energy entity is destined to eventually vanish. To delay that fate even a little, they indiscriminately absorb energy from their surroundings. You must have seen descriptions of how not only demons but also the supporting warriors were sucked into the energy entity.”

“Gigantic energies possess the property of absorbing the energy around it... I’ve heard that theory long ago. But the Council, including you, dismissed it as nonsense and discarded it.”

“It wasn’t nonsense, it was the truth. An unimaginable energy possesses the property of absorbing everything around it.”

“... ..”

It was too dangerous a truth, so they deceived others, calling it false. Arwen’s expression grew more rigid.

“During the devil war, the situation was so desperate that we had no choice but to use fusion magic. However, that changed after the war. Our ancestors realized that through fusion, they could turn people into a single massive mana. But don’t you, Your Majesty, know what would happen when that fact becomes known?”

“... ..”

Using people as ‘mana.’ Once that truth spreads widely, it is highly likely that gruesome human experiments will take place in the shadows.

Not only that, but the current civilization has advanced far beyond the time of the devil war, and the population has multiplied several times. As described in Fieren’s

explanation, fusion—meaning the joining—was not limited to just two people, but multiple people could perform the magic, just like in Xenon’s Biography.

If certain individuals were to execute with impure intentions... It’s evident that a dreadful tragedy would occur. Even if some energy entities were created, they wouldn’t be possible to annihilate and will only move forward.

Since our ancestors also anticipated this, there is a high probability that they completely eradicated any records. Arwen concealed her concern, then asked quietly.

“I will ask again before that. How do you know about this forbidden magic?”

“My father taught me it, and he learned it from my grandfather, who, in turn, learned it from my great-grandfather. Though the documented records disappeared, it was orally passed down to make us aware of the dangers.”

“Is it truly such a perilous magic? Not just an excuse to find Xenon?”

“If that were the case, why would I have dared to be disrespectful and sought out the Queen? This book has already spread widely in the human world. We must prohibit its publication as soon as possible and, more importantly, find Xenon.”

“Hmm...”

If one only listens to the words, it’s a very serious matter. This magic called “Fusion” should not be known to the world, as it might lead to crossing an irreparable river.

However, it’s impossible to bring Isaac here as well. Arwen, with a pensive gaze, glanced at the 14th volume of Xenon’s Biography and suddenly had a question.

Is “Fusion” something only elves can use, or can other races use it as well? What if it’s exclusive to elves?

In that case, she could block it from her side. Even if a few thoughtless individuals unknowingly conducted experiments, punishment could put an end to it.

Above all, if Xenon’s Biography was truly a “prophecy,” there shouldn’t be any major issues. The fusion mentioned in Xenon’s Biography was not something that just anyone could do, it explains that only warriors with pure spiritual power can perform such a magic.

In Xenon's Biography, Ruden and Eir are heroes who chose to sacrifice themselves to protect their homeland and even prevent the resurrection of the great devil, Diablos. If only such heroes can perform the fusion, then there should be no problem.

Of course, the theory that a huge energy absorbs surrounding energies was dangerous in itself. However, this can be controlled through agreements with leaders of each nation.

'There are still some shady aspects...'

Because the Council of Elders had made outrageous claims in the past, it was difficult to believe them immediately. It could also be an excuse to bring Isaac here.

Arwen quickly organized her thoughts and then turned her gaze to Fieren. Fieren was still waiting with an unchanged expression.

"Fieren, the Grand Councilor. I have one last question."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Is the fusion you mentioned something that only our elves can use, or can other races use it too?"

"It is something that only we elves, who have been chosen by the gods, can use. We are the ones with the purest mana."

Then, there should be no problem. Although some foolish humans might want to try it once, there is a high chance they will be immediately restrained.

Besides, wizards are highly valuable assets to humans. They wouldn't be crazy enough to attempt such a thing.

However, human experimentation takes a bit of time. Nevertheless, since this is essentially a kind of human surrogate, you could dismiss it as 'black magic' and strictly prohibit it. If anyone violates this, they can be directly executed by the Holy Kingdom.

There's no need to be in a rush. Isaac must have written about this, desiring such results.

'I can go and ask him directly later, to see if he is truly a prophet.'

Maybe Isaac wrote about it in his book because he personally has seen the 'Fusion'. Arwen replied, emphasizing the weight of the matter toward Fieren.

“Then there shouldn’t be a problem. As long as only elves can use it, there won’t be any issues. We will control it ourselves.”

“Your Majesty, this in itself could cause significant problems if news about this forbidden magic spreads. Please consider it carefully. This is not an issue to be taken lightly.”

“Hmm. Why are you so uneasy? Don’t you trust yourself, the one who has ruled Alvenheim until now? Or is it because of the Dark Elves?”

Startled, Fieern flinched at her words. Observing his reaction, Arwen smiled inwardly.

‘I knew it.’

Translators note:

Chapter 171: Forbidden Magic (2)

When Arwen noticed the trembling of Fieren's body, she almost burst out laughing. On the surface, because of forbidden magic, she had to be serious, but inside, she couldn't stop herself from laughing.

In Xenon's Biography, the combination magic, or 'fusion,' as it's theoretically called, was undoubtedly a highly dangerous magic. Fusion sacrifices oneself as an offering and goes so far as to indiscriminately absorb the surrounding energy, making its dangers impossible to ignore.

However, Fieren's true concern was not about the danger of fusion. If you carefully review the process of fusion mentioned in Xenon's Biography, you could only roughly grasp the idea.

It would be enough to subtly hint at the future that may happen later if forbidden magic was mentioned in a book. It was excessive to cause a fuss to this extent.

Furthermore, Fieren already knew that fusion was a magic that only elves could use. For Fieren, who ruled Alvenheim for centuries, it was an easy task to prohibit specific magic.

Moreover, since the last speech, the popularity of the Queen, Arwen, in Alvenheim has risen dramatically. If Arwen strictly prohibited it, the citizens would follow obediently.

'But the problem is the fusion between elves and dark elves.'

The problem lies in the fact that the subjects of fusion are not elves and elves, but elves and dark elves. Although it was overshadowed by the issue of mixed-blood, the appearance of dark elves has captured readers' attention.

Who are the dark elves? Another race of elves with completely different culture and traditions, despite sharing the same origin.

Sometimes they appear in human society to buy necessary items or conduct investigations, but they really come out very rarely. This is why humans look at dark

elves with curious eyes or express their curiosity directly when they meet them.

Like this, Dark Elves were originally one of the lesser-known races in the world. However, when they appeared in Xenon's Biography, many people paid attention, wondering if Xenon knew a lot about Dark Elves.

Furthermore, the Dark Elves' portrayal based on the information advised by Siris was so close to reality that it was almost indistinguishable. Starting from their specialization in covert attacks to their ability to permanently conceal their bodies.

One could overlook the differences in their titles, as it was the least of the concerns. The biggest issue lay in the relationship between Elves and Dark Elves. Despite being overshadowed by the matter of mixed-blood, Xenon's Biography also elaborates extensively on why the relationship between Elves and Dark Elves became strained and the event that led to the Dark Elves' banishment from Elvenheim.

Thanks to Xenon's Biography, the fact that the Dark Elves chose to exile themselves to avoid an internal conflict became widely known. The truth buried deep in the history of the Sanctuary was revealed through Xenon's Biography.

Elven scholars, including humans, began serious research to verify its authenticity, and some even set out on journeys to the habitats of Dark Elves. Although it is currently a quiet period to gather evidence for confirmation, once it is proven, Alvenheim will be engulfed in yet another shock.

'The Dark Elf problem is somewhat progressing positively.'

Arwen anticipated that the matter concerning Dark Elves would proceed smoothly. After all, they have been exchanging interactions with the Dark Elves for this very purpose.

Instead, she should express her gratitude to Isaac. Despite Rain stealing the manuscript, the Dark Elves were portrayed favorably in Xenon's Biography.

Therefore, the fusion of Elves and Dark Elves described in Volume 14 can be seen as a true integration between the two races. The conflicts that once divided the two nations during times of crisis are set aside as they come together to fight against the evil threatening the world.

As the saying goes, "One's clothes get wet in light rain," and it's only a matter of time before Alvenheim's perspective on the Dark Elves gradually changes. If the Alvenheim

citizens view the Dark Elves even slightly differently, it won't be long before they are allowed into Alvenheim.

No matter how hard Arwen tries, if the people of Alvenheim continue to fear the Dark Elves, assimilation will be nearly impossible. However, through Xenon's Biography, if their perspectives change, they can overcome misunderstandings and take a step forward.

To prevent that from happening, Fieren planned to censor Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography. The pretext was the presence of forbidden magic, but the real reason was the dangerous intent hidden within.

“Sigh... Fieren, the Grand Councilor.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Is this really because of the Dark Elves? You also know well the significance of Elves and Dark Elves fusing in this book. It represents the unity of two races that were once divided by the past conflicts. It might be a very sensitive matter for some individuals who insist on purity of blood.”

“The Dark Elves are those who hide in the darkness. We can't trust those who don't even show their faces.”

When Arwen pointed out sharply, Fieren seemed to have no intention of concealing his true feelings anymore, and he expressed his inner thoughts. Arwen almost showed a scornful expression but managed to suppress it.

In the end, his obsession with purity of blood remained. Though uniting was dangerous, and the fusion might be a forbidden magic, it's merely a pretext.

On this occasion, disregarding the usual protocol and even displaying rudeness, he had come to the Audience Chamber, leaving the members of the parliament behind. But nothing had changed. It was evident that Fieren had rushed in recklessly, speaking out of turn and causing a commotion.

“However, Your Majesty must also be aware of the danger of the fusion. It's a highly perilous magic. By now, it must be impossible to conceal it since it was already discovered. Before the forbidden magic spreads widely among the Dark Elves and others, we must quickly ban its publication.”

“You know that it isn’t practically feasible, don’t you? Alvenheim has been engaging in exchanges with other countries for decades now. Moreover, Xenon’s Biography has recently gained immense popularity even within Alvenheim. Are we suddenly going to halt all of that? Don’t you know it would erode trust in diplomacy?”

In the past, Xenon’s Biography was only read by a few in Alvenheim, but after the 12th volume, the demand skyrocketed.

Firstly, the fact that the heroine, Mary, is an Elf, attracted a lot of attention. And the tragic love story of Kair and Elisha caused a social stir and there was the half-blood situation.

Above all, even if by chance, the revelation of the contamination of the World Tree’s roots was enough to capture the Elves’ interest. Thanks to this, the publishing house was enjoying exceedingly happy days.

“Of course, I understand that. But even if the publishing house is unaware, isn’t mentioning the Minerva Empire a sensitive matter? Even if Xenon were from the Michelle Territory, nobody knows where he currently resides. The authority over Xenon’s Biography lies not with the Minerva Empire but with the publishing house.”

However, Fieren was not to be taken lightly. As he said, Xenon, or rather Isaac, had only mentioned being from the Michelle Territory, without granting authority to the Minerva Empire.

If Isaac were to reveal his identity and join the Minerva Empire, things might have been different, but for now, the situation remains the same. Moreover, there is a high possibility that a worst-case scenario, “serial discontinuation,” could occur if the higher-ups caused harm to the publishing company.

Having experienced the bitterness of serial discontinuation and its consequences, the Minerva Empire would find itself in a difficult position. Despite being a book that sells well in their country, they have no real authority over it.

The only thing the Minerva Empire can do is receive taxes from the publishing company. They try to squeeze out whatever they can by conducting unexpected inspections every month, but the publishing company’s CEO was already skilled in evading such situations, leaving the Minerva Empire with no real gains.

“So, even if we censor it in our Alvenheim, the damage will only fall upon the publishing company, and Minerva Empire will be barely affected. Moreover, we have the pretext of forbidden magic, so there should be no problem with censorship.”

“A pretext...”

Arwen mumbled softly at the word ‘pretext’ that Fieren had mentioned. Up to Volume 13, she could easily dismiss the nonsense the council had spoken, but this time, the pretext was solid.

Forbidden magic, an ability that should not even be mentioned in books. While there are ‘books’ about military tactics, there are no ‘spell books.’ If even a little detail is described, it must be burned without a doubt.

And the depiction of fusion in Xenon’s Biography was somewhat ambiguous. The process of fusion was not explained in detail, filled with rather abstract phrases.

Is that enough reason to censor it? She sighed after contemplating for a while.

“I do not allow it.”

“But...”

“Do you really not know how significant an impact Xenon’s Biography has? Do you think censoring it will prevent forbidden magic from spreading?”

There’s a saying: If someone tells you not to do something, you want to do it even more. Especially scholars and wizards with a strong thirst for knowledge often make such mistakes.

It’s understandable to censor Xenon’s Biography, there was a very good reason to believe that forbidden magic is contained within. However, scholars and wizards already dispatched here may raise doubts upon hearing the news. They might wonder why this magic is forbidden.

Above all, the biggest flaw was that it has already spread widely in the human world. Many elves live in human society, some of them even of mixed blood. The powerful force and influence of their already-rooted culture cannot be stopped simply by censorship.

“Let alone children...”

Arwen almost blurted out her real thoughts in her excitement. She quickly composed herself and continued smoothly.

“...even if they read those books. It’s doubtful if censorship can do anything. Don’t you think it might just lead to more illegal activities?”

“... ..”

“Just earlier, you said that Dark Elves are unreliable individuals. But, Grand Councilor, do you really believe they would unite in vengeance to threaten our Alvenheim?”

“...It’s not entirely impossible, but Your Majesty, do you truly trust them? Even those whose appearances and hearts are dark?”

Fieren wrinkled his nose in disdain and mentioned the Dark Elf’s skin color. In response, Arwen let out a light snort.

“I can’t tell who’s black-hearted just by looking at them. It’s often those with the most sinister intentions who appear the most trustworthy. At least the ones who are blind to the light are more believable. They have the ability to see through the darkness and perceive the truth.”

“... ..”

“I won’t censor anything. Leave Xenon’s Biography imported to Alvenheim as they are. Do you have anything else to say?”

“...Your Majesty, do you really plan to take them back to Alvenheim? It’s been hundreds of years since they were banished. Centuries have likely brought significant changes to their culture and traditions.”

Fieren continued in a composed tone, sensing that Arwen couldn’t be swayed by his words. Arwen listened to him half-heartedly, expecting more empty talk.

However, contrary to her expectations, Fieren’s words were quite realistic.

“A clash of cultures often leads to ruptures. Although Your Majesty may see it with hopeful eyes, they may not be the same. Their own culture and traditions might be consumed by fear. That fear could soon cause another social turmoil, much like the Half-Blood situation.”

“... ..”

“Are you certain, Your Majesty? Are you certain about the integration of two different races with the same roots but different stems? I want to ask about practical solutions,

not just relying on books. Dark Elves have witnessed the consequences of the Half-Blood situation, so please reconsider once more.”

As an Elf secretly engaging with the Dark Elves, Arwen found the question absurd. However, the Council, including Feren, remained unaware of this fact, making the question valid.

The issue was that within the question, whether intended or not, Arwen was being underestimated. The half-blood situation was different from this one, where Dark Elves are involved.

Though the half-blood issue was contained just before it went awry, the Dark Elves were already divided. Fieren was questioning if Arwen’s ambitions were realistically achievable.

‘It’s truly remarkable how you manage to infuriate people.’

Since the Racial War, the kings of Alvenheim have been frequently replaced before Arwen’s reign. The Council’s constant probing could easily wear down one’s patience.

But Arwen was different. Born a half-blood, she excelled in all sorts of strategizing and this did not faze her much. With a smile hidden within, Arwen spoke in a soft voice.

“You speak of ambitions... Then let me ask in return, Councilor Fieren, what are your ideals?”

“Naturally, it’s the peace of Alvenheim. If that peace were to be disrupted, I would do anything to preserve it.”

“Then, would you even risk your own position for that peace?”

“... ..”

Arwen’s direct question left Fieren without an answer. No, he couldn’t answer.

“Ruling Alvenheim peacefully... It may seem good at first glance. But Councilor Fieren, that peace is nothing but stagnation. The people might be content with what they see without knowing what’s wrong. Ignoring inconvenient truths is akin to being a frog in a well.”

“Are you truly intent on shattering the peace, Your Majesty? That would be tyranny.”

“No, I too prefer the tranquility now. However, look at humans. They achieve endless progress while disturbing their own peace. Even in the racial war, humans have initiated aggression against us and triumphed gloriously. To achieve progress, one must be prepared to disrupt peace. But...”

She then gazed down at Fieren with a disdainful gray glance. A good-for-nothing waiting to be defeated without even putting up a fight.

“What do you really want? ‘Peace’ and ‘comfort’ must be clearly distinguished. You are facing a huge storm, yet you are only thinking of avoiding it without any preparation. At least, that’s how I see it.”

“... ..”

“But when the typhoon grows stronger, even avoidance becomes impossible. There will be nowhere left to escape. However, those who are prepared and ready for the impact? Unlike those who are completely engulfed and disappear, they will endure steadfastly. That’s development, and behind the typhoon, peace will inevitably come. It has always been that way throughout history.”

Having given a lengthy explanation, Arwen delivered the final blow.

“Was my explanation too difficult? Then let me ask another question, sir. Why are you involved in politics?”

“... ..”

“Do you think Alvenheim will truly become peaceful by merely implementing policies that turn a blind eye and amount to mere bluff? I believe it will only lead to an increase in smuggling and the rise of lawless people.”

Clench-

Arwen was directly denying even the significance of the Elder Council’s existence, yet Fieren could only clench his fist as she voiced her straightforward remarks. From the standpoint of a politician engaged in politics, such words could only be regarded as highly offensive.

However, what stirred an even greater anger was the fact that there was no way to refute her. The Queen, who was thought to be a novice, had gained even more influence since the half-blood incident.

And the decisive reason for this increased influence... only one came to mind immediately.

After barely suppressing the boiling rage within him, Fieren quietly spoke. It was a statement tinged with hidden anger due to him being so furious.

“...I understand Your Majesty’s thoughts. Let’s treat the censorship as if it never happened.”

“Understood. Is there anything else you wish to say?”

“No, nothing else. However, I will personally handle the matter of Xenon’s whereabouts. Simply the fact that he knows forbidden magic is enough to identify him as a dangerous individual.”

After having visited the publishing house already, Arwen responded as if nothing had happened, repressing her inner thoughts.

“Do as you please. If you think you can handle the storm that will come when you touch Xenon.”

“He won’t be broken so easily. Farewell for now.”

Fieren left with those words, walking confidently towards the tightly closed door of the study. Once his figure had completely disappeared, Arwen released the tension in her body and let out a sigh.

It had consumed a great deal of mental energy, but it wasn’t entirely in vain. She looked around and then down at her thigh with a pleased expression.

On her thigh lay Volume 14 of Xenon’s Biography, which Fieren hadn’t collected.

“Still, it wasn’t entirely useless.”

Arwen chuckled and began reading the book with a gleeful expression.

Translators note:

Chapter 172: Book 14 (1)

The 14th volume of Xenon's Biography has made its appearance in the world. And once again, it has caused a significant impact, as always.

First and foremost, it introduced the ability for Elves and Dark Elves to truly become one, through a magic known as 'Fusion'.

This ability was not just a mere imagination but a magical curiosity that caught the attention of numerous scholars and wizards. Furthermore, the current situation seemed to confirm that Xenon (Isaac) was, at least partly, considered a prophet.

Up to this point, it might have been merely a matter of varying opinions, but everything changed after the events of Volume 14, which unfolded in Alvenheim.

[Fusion, as depicted in Volume 14, is an actual magic that can be performed. However, it is highly unethical and strictly prohibited due to its severe repercussions.]

[It was magic once used by Elves during the Devil War 3000 years ago. However, after receiving the World Tree as a gift from gods, it was considered too dangerous and all records were destroyed.]

[Fusion, or rather, the unification, can only be achieved by Elves chosen by the gods, and among them, only noble-minded warriors...]

The remarkable scene of Fusion depicted in Volume 14 of Xenon's Biography was revealed as an actual usable magic, albeit a forbidden one.

The official term was "Unification," and as described in the book, it doesn't disappear until all its energy is depleted, absorbing everything around it to replenish that energy.

As it is only a pure energy, it doesn't distinguish between regular mana and dark mana and absorbs both. Unification can create a calamity like in the book.

When the news spread, especially among the elves, in Alvenheim, people were astounded.

[Anyone attempting to harness Unification will face severe punishment, and the same goes for those who attempt to exploit its theory.]

[Even though the Queen has issued orders, the scholars and magicians still show interest in the theory described in the book.]

[The theory that a massive energy absorbs surrounding energy to prevent its own destruction was once proposed by a scholar from Yggdrasil. However, it was quickly discredited by strong opposition from the council.]

Unification triggered various reactions. Although Arwen threatened severe punishment, she felt it might not be enough to quell the curiosity of scholars and magicians.

Some worried about the possibility of a truly dangerous situation arising, while others insisted that the theory was impossible. Their reasoning was that the phenomenon of an energy entity absorbing surrounding energy to prevent its own destruction requires a form of “self-awareness.” Since the birth of the energy entity through Unification ultimately results in a living being with self-awareness, just like any other living creature, it would struggle to survive when faced with danger.

Therefore, to verify this phenomenon, it would be necessary to create an energy entity with self-awareness. No matter how infinite the power of magic may be, “creation” was still exclusive to deities. Even the magicians realized this and abandoned their attempts cleanly.

As it was, I thought I could overlook the matter of unification, but the real problem arose after the situation settled down.

[Xenon knew the forbidden knowledge of unification. If so, could he know other things as well?]

[Looking back, all the knowledge he knows is dangerously saturated. If he truly knows the future, his knowledge could become a weapon.]

[There is no doubt that Xenon is the one who saved this world from crisis. However, the fact remains that his knowledge can be dangerous.]

With the misunderstanding that Isaac even knows forbidden magic, negative evaluations also rose to the surface.

In fact, the assessment that Xenon is dangerous existed even before, but due to being absorbed in the book, it did not attract much attention. Moreover, even this was

culturally dangerous, not meaning that the author himself was dangerous.

However, starting from Volume 14, they began to be more cautious.

If he knows forbidden magic that doesn't even exist in records, then could there be other dangerous knowledge? So they thought.

Xenon was a hero who revealed the signs of contamination of the World Tree and devil summoning, but precisely because of that, his knowledge is very dangerous. Such evaluation slowly started to emerge.

When someone achieves great accomplishments, there are those who admire them, but at the same time, there are those who envy them. People, especially the human heart, are treacherous.

Throughout history, eminent figures who left their names in history received respect from the masses, but along with that, they also faced significant constraints.

Starting from Volume 14, a faction that has been interpreting Isaac's actions negatively and seeing him as a threat has gradually started to emerge. Naturally, they had the pretext of forbidden magic, making it easy to criticize him.

Of course, there was no prominent figure openly slandering him in public, especially those who acknowledged him as a Luminous's saint. The criticism mentioned in the newspaper was also clumsily written anonymously, without revealing the author's name.

[Those who harm the saint acknowledged by Luminous will be severely dealt with.]

[Do you not fear God's wrath?]

[While it is true that his knowledge is dangerous, there are no immediate issues. He is, in fact, a benefactor of the world, preventing the invasion of devils.]

Above all, due to people's trust in Luminous, there was no way that fanatic followers, like those from Xavier, would stay silent. Even though they no longer showed fanatical aspects compared to the time when they indiscriminately slaughtered demons, their loyalty remained unchanged.

This sentiment was not limited to Xavier but was also prevalent in the Minerva Empire, Ters Kingdom, and even in Helium. Helium, of course, requires no further explanation, and the Minerva Empire and Ters Kingdom were in a state of mutual restraint.

Anyway, it wasn't just individuals, nations themselves stepped forward to protect Isaac, leaving those who had poured out criticism in a position where they could only regret their actions. Nevertheless, some continued to raise their voices, emphasizing that Xenon's knowledge was dangerous.

In fact, their arguments seemed reasonable at first glance, which further intensified the pursuit of Isaac's identity. Thanks to this, there was one person who suffered the most.

“Ah, really! I already said I don't know! I'm just responsible for receiving the manuscript and sending it to the printing press!”

“You said you would tell us who gave you the manuscript. Speak up already. What do you want? Money? Or honor?”

It was the CEO of a publishing company. As always, he grumbled, seemingly frustrated, as he addressed the nobles who had come to track down Xenon.

He could tolerate the previous visit from the nobles of Alvenheim. After all, if he didn't betray Xenon and had Matthew forge the signature, it would have been over.

In reality, the operation hit the mark perfectly, and the nobles of Alvenheim didn't come back anymore. After that, he enjoyed life, watching the scene while his money was duplicated with great pleasure.

However, due to the forbidden magic described in Volume 14, those nobles came back once again. It was because Xenon, who even knew the magic lost from the records, was deemed extremely dangerous.

Even though they offered him money and power, the CEO valued his loyalty to Isaac. But this time, the “justification” was too strong. If he thought about why the forbidden magic was called forbidden, the answer was apparent.

Because of this, the publishing company's CEO once again encountered the stubborn nobles of Alvenheim.

“If Xenon's knowledge causes great chaos in the world, you, who allowed it to happen, will be responsible too. Do you think it'll be okay? You might lose all the money you've saved up until now.”

A tall elf man, dressed in luxurious silk-like attire, asked the CEO in a threatening tone, though somewhat hesitantly. Being an elf, he naturally looked down on the CEO due to his taller stature.

However, the CEO didn't back down an inch. He had faced several nobles until now, and an elf noble wouldn't make any difference.

"It's money. I'll stop if I earn enough. But I can't betray a person just for that."

"Hmph. Loyalty, huh? You must be saying that because you can earn more money."

The elf noble spoke as if he was not bothered. It was true in a sense, and the CEO had to seal his lips tightly. He had no intention of revealing Isaac's whereabouts, not even a trace. The moment he did, his connection with Isaac would be completely severed.

For now, his priority was to drive away the nobles somehow. The CEO clenched his hands and quietly sighed at the annoying elves.

"...Is it really going to be solved like this? I'm already busy to death, and now I have a headache. Come back later."

"Remember, human. The knowledge Xenon possesses is very dangerous. Not only to us but to many others who share similar thoughts."

The elf nobles left, seemingly threatening without being threatening, and the CEO let out a sigh as their footsteps gradually faded away. He sank into his chair, feeling powerless. Whether it was dangerous knowledge or whatever they were roasting him for, he couldn't understand. But that probably meant finding Isaac would be equally difficult.

The CEO himself was the only clue and connection, so the chances were high that they came with the intention of clutching at straws.

Last time, they came simply to 'verify' a signature, but now they were deliberately 'tracking' Isaac down. Besides the nobles of Alvenheim, there were others who were also searching for Isaac. However, being elves, they carried an entirely different weight.

'He seems to have some skills... If they are elves who use magic skillfully, it will be dangerous.'

Although they don't have the authority to directly investigate taxes like the Minerva Empire, the elves are much better at tracking step by step. No matter how skillfully Hawk hides the manuscript path when he sends it, getting caught was just a matter of time.

The reason he hasn't been caught until now is that he always hired different messengers, and above all, the elves didn't show much interest. At least until the release of Volume 13.

While Hawk's method of communication might be effective with humans, it's uncertain whether it will work with elves. Elves were one of the races that could use the power of magic as naturally as breathing.

'No, this won't do. If things continue like this, I should send a warning.'

That way, even if problems arise, he won't be held responsible. Just before the CEO wrote the letter to Isaac, he looked around.

Come to think of it, those damn elves might have pulled off some tricks while staying here. No matter how urgent it is, one should be cautious, right?

With that in mind, the CEO decided it would be better to write the letter at home instead of the publishing house, leaning back on the chair. The recently replaced leather chair made him feel comfortable.

'I'm working so hard, but what is that man, Xenon, doing?'

What is he doing, indeed?

"Isaac."

"Yeah?"

"You're not really a prophet or a seer, are you? This isn't just a coincidence, is it?"

"You say it's a coincidence."

"Hmm, I see. Anyway, let's get out of here quickly."

"Suddenly?"

He had a happy life with his beloved partner to enjoy.

"Do you not want to mess me up?"

"Not at all."

That day became a long night.

Translators note:

Chapter 173: Book 14 (2)

As the 14th volume was released, I suddenly had a thought. Perhaps, by now, the world might hate me. Luminous and Mora may have different perspectives, but from my point of view, it's hard not to think that way. The contamination of the World Tree's roots, devil summoning, reapers, mana engine, and so on – there were already enough headaches with all these elements, and now people are making a fuss about forbidden magic and whatnot.

I merely wrote the novel based on my imagination, but now that those imaginings have manifested into reality, it feels surreal and overwhelming. Maybe it's time to give up. Why should my imagination turn into reality anyway? What's the point?

What's even more distressing is that even if I deny being responsible for those events, nobody will pay attention to my excuses. The incidents have been piling up consecutively, making it hard to dismiss them as mere coincidences. The only silver lining is that some factions acknowledge the danger of the knowledge I possess and attempt to exclude it. However, they surfaced momentarily, facing fierce criticism, before retreating back into obscurity. In truth, I've faced resentment and jealousy before, so it didn't bother me much.

However, now the scope seems to have broadened slightly. While it was common for novelists to criticize me in the past, now even nobles were getting involved.

And they thought just like those at Alvenheim. 'If one knows forbidden magic, wouldn't they also know other dangerous knowledge?', like that.

Before Alvenheim, Xenon had faced many situations where he was mocked and even attacked by human nobles. He found himself cornered in various ways.

As a result, some prominent figures spoke harshly, but they soon met with backlash and faded away. However, the cautionary atmosphere remained, and it weighed heavily on my shoulders. What started as a hobby, writing novels, became a burden because I didn't know what might become reality in the future, making it difficult to continue.

I even had to contemplate completely revising the part about the beastmen I had carefully planned. But it's tough to get into that part of the story as well.

I had no choice but to think about whether I should continue writing steadily while clearing my mind or take a break for a while.

[Isn't it better to keep going like this? Whatever you write from now on, I'm sure it will have meaning.]

'You're just piling on the burden without giving any advice.'

[Even if I wanted to help you, neither you nor I can do anything, right? The future that's already set in stone can only be prepared for, not stopped.]

In the end, I visited Mora to receive advice and gain divine power for the night activities with Cecily, but it yielded little.

According to what Mora told me, the signs of devil summoning were just the beginning, these events were already destined to happen.

One of the reasons I answered "I don't know" when asked about fusion was because of this situation. I had no idea what would happen in the already fixed future.

[Didn't you have such a saying on Earth? 'First, poop. Then you'll become famous. Right?']

'Become famous first. Then even if you poop, people will applaud you. What will happen if you just poop carelessly? They'll treat you like a crazy person.'

[Oh, I see. But as long as they understand, it's fine!]

Sigh-

I let out a deep sigh in my heart. Anyway, there's a very high chance that from now on, regardless of what I write, people will try to figure out if it's true or false, just as Mora said. They treat the novel as if it were an actual prophecy, not just a work of fiction.

The problem is, it's ambiguous whether Luminous and Mora would approve of it, as their involvement might have unintended consequences. As the saying goes, once a fixed perception is formed, it's hard to change. You don't have to look far back, just think about how the demons were treated for over 1,000 years.

The contamination of the World Tree's roots alone was at a suspicious level, and now with the revelation of the forbidden fusion magic, Xenon's Biography will undoubtedly be treated as more than just a novel—practically as a prophecy or something of the sort.

'...Isn't there any way?'

[Of course, there's nothing we can do to help. The best way is to include stories that are impossible in this world.]

'And the result is what it is now.'

[Well... that's true too.]

After contemplating for a while, Mora tried to persuade me with a casual tone.

[Just ignoring it seems like the best way. It's true you came from a different world, but you're not a prophet or someone who regressed, right? As you keep writing your book, someday people will understand.]

'The problem is the impact that might occur before that. As you said, misunderstandings will probably be resolved, but the phenomena caused by the book...'

[We can handle that from our end. Or ask us. Write about it and see how people react.]

'When I asked about the fusion last time, you said you didn't know.'

[You should have asked more specifically. Instead of 'Is it okay?', what kind of reactions will come out? If you ask vaguely, we can only answer that we don't know. You have to ask the right questions if you want a definite answer.]

Seems like some coded program. I was in liberal arts, but I had a rough idea about programs.

'It feels a little unfriendly, though...'

[Well, as my brother also mentioned, knowing the future means buying time. And except for us, most other gods don't even bother with divination. It's often a difficult task to speak so candidly like this. You are special in that sense.]

'...I'm sorry. I was rude.'

I almost made a big mistake confronting a god. If their kindness continues, I may end up taking it for granted, but they are gods. Though not all-powerful, they are transcendental beings who can see into the future.

Throughout history, there are numerous examples of those who received the favor of gods but became arrogant and faced divine punishment. I must make sure not to become like that and should remain humble, at least as much as I can.

[It's okay. You're handsome, so I'll look at you with a generous heart. How about growing your hair long just once?]

'I'll pass on that. It's too much trouble to manage.'

[Oh, come on. Give it a try. There are plenty of men with long hair in this world, you know.]

Like Mora's complaint, there were more men with long hair in the world than one might think. However, most of them simply don't bother with maintenance, not for fashion reasons.

There are no places like salons where professionals cut hair, and there is no standardized hair style either. The exception might be soldiers who tend to keep their hair short because it could get caught on something during deployment or get pulled by an enemy.

I, too, considered growing my hair long at least once, but I gave up because I realized too late that even tying long hair is a cumbersome task.

'I'm sorry...'

[Alright, I understand. If that's your choice, there's nothing to be done. It's a pity though, I think it would suit you really well.]

'If the opportunity arises, I'll consider it.'

[Really? Alright then, I'll have to ask that person for a favor. Hehe.]

'... ...'

What a manipulative way to go about it. Hearing Mora's teasing laughter, I felt a mix of annoyance and excitement.

I can understand why the other gods find Mora exhausting. Being so frivolous, it's no wonder that mortals find it hard to deal with her.

The only fortunate thing, perhaps, is that she doesn't have a narrow mind and possesses a broad tolerance. Even the believers would find it difficult to confront Mora, but they don't fear her.

'...Mora, are you still there?'

[Yeah, did you call me?]

'Then, if I were to release the fifteenth volume now, what kind of response would I receive...'

I stopped myself from asking about the response to the publication of the fifteenth volume. While preparing thoroughly by checking the reactions in advance might be a good choice, it could inevitably affect my writing, both big and small. Moreover, there was the worry that my pre-planned story might become a complete mess. Knowing the future has its merits, but on the other hand, it means not experiencing growth.

Also, it wouldn't be right to keep seeking help from the gods every time I publish a book. I should find my own way forward, relying on others would mean standing still.

So, I gave up asking about the response to the fifteenth volume. It was evident that the reactions would be similar, and until people's misunderstanding was resolved, the only answer was to consistently release books.

Though I couldn't predict what incidents might occur during that time, it still wasn't a good choice to depend on someone else.

'...No, you're right, Mora. It seems the best way is to continue writing steadily until the misunderstanding is cleared.'

[You thought well. We can warn, but we can't force. The 'penalty' you know can only happen in the temple. The reason why wicked people can exist is also because of that.]

'Then, is it impossible for the believers to unite and pray for that wicked person to receive a penalty?'

[Before that, if we speak up, wouldn't people take care of that scoundrel on their own?]

'Oh... That makes sense.'

The word “take care of” didn’t suit the mouth of a god, but that’s why it left a stronger impression. In fact, after Luminous spoke, even Xavier’s cardinal became dedicated to the pilgrimage to find me. It was as if she had made it her life’s mission.

I pondered on what question to ask and recalled the reactions that came up last time. Unlike before, they said my knowledge was dangerous and I needed to be found immediately. Though my existence was only reported in the newspaper, there were still those who sought to protect me. Moreover, I heard that Alvenheim nobles had come looking for me as well.

If things continued this way, there might be a riot, so it seemed best to be prepared, especially for this aspect.

‘Mora, then, can you tell me what I need to be cautious about from now on? I would be grateful if you could also warn me about any dangers that might befall the people I love.’

[Hmm... Well, it seems like something interesting will happen soon. And it will happen at your mansion.]

‘What do you mean?’

I flinched at the thought of something happening at our mansion. I urgently asked with a sense of unease.

While I didn’t mind incidents occurring elsewhere, I wanted to prevent any trouble at the mansion. My mother had recently gotten pregnant with Lily, and if she were to experience any stress or complications, it could be a big problem. As I mentioned earlier, my mother is older than one might think.

Despite my concerns, Mora responded with an intrigued voice, leaving me with incomprehensible words.

[You’ll be able to witness hyenas sneak into a lion’s mouth without even realizing it.]

‘...I don’t really understand what you mean.’

[You’ll find out exactly one week later when you return to the mansion. There’s no need to worry about anything, nothing will happen to you. I’ll make sure of it.]

‘If that’s the case, then I’ll be relieved, but...’

Just the occurrence of any incidents at the mansion worried me greatly. During the exhibition, Rain once broke into the mansion, causing chaos. I think it's better to be thoroughly prepared. I wanted to prevent any harm to those around me because of me.

'Wouldn't it be better if Cecily noona was with me too?'

[That way, you can handle it more confidently. Oh, but I recommend you just sleep on that day. You might face an awkward situation for no reason.]

'...I understand. Is there anything else?'

[After that, you don't need to be involved, it will be taken care of automatically. You just focus on writing your book.]

'Do you mean I can just stay still?'

[Instead of staying still, how about writing a little letter? It could be quite amusing.]

I wonder what's going on at our mansion to make it sound amusing. I tilted my head in puzzlement, but until that day comes, it will be hard to figure out.

It's difficult even for Mora to tell me directly, because if that happened, the future could be completely messed up. To prevent that, I didn't ask for details.

'Thank you. Then I'll trust only Mora and return to the mansion in a week.'

[Alright. Before you leave, you'll receive divine power, right?]

'Yes.'

Before Mora left, as always, she transferred her divine power to me. As Mora's divine power was absorbed into me, I felt my mind becoming calmer and my thoughts clearer.

Unlike Luminous, Mora's divine power didn't give an immediate impact. But if Luminous' divine power could make you feel its strength directly, Mora's was different, stabilizing the mind.

Still, through the first night with Cecily, I could understand how crucial Mora's divine power was. If it weren't for her divine power, I would have exhausted myself and collapsed before Cecily did.

'But today, it feels like there's more... Is it just my imagination?'

[It's just your imagination. Having more divine power is better, right?]

'That's true.'

At first, I accepted it without any suspicion, but the problem arose the next morning. Cecily, not being affected by the evil cycle, fell asleep after a few attempts, allowing me to rest comfortably as well.

Huh? Isaac, your hair... Why is it so long?"

"...Oh, really."

And when I opened my eyes again, my hair had grown long, reaching down to my shoulders and even beyond. It was obvious that Mora had played a prank on me.

Even without trying, my red hair stood out, and as it grew longer, it exuded even more vibrancy. Eventually, with irritation in my heart, I asked Cecily again to tidy up my hair, but...

"Has it already grown? It hasn't even been an hour."

"What?"

No matter how much she cut, my hair grew back quickly like seaweed. Cutting it seemed pointless as it continued to grow endlessly, so I had no choice but to give up.

"Just let me take care of it and tie it up like this."

"...Do as you please."

"Am I the first one to tie your hair?" I feel good that I'm doing what Marie couldn't do first. Wouldn't I be in the lead at this point?"

"... .."

And so, a peaceful day passed at Helium.

"...So, he secretly sent a letter?"

"Yes. He wrote it at home instead of at the publishing company, and considering he didn't put it in the mail, it must have been a letter to Xenon."

“Good. Well done. If we just follow that guy, we’ll find him.”

A glamorous and beautiful elf raised the corner of her mouth and muttered as if it were nothing.

“No matter how much they fly or crawl, in the end, they’re nothing but humans.”

Chapter 174: Unexpected Situation (1)

Not all new couples may experience this, but for the majority, there's an expression 'incredibly lovey-dovey, as if overflowing with sweetness'. If you've been in a long-term relationship, it might be different, but usually, this term is used to describe the fun of getting to know each other's previously unknown sides in a relationship.

Just like Marie and me before, my palace life with Cecily was similar. The only difference was that with Marie we spent a short honeymoon at my mansion, while Cecily seemed to be together with me at all times throughout the vacation.

In fact, Marie and I were only engaged, so it's a bit ambiguous to call it a honeymoon. The same goes for Cecily; she is not in a formally bound relationship with me like Marie.

However, we cherished and cared for each other so much during that time, almost as if we were on our honeymoon. When we were in the prime of our passion, just locking eyes would lead us to the bedroom, and even when that wasn't the case, we spent much time embracing each other.

Unlike Marie, Cecily sought emotional stability even though she enjoyed pleasure. On the first night, due to the evil cycle, she preferred pleasure more, but from the next day on, she focused on just being with me.

Because of this, she found satisfaction in just hugging. The problem is that her large breasts pressed against me, making it hard to resist.

Anyway, while Marie awakened to her sexual desires, Cecily was pursuing emotional connection. It felt like their positions should be switched.

“So, when compared to Marie, who enjoys it more, you or me?”

“Oh my, I can't answer such a question.”

I pinched Cecily's cheek playfully and scolded her, asking a mischievous question. I know it's just a joke, but I avoid sensitive questions.

Currently, the two of us were enjoying a date in the gardens inside the palace. However, we took a moment to rest and found a quiet spot.

After settling down, I made a pillow out of Cecily's slightly plump thigh and comfortably lay down. The sensation of her soft thigh reached my head through her clothes.

“Hehe, was I too mischievous?”

Cecily asked, lightly grabbing my hand as I pinched her cheek. As she held my hand, I immediately let go and smoothed her cheek.

When I gently caressed her cheek with affection, she leaned her face into my touch as if to savor it more. The soft feeling of her cheek was vividly transmitted through my hand.

As I mentioned before, Cecily particularly enjoyed physical affection. We didn't necessarily have to be in a passionate relationship; she valued our connection above all else.

Just knowing that she can feel my presence brings peace to her heart, or so I'd like to believe. Thanks to this, I once again realized that she's deeply in love with me.

Originally, I thought she was devoted to me because I'm a well-known writer in the Xenon's Biography, but over time, Cecily became more precious to me, like Marie.

While gently touching her cheek, I moved my face to see her expression. However, there were two large masses of fat blocking my view.

They were big enough that even when I shifted position, it was difficult to see Cecily's face. Her bust was impressively large.

‘Didn't she say if she can't be able to see her feet by looking down?’

It was a familiar concern that even Marie had complained of. Especially when going down the stairs, as she couldn't see the bottom, she had to carefully descend, which also worried Cecily. And in this position, a thigh pillow, her face was practically invisible.

She had given up her lower field of vision.

“Cecily.”

“Yeah?”

“Can you see my face?”

“Your face?”

In response to my question, Cecily made a puzzled sound and slowly lowered her upper body. Naturally, her large breasts also moved toward my face.

Anticipating what would happen next, I closed my eyes slowly.

Squish-

Eventually, Cecily buried my face with her chest. A different kind of tranquility came through the sensation, even through her black dress.

How many seconds passed like that? Cecily belatedly realized what she had done and pulled her upper body back hastily.

“I-I’m sorry! Are you okay? Did you feel suffocated?”

“Don’t worry. I knew this would happen, so I held my breath.”

“What? This guy, really...”

In response to my teasing reply, Cecily grumbled in a way that suggested she had noticed I was intentionally being provocative. A faint laugh escaped her lips on its own.

Even after we became lovers, she always knew how to playfully tease me, so I wanted to play with her at least once. However, I soon realized that I couldn’t outwit Cecily when it came to playfulness.

Thud—

“How about it? Want to play around again?”

“Urp! No!”

Cecily leaned her upper body down, full of intention. Caught off guard, I found myself pinned between two large mounds, and I could only squirm helplessly. It felt like I might suffocate if this continued, so I urgently tapped her arm. Reacting to my desperate response, she let out a mischievous chuckle and lifted her lowered upper body.

“Phew!”

“If Isaac wants more, I can do it, but...”

She said with a sly smile as she placed her hand on my chest and, discreetly, slowly moved it downward, reaching my abdomen. Just as her hand was about to go lower, I quickly grabbed her wrist.

Due to her breasts blocking my view, I couldn't see Cecily's expression, but I expected she might be disappointed.

“No, we can't. We need to hold back in public. You never know if someone might see.”

“Couldn't we use magic to hide ourselves?”

It seemed that Cecily wanted a different kind of rapport. However, I now had to decline. Since I had gone through all the trouble of gaining divine power from Mora, I couldn't waste it.

I slowly stood up from Cecily's lap and faced her directly. She had her lips pouted, expressing her dissatisfaction. If she were an ordinary human woman, it would have taken some time to console her, but Cecily was a demon.

For demons, there is one special way to soothe them.

Swoosh-

“...Hmm.”

That is to pet her horns. As I reached out my hand and stroked her horns, her expression immediately softened. Then she leaned her face against my chest.

It was like a cat being pampered, and I responded with a gentle smile, continuing to caress her horns.

I might have explained this long ago, so I don't remember, but horns have no feeling capabilities. Even if they break, you would only register the fact that they're broken and don't feel any pain. By the way, broken horns will grow back in just a day.

However, to demons, 'horns' are like a symbol of the devil. To lovingly stroke those horns implies that even if they were to become a devil, you would still ardently love them.

It's a romantic tradition that can only be found in demons who have endured pain for many years.

'At night, well...'

It was somewhat subtle to use horns, which contain such a beautiful culture, as 'handles.' But I heard from Cecily that they were originally used for such a purpose. I gazed down at Cecily, who leaned against my chest and purred like a cat. Enjoying the sensation of touching the horn with her eyes closed, focusing despite not feeling it.

"Haah... Isaac's scent... I really like it..."

"... .."

"I want to stay like this forever. Just like this, forever."

Cecily's voice grew even huskier as she smelled me. Looking at it, I saw that it was filled with black.

It is certain that the cycle of evil, when inner evil overflows, is separate from sexual desire. I let her head fall from my bosom before it went farther.

Even when I pushed her away, Cecily looked at me with moist eyes. It seemed like she was filled with the feeling that she shouldn't be too impudent.

'It's different seeing her like this.'

If Marie's unique lively personality stimulates my heart, this side of Cecily has a calmness to it, like throwing a stone into a quiet lake, causing ripples that resonate deeply in my heart.

"Uung..."

"Haah..."

I gently exhaled a deep sigh as Cecily, begging with her index finger on her lips, rushed towards me. Who could refuse such a plea? With my arms wide open, I invited her.

"Want a hug?"

"Yes!"

She held me tightly, burying her face in my chest as if she never wanted to let go.

Unlike moments ago, simply touching her horn seemed insufficient. As I slowly stroked her back, I could feel her warmth.

'She loves me this much, but when I die...'

Suddenly, an unhappy vision of her future crossed my mind. I am a mortal human, while she is an immortal demon. Due to the limits of my lifespan, even if I grow old and die, she will continue to exist as she is. Can she bear such sadness?

One of the biggest reasons why demons become devils is the death of their beloved. Demons can control rage, but not sorrow.

'...I should create countless cherished memories for her.'

As I mentioned to her, rather than regrets, I should fill her life with fond memories. Will that make her less sorrowful? Slowly closing my eyes, I savored the delicate body of Cecily.

I wished time would stand still at that moment, but alas, time refuses to stop. For a while, we embraced each other, finding solace, until we faced each other again.

Cecily looked at me with a radiant smile, filled with happiness like the colors of the world.

"...Isaac."

"Yeah. Noona."

"I've always told you, but my body and heart are all yours. So, you can do as you please. Got it?"

Cecily said affectionate words, placing her hand on my cheek. It wasn't an empty promise; she was always ready to dedicate herself entirely to me. At first, I thought it was only because I was the author of Xenon's Biography, but now, it's not just that.

She was preparing to devote herself to who I am as a person. A woman I couldn't help but fall for in a different way than Marie. I smiled and quietly replied.

"I feel a bit guilty just taking. Noona, don't you want anything?"

"Are you offering the position of a first wife?"

"Well, that's..."

I may have fallen deeply for Cecily, but my love for Marie has not cooled down. Moreover, I can't help feeling sorry for Marie, who is probably working on her own

thesis in the studio right now.

As I spoke with a hint of bitterness and a forced smile, Cecily chuckled lightly. Then, with her usual playful demeanor, she said.

“Just kidding. The first wife position should be given to Marie. The fact that I could be with you is all thanks to Marie’s generosity.”

“Thank you. For giving it to her.”

“What’s there to thank for? I should be the one thanking you. Cheer up.”

Saying so, Cecily lightly kissed me. Her adorable charm made me burst into a chuckle.

“Still, I’m curious sometimes. What if I had realized that you are Xenon a little earlier?”

“Well, honestly, nothing would have changed. Marie liked me even before she knew I was Xenon.”

“Really? Well, I guess there’s nothing we can do about it then. I should just get rid of my greed.”

If Marie had heard this, she might not have been pleased. It was partly a joke, but it seemed like she was pushing Marie away and aiming for the seat next to him.

Of course, given Cecily’s personality, she wouldn’t do that. If she had wanted to push her away, she would have done it a long time ago.

They both knew that compromising with each other was the best option. However, the need to reconcile their feelings for each other remained unchanged.

“Don’t say such things in front of Marie if you can help it. Once suspicion takes root, it grows endlessly.”

“I’m aware of that. But should we still be cautious? If Marie’s affection for Isaac wanes, I’ll swoop in and take him. And intentionally raise jealousy.”

“Hmm...”

Marie’s jealous figure... just imagining it made him feel affectionate and endearing. He wanted to rush over and give her a tight hug right away.

But really, would Marie's affection for him wane? He doubted it. Cecily would faithfully play the role of preventing such a situation. The reverse was also true.

On second thought, thinking like this was quite philandering. Nevertheless, I should get used to it; otherwise, I might end up in a situation where nothing works out.

"It seems like a good idea... I'll have to look into it slowly. It's not like my affection will fade away immediately."

"By the way, I can swear that my feelings for Isaac won't change. Without Isaac, life feels empty."

"If you already feel this way, what does it matter later?"

"I should console myself by looking at Isaac's child. Or maybe I should look at the child born between Isaac and me?"

"Cecily, are you scheming something?"

"Hehe."

Cecily smiled shyly at my admiring words. Then, she put both hands on my cheeks and asked eagerly.

"Next evil cycle, can't we do it without contraception?"

"No, we can't."

"Sigh."

Still, what can't be done can't be done.

When I firmly rejected her, Cecily made a pouty face but quickly brought up another question.

"How about the illustration? Can't we have an illustration? We agreed on that from the beginning."

"With the current situation, it's complicated. It might harm you for no reason. What if there's a demon that resembles Lilith more than you?"

Everyone probably knows, but in Xenon's Biography, Lilith was the character based on Cecily.

So, as part of improving my drawing skills, I had plans to include illustrations in the story. However, due to the current situation, I had to temporarily suspend that idea.

As Xenon's Biography was somewhat treated as a prophecy, adding illustrations could lead to unforeseen consequences. It might even cause harm to those who could be perceived as potential culprits in the future, facing persecution. It might sound like an extreme thought, but given the times we live in, it's entirely possible.

"Alright, I understand. So, you won't include any illustrations at all?"

"Maybe not entirely. By the end, the misunderstandings should be cleared up. I'm thinking of adding them around that time. The same goes for other characters, not just for Lilith."

"When will it be completed? The story seems to be just starting to build up."

"We still have a long way to go. It will take at least half a year, I guess?"

"Only half a year?"

"Yeah."

She was a demon. A demon who perceived even a year as a short period. Half a year could pass without her noticing.

"Well, for now, that's the plan. As long as nothing major happens, it should take about half a year. Since I've been appointed as a recommended student, I have plenty of time."

"What kind of major incidents could happen?"

"Nothing serious... just thinking about possible delays in the serialization."

"What do you mean by delays?"

"I might get seriously injured, for example. Even if everything else is fine, if my hands are injured, there's no way to avoid a delay in the serialization."

"Your hands, huh..."

Cecily hesitated with her words, as if she had made up her mind, she nodded her head. Then, with a determined, fiery gaze, she looked at me and opened her mouth to speak in a solemn tone.

“If anyone hurts Isaac, they will pay with their life.”

“Oh, it won’t come to that...”

I didn’t even finish my sentence before Cecily shook her head from side to side. She clasped my right hand with both of hers and spoke to me with a serious expression.

“You used this hand to save our race, so it’s only right. And it’s not just me, others would think the same way too.”

“... ..”

“Most of all, if the man I love gets hurt, I’ll be in even more pain. Though I might not always be by his side, I’ll make sure revenge is carried out thoroughly.”

It’s reassuring to hear these words from Cecily, who was destined to be the next Queen of Helium. She claimed she could blow up mountains with just a few gestures, so revenge would be a piece of cake. But what I truly appreciate is her mindset. Who wouldn’t be captivated by someone like her?

Filled with determination, I gazed into Cecily’s red eyes and couldn’t help but smile. Cecily responded to my smile with a smile of her own.

“Thank you, Noona. It feels comforting when you say that.”

“Don’t thank me. If you’re really grateful, take off your pants.”

“Suddenly again?”

“I’m teasing you. I put up the barrier, so you can relax.”

“Sigh. I got it. I got it.”

The fire in Cecily’s heart seemed to burn as intensely in the daytime as it did at night.

In a dark space where not even a single ray of light could penetrate, two men faced each other around a round table. The darkness enveloped them, making it impossible to discern their features, but despite that, they exchanged words in a familiar manner.

“Here’s the letter for today. The boss seems to consider it quite important, as he sent it from home.”

“Hmm.”

As one man placed a simple piece of paper on the table, the other man gazed at it intently. Although nothing was visible in the darkness, his golden eyes shone brightly. Like a predator’s eyes gleaming in the dark night, his eyes emitted an intense light.

As the man with the letter attempted to hand it over, the recipient suddenly cleared his throat. The man with the golden eyes hesitated before taking the letter, and then slowly raised his head to meet the courier’s gaze. After a momentary exchange of glances, the courier placed his hand on the table.

Tap-tap tap

“By the way, how’s life these days? Your daughter joined a prestigious Knights’ Order, right?”

The messenger habitually tapped the table with his finger as he inquired about the recent updates.

The man with golden eyes, seemingly unaffected, replied.

“No news yet. And what about you? How’s your son doing?”

“He must be struggling by now. Unfortunately, he doesn’t have much talent.”

The messenger answered with a series of tapping sounds on the table.

Tap tap tap tap-tap.

Even while responding, his fingers continued to drum on the table, but soon, they came to a halt. The man with golden eyes shrugged and carefully placed the letter handed to him by the messenger into his pocket. It was about time to leave.

“Anyway, I’m always thankful. It must be bothersome to do this for me.”

“What’s there to be thankful for? I owe you a lot. Besides, it’s not entirely unenjoyable.”

“You always say that, but your temperament is quite peculiar. I’ll be going now.”

“Take care of yourself.”

The man with golden eyes stood up and briskly walked away. As he disappeared, the messenger also got up suddenly.

“I might not be able to do this for a while.”

The mumbling man scratched his head.

On the other hand, the man who received the letter from him, the man with golden eyes...

‘He is being pursued by elves. It doesn’t seem like good news.’

The person who received signals not through words but through their fingers was on their way back home, deducing the signals they had sent.

‘It’s fortunate that Isaac isn’t in the mansion, if he were, it would have been a big problem. For now, I can handle it from my side.’

A lion with red hair began to lure the hyenas. The problem was...

“...Isaac? And Princess Cecily? Why are they suddenly in the mansion?”

“We thought it wouldn’t be good to be only in Helium. We also came to see Father’s face.”

“Hello, Baron Hawk. Oh, should I call you Father-in-law now?”

“... ..”

Unexpected situations could occur at any time.

Translators note:

3 chapters today

1/3

Chapter 175: Unexpected Situation (2)

Upon returning to the mansion, my father had a troubled expression on his face when he saw me. It couldn't be because of Cecily, as he wouldn't react like that even if he disliked her. There must be some definite reason behind his reaction.

Curious about what was going on, I asked him what happened, and he looked embarrassed as he gestured for me to follow him. Cecily and I exchanged glances before complying.

Though I had many questions, following him was the priority. We walked, filled with curiosity, and ended up in the same room where we had the interview with Adelia last time. It was not a space for formal reception, but a place where we could face each other and have discussions on various topics.

“Have you come?”

“Yes, Mother.”

In that room, Mother was already sitting, probably having received a prior notice from Father. By the way, Father had briefly stepped in and out, so he had already met Mother. Mother greeted me with her characteristic warm smile and gently patted my belly. Lily is growing up healthily without any problems.

“Please take a seat first. Princess, sit next to Isaac.”

“You can speak comfortably. You're already my father-in-law now, right?”

“... ..”

When Cecily cheerfully uttered the word ‘father-in-law,’ Father looked at me with a strange expression. Since it was already confirmed, I didn't have any intention to deny it, so I just shrugged my shoulders. Father chuckled and squeezed himself next to Mother. Cecily and I sat across from them, waiting to hear what they had to say.

I prayed that it wouldn't be something serious, but when I recalled the oracle that Mora told me I knew it was likely not good news. Moreover, Father clearly showed an uneasy reaction as soon as he met us.

Whether it was something deeply related to me or something related to the family, the fact that it was troublesome remained the same.

“Phew... Didn't you say you would spend the entire vacation in Helium?”

Father, who sighed again, asked in a complex tone. It seemed like he didn't expect Cecily and me to return.

At first, my plan was to stay only in Helium, but he changed his mind after hearing about Mora's oracle. Moreover, there was a good reason to see each other, so Cecily gladly joined. I quietly replied, feeling somewhat uneasy.

“Being only in Helium feels a bit... awkward. At least we should see each other's faces.”

“That's true, but... why now of all times?”

“...What's the matter?”

It was rare to see Father in such contemplation. He had been stressed before due to an increased workload, but that was an exception. After pondering for a while in response to my question, he shook his head. It seemed like he had made a decision in his mind.

“By any chance, when are you planning to return to Helium?”

Despite my curiosity, he didn't forget to test the waters. I maintained a composed attitude and answered.

“I plan to stay for about 2 to 3 days and then leave. There's still about half of the vacation left.”

“What if I told you to go back right away?”

“If it's something related to me, I won't go back.”

Perhaps realizing that he couldn't sway me, Father chuckled as if he couldn't hold back, then nodded in agreement.

He then shifted his gaze to Mother, who was pregnant with Lily with a warm and worried look, before turning back to me. His golden eyes were shining brightly.

“Since you’ve already exposed your identity, there’s nothing left to hide. As you suspected, it’s a matter closely related to you. The news came from the connection through which the manuscript was delivered.”

“Could it be that I’ve been found out?”

It was not me, but Cecily who asked the question. In response, Father nodded heavily as he met her gaze.

“Yes... no, that’s not right. Fortunately, we weren’t completely exposed. The accomplice noticed the pursuit and took a roundabout route to get here. But they will likely reach this place soon.”

Father was willing to speak openly after Cecily had given her assurance earlier. Cecily herself seemed unfazed by the situation.

“I’ve heard of Father-in-law’s skill in Helium. Known as the ‘Red Lion,’ right? Since you mentioned an accomplice, are they as capable as Father-in-law?”

“They used to be comrades-in-arms in the borderlands. He’s quite adept at espionage and reconnaissance. He willingly helped with delivering the manuscripts because I once saved his life.”

“But for someone like that to be pursued... could it be... an Elf?”

“There’s no one else but an Elf, and a skilled one at that.”

Elf again. I tried my best to suppress my impressions.

Last time it was a Dark Elf who intruded into our mansion without permission, and now it’s an Elf. I can’t figure out why they keep causing trouble.

Though there may be normal Elves like Arwen or Keir, their tendency to cause trouble seems to be an inherent characteristic of their race.

“Here’s the letter delivered by the publisher. They tried to send it discreetly from their home, but they were eventually caught because they are an ordinary person.”

“Hmm...”

After receiving neatly folded letter paper from my father, I slowly unfolded it. I didn't forget to show it to Cecily so she could also see. The content of the letter was roughly as follows:

Elves came again to look for my letter after Arwen's speech. This time, unlike the previous occasion, they persistently pestered me until they would find me.

I've heard of the elves visiting the publishing house before. According to what Arwen told me, they belong to one of the distinguished families affiliated with the Council of Elders. They are led by a chief named 'Fieren.' Being part of the Council was not unusual for prestigious families since it is a political organization. So, the probability of them being stuck-up conservatives who adhere to elitist ideologies is very high.

"I'm not sure which faction these elves belong to, but I'm certain they are arrogant. That much I can guarantee."

"Why do you think so?"

"If they weren't arrogant elves, they wouldn't have acted like this from the beginning. They were the ones who demanded from the publishing house to hand over the letter in the first place."

My father, who encountered an elven reconnaissance team in the border zone, spoke with such conviction that I couldn't take his words lightly. Moreover, I also had developed close relationships with several elves, so they approached me more intimately.

However, that doesn't present a fundamental solution. After thinking for a moment, I asked cautiously.

"So, what do we do now? It won't take them long to find their way to this mansion."

"Two situations will unfold from now on. First, they will 'formally' visit this mansion. In that case, you can simply talk to them politely and send them away. But now that they know this place is the end of their pursuit, they might use force."

"And the second is trespassing into the mansion."

"Elves trespassing?"

Not dark elves but normal ones. Elves were a race that even refused assassinations, calling them dirty tricks during the race wars. I can't quite understand how such a race

would engage in trespassing.

“Of course, they won’t blatantly charge in. The idea that elves don’t do dirty tricks is something from the time of the race wars. They probably have a high chance of infiltrating using magic, whether it’s for orders or for a just cause. Self-justification is enough for them.”

“Isn’t the mansion protected by security magic?”

“Those elves aren’t fools, and they can easily neutralize security magic.”

“In the end, both situations lead to the same conclusion.”

“If you think about it, that’s right.”

Either way, it doesn’t seem like those elves will back down easily. Father also had a hunch about that, which is why he was planning ahead. However, due to Cecily and I unexpectedly returning to the mansion, the situation seemed to have become a bit complicated.

Thinking carefully about the complex situations ahead, I asked my father a question.

“Would the elves benefit from doing something like this?”

“What kind of benefit couldn’t there be? You know there were rumors recently in Alvenheim about your books being censored, and your books have also given rise to the social issue of half-bloods. Of course, the Queen managed to handle it well, but there might be more incidents in the future. Moreover, the existence of Dark Elves is gradually resurfacing. Forbidden magic like the ‘Fusion’ is the same. From Alvenheim’s perspective, they have more than enough reason to find you.”

“... ..”

“I’ve heard that in Alvenheim, there is a political conflict between the Queen and the Council of Elders. The Queen is favorable to an open-door policy, but the Council of Elders opposes it. Since the elves don’t act independently, they must have received orders from one of them. I want to believe it’s from the Council of Elders.”

It wasn’t particularly surprising as it was already a known fact. The main point was how to overcome this situation. It wouldn’t be long before the elves dispatched by the Council of Elders would enter our mansion.

Just like what happened to Rain, there was a high chance they would come to my room to look for the manuscript. However, I couldn't move the manuscript elsewhere either. If they found out that this mansion was the source of the transmission, they wouldn't be foolish enough not to notice.

“If we weren't here, how would Father have dealt with it?”

“I initially planned to move everything, including the manuscript, and endure it. If there's no evidence, they'll have no choice but to leave.”

“But, Father-in-law. That's just a temporary solution. There's no guarantee they won't come back and find out someday.”

Cecily pointed out firmly when she heard Father's plan. As she said, elves could use magic anytime, anywhere, and there was a high possibility they would thoroughly search the mansion.

While we might be able to endure it for now, it's not a fundamental solution. To achieve a complete resolution, we must deal with them.

“I know that too. But since we don't even know where they came from, my options are limited. The letter the boss sent seems to indicate they might be nobles, but elf nobles carry a different weight than human nobles. Above all, there is a high risk of Isaac's identity being exposed.”

“It doesn't matter if it's exposed or not? There's Marie and I. Besides, Isaac is currently favored as a saint within the Luminous church. If they touch him, even Xavier won't remain quiet.”

“That's true, but... revealing Isaac's true identity in the current situation would be tough for him. He's already under scrutiny for being a prophet or a regressor, and people are cautious of his dangerous knowledge. At least waiting for such circumstances to calm down would be the best course of action.”

“Hmm...”

While my father and Cecily were arguing, I got lost in my thoughts. If I do it well, I can crush not only those elves but even the council, which is nothing more than a bunch of hypocrites.

Revealing the situation before and after the incident is not a significant problem. As seen in Arwen's speech, her persuasive ability was outstanding. Slightly changing the

course to ‘manipulation’ would be enough.

Currently, public opinion towards Arwen is very favorable. By emphasizing her identity as an ‘elf’ without distinguishing between pureblood and mixed blood, she has instilled not only confidence but also pride in the hearts of the citizens.

And if we add the status of ‘Xenon’ to this? For the elves, Xenon, who saved the World Tree from contamination, is a hero in itself. After all, the World Tree was a gift from the gods.

If you combine these two appropriately, you can make falsehoods believable as truths. Of course, not entirely filled with lies, but mixed in a reasonable manner.

As I blinked my eyes, I found my right hand resting on my thigh. At the same time, an amusing plan came to mind, and I smiled slightly.

It seemed that the meaning of a hyena entering a lion’s den was becoming clear to me only now.

“Father, I have a good plan. Would you like to hear it?”

“A plan?”

“Yes. If executed well, I can hide my true identity, eliminate the elves, and all those involved at once. But before that... Noona.”

“Yes, Isaac?”

“Do you happen to know of any magic that can suggest or manipulate memories?”

Cecily was named the next Demon Lord, so her magical abilities would undoubtedly be exceptional. When it comes to magic, I can trust her without a doubt.

At my question, Cecily momentarily looked puzzled but then nodded and gave a positive response.

“There is such magic, but it might not work on elves since they have natural resistance to it. And if it’s a cleric, it would be ineffective.”

“Really? How about implanting an explosion spell in their ears?”

“...What kind of plan involves planting an explosion spell in someone’s ear?”

Cecily looked at me with a bewildered expression, questioning the oddity of the idea. Well, I guess it did sound a bit far-fetched.

In response, I waved my hands, assuring her that it wouldn't go that far.

“We're not actually putting in exploding magic, it's just for intimidation. Anyway, is it possible?”

“It's possible, yeah.”

“Then it's settled. Oh, by any chance, how about tracking magic?”

“As long as it stays within the range, that's possible too.”

Magic is truly something. It makes things that were once only possible through the technology of past lives achievable. During that time, my father seemed to have caught on to our conversation and spoke with a worried voice.

“Isaac, I have a rough idea of what you're thinking. However, Elves are not to be underestimated. Even with the magic you mentioned, a thorough investigation could...”

“But would those people know that Cecily is here? Even if they have heard of father's might, they would know you can't use magic.”

“Hmm... that may be so, but in Alvenheim...”

“Oh, you don't have to worry about that. We have an ally.”

“What do you mean by that?”

Upon hearing about the ally, father widened his eyes and looked at me with surprise. Mother, who was beside him, also had a somewhat astonished expression. Indeed, having a political ally within Alvenheim is something that can be quite perplexing.

I've only been to Alvenheim once, and that was it. I hesitated on whether I should say it all, and then I glanced at Cecily with a side glance. She smiled back as if to say I could say whatever I wanted.

I gained confidence and slowly began to reveal the existence of the “collaborator” within Alvenheim. First and foremost was the incident of the high-level theft.

Until the incident of the high-level theft, my parents remained composed, but as soon as they heard about Rain's unauthorized intrusion into the mansion during the exhibition,

their expressions changed in real-time. Following that, when they heard about Arwen apologizing to me, they were amazed.

“...So, I actually wrote the speech and sent it to the queen. We’re still in contact because of that connection.”

“Hehe.”

“Amazing, truly amazing.”

As he finished explaining about the speech, Father’s reaction went beyond astonishment to bewilderment, while Mother’s response was filled with unease. To be honest, such reactions were natural.

The collaborator I mentioned was none other than the queen of Alvenheim, and she kneeled down and apologized to me. Moreover, using that as an excuse, we’ve been maintaining our connection until now.

Without any context, it might sound like nonsense, but considering the incident of Rain’s high-level theft, they have no choice but to believe it.

“I heard from the queen that the elves who came to the publishing house were the closest aides of the Council of Elders. As you know, unlike the queen, the Council of Elders rejects other races besides the pureblood ideology. During the racial war, they also made the worst mistakes.”

“Whether they disappear or not doesn’t matter. But Isaac, if the Council of Elders were to vanish, Alvenheim would be in great social turmoil. And there are forces supporting the Council, so they won’t easily fall apart. They might even instigate a coup through various means.”

“Well, Father, my thoughts are different.”

I smirked after hearing my father’s concerns. Just as he looked at me with a puzzled expression, I confidently spoke while showing my right hand.

“If news spreads that my right hand was shattered, won’t it cause a commotion in Alvenheim?”

“But Isaac, why did your hair suddenly grow so long?”

“Well, this is... there’s a reason for it.”

“It suits you very well. Keep it that way from now on, okay?”

“...Sure.”

Translators note:

2/3

Chapter 176: Unexpected Situation (3)

The plan has almost been set, but there are points to be addressed before they fall into the trap. First of all, Adelia was staying at our house. She is my bodyguard, but she has no idea that I am Xenon. She became my bodyguard purely out of favor towards me, and if she gets involved in this situation, it will be quite troublesome.

Because of this, Father even suggested revealing it to Adelia. Although she's not talkative and her background is suspicious, it's unavoidable for a smooth progress.

However, the person who firmly rejected it was not only me or Cecily but also Mother.

“No. Dame Cross shouldn't know that Isaac is Xenon.”

“Why?”

Up until now, my mother had sat quietly, merely listening to the conversation, so my father asked with a puzzled expression. I, too, was equally puzzled.

Mother gently stroked Lily, who was peacefully asleep in her stomach, and then she opened her mouth with her unique beautiful smile.

“Maybe one day, Dame Cross might face an important decision. Even for that chance, we must not reveal that Isaac is Xenon.”

“Um... If you say so, I'll accept it. I'd like to hear the details later.”

“You'll probably understand too.”

In the end, we were left with no choice but to not include Adelia. However, she was highly skilled, having worked as an assistant at the Halo Academy.

Elves might intrude at any time, and her senses should be sharp, so could she really not notice?

Father seemed somewhat hesitant, perhaps because he was worried about that point.

“Dame Cross has exceptional senses, even though I don’t know what she went through in the past. Even during training, she intuitively knows where to attack.”

“She notices everything?”

“That’s right. She said her body warns her on its own. It must be hard to develop such a perception going through ordinary experiences, I wonder where she learned it.”

“... ..”

Could that also be connected to the past? As she was not properly recognized as a royalty and lived in the palace, she must have faced all sorts of persecution.

It might have been bad enough to warrant an assassination attempt. Considering the insults Adelia received from her siblings, it’s not an entirely implausible story.

“Anyway, it means we need to handle the operation without Dame Cross noticing... It’s not as easy as it sounds.”

“Your Highness, what if I put her to sleep with a sleep spell?”

“Would that work?”

“It’s not impossible.”

“Hah.”

When things were handled more easily than expected, Father let out a disappointed laugh. As always, magic played the role of doing the impossible.

“Alright, then the issue with Dame Cross is resolved. We just need to let our employees know that thieves broke in.”

“But the key is when they will come, right? Father-in-law, when do you expect them to come?”

“Well, my friend purposely messed with their tracks, so it’ll take some time. At best it might be three days, if they’re fast, tonight.”

They will come tonight. A week ago, Mora informed me that something would happen at night. And today is that day.

There is still plenty of time until nightfall, but it's a bit urgent to set up the trap soon. It's better to hurry.

"I understand. Let's set up the trap first. Please wait a moment."

"Where are you going?"

"I have something to bring from my room."

I suppose you have a rough idea, but it's the summoning scroll for Siris. Since I've already explained everything, they won't be surprised by Siris's introduction.

When I got up from my seat, Cecily tried to get up with me, but I immediately stopped her. There's no need for her to follow me when I'm just going to the room, and it won't take long anyway.

Instead, I asked Cecily for one favor.

"Oh, Noona, can you ask Gartz to join us in this matter? The more people, the better, right?"

"Lord Balak is currently under strict home arrest. Can you guess why?"

"... .."

Poor Gartz. At least he was fortunate enough to get his autograph returned. Without that, he would've been extremely downcast.

I forced a bitter smile and headed to the room to get the summoning site. It's the first time I'm going to the room since I met Father.

"Oh?"

"Hmm?"

As I turned the corner, I came face to face with Adelia. She was gently drying her wet, chestnut-colored hair, as if she had just finished bathing. At first, her sky-blue eyes blinked, but soon they began to widen.

"What's wrong? Weren't you in Helium?"

"I just came back. It's a bit suffocating to stay in Helium all the time. It's good to see my parents' faces sometimes. But did you just bathe?"

“After training, you should take a bath. But...”

Adelia stared at my face intently and tilted her head to the side. It seemed like she noticed my hair had grown longer in that short time.

“Your hair... seems to have grown longer?”

“I have my reasons. I think I’ll keep it like this for a while. It grows back even if I cut it.”

“Oh, really? Surprisingly, it suits you well.”

Adelia touched her chin and seemed to be deep in thought. Since we had plenty of time, I just waited patiently.

However, for some reason, her face started to blush gradually. While I was puzzled, she suddenly cleared her throat and asked quietly.

“Ahem. Do you... like long hair, cutie?”

“Huh? All of a sudden?”

“No, I was just curious, that’s all. Marie, that girl, and even the Demon Princess, they all have long hair, you know.”

Upon hearing Adelia’s words, I recalled Marie and Cecily’s hairstyles. Both of them indeed had quite long hair, with Cecily’s reaching down to her hips.

Moreover, my hair had grown long now, too, so it’s understandable why Adelia would have such a misconception. However, the three of them had such beautiful faces that any hairstyle suited them well.

Honestly, whether it’s short or long hair, as long as you are as pretty as the two people mentioned, that’s enough.

“Not really? I just like it when I like it.”

“Oh, I see. How about me? Am I okay?”

“Right now, you are the prettiest.”

It’s not an empty compliment, it’s sincere. The wavy end of her dark brown short hair and the distinctive small nose add to her beauty. Even her husky voice.

With Adelia's lively charm fully on display, one could say she is the prettiest now. Even if she grows her hair longer, it would only diminish Adelia's charm.

“Thank you. Though it's a bit embarrassing to hear it out loud.”

Adelia heard the sincere praise and twirled her hair with her fingers. Seeing her feeling shy, which was different from her usual self, added a different charm.

Seeing that, I inwardly chuckled. Her feelings are too obvious. Even someone who's bad at picking up cues would notice that she has a crush on me.

But Adelia herself was completely unaware of this fact. Is it because this is the first time she's experienced something like this, or is it because she genuinely doesn't realize it?

“So... are you going back to Helium?”

“Yeah. I'll stay there for about a week.”

“I hope so. It gets boring without our cutie around.”

“Well, we'll be together all the time once the vacation is over and we return to the academy. Anyway, I'm heading out now. Take care, Noona.”

“Yeah. I'll work hard.”

Adelia stepped aside and waved her hand discreetly. I waved back and walked towards the room. When I turned back after walking a little, she was still standing there, waving her hand with that characteristic confident smile.

Every time I saw her, I felt a sense of nostalgia. They say unrequited love is always painful. Moreover, knowing that I already have two lovers makes me feel even more sorry. But I can't just readily accept her feelings.

To fully embrace her, a complex process must be undergone. I wonder what choices Adelia will make at the end of that process. It might be a story of the distant future, or it could happen not too long from now, but the fact that she has to make a choice remains unchanged.

I can only hope for her to make a wise decision.

I got the scroll in the room and promptly tore it apart. My family watched with intrigued expressions as I ripped the scroll in half and waited patiently.

After about 30 seconds passed, the torn scroll was engulfed in blue flames and soon turned into ashes, dispersing into the air.

Then, a magic circle formed on the floor, emitting a blue light, and slowly, someone began to appear.

“Did you summon me?”

It was a familiar voice of a woman. Siris, one the dark elf famous for concealing their appearance, stood before us. She was still wearing her revealing armor.

Father groaned when the Dark Elf appeared, and both Cecily and Mother watched silently with surprised reactions. I scratched my head as I looked at the armor worn by Siris. It wouldn't have been embarrassing if it was just the two of us, but now that I was with my family, I felt really awkward.

“Let me introduce you. As I mentioned earlier, this is Siris, the Dark Elf who connects me to the Queen. Among the Dark Elves, she is exceptionally skilled.”

“... ..”

While I introduced her, Siris looked at me with a complicated expression. After all, I had been keeping this secret all along, and suddenly I was summoned in front of my family.

However, her expression changed quickly as I explained everything about the situation. She nodded as if she understood.

“So, that's what happened. First, let me introduce myself. My name is Siris Lunatic. As you might have heard, I am currently working as a courier for Isaac, having committed a crime against him.”

“I am Hawk Ducker Michelle. Isaac's father.”

“I am Anna Ducker Michelle. Nice to meet you.”

Siris introduced herself politely, and Father seemed curious, asking her a question in a curious tone.

“Isaac mentioned you being a messenger earlier, how long is the contract valid for?”

“Until Sir Isaac goes to Lady Mora’s side. At least for over 50 years, I suppose.”

“... ..”

As soon as they heard Siris’s response, the parents turned their gaze towards me without hesitation. They seemed to be suspicious, as if they were thinking the same thing: her too?

I was taken aback for a moment, but I quickly realized what they were suspecting. Since Siris, a beautiful lady, was my messenger, they must have imagined some strange scenario.

In order to dispel their misunderstanding, I quickly shook my head and said urgently,

“That’s not it. she’s not a slave but just a messenger.”

“Hmm... I see. By the way, a Dark Elf, huh? It’s my first time seeing one, so it’s intriguing”

“Is it also the first time for you to see a Dark Elf, Father?”

“I operated in the border area, so there’s hardly any contact with Dark Elves. Maybe if they were part of an Elven reconnaissance unit, but that’s about it.”

With a curious glint in his eyes, Father looked at Siris intently. However, his gaze inadvertently shifted to some inappropriate places because of Siris’s attire.

Of course, every time that happened, Mother would prevent it by putting her hand on Father’s thigh. In some cases, she would pinch his thigh, causing Father to chuckle.

“Anyway, Siris.”

“Yes, Lord Isaac.”

“I called you, Siris, for the reason you heard earlier. Soon, a close associate of the Council will come to our mansion. I hope Siris and Arwen can assist us. It’s also an opportunity for Arwen to eliminate the Council.”

“I will ask her about it and let you know.”

Siris left with those words and used teleportation immediately. About 30 minutes later, while we were carefully establishing our plans, she returned.

“The Queen has kindly accepted. However, she said she cannot directly help us.”

“It’s okay. As long as Arwen finishes it properly, that’s enough.”

“Is there something I can do to assist?”

“Siris, well, yes. Please let us know in real-time where those elves are. Father, since the elves were tracking, you roughly know where they are, right?”

“I’ll roughly draw a map. They should be around here.”

The planning proceeded swiftly. With two skilled individuals in magic and ample force to subdue the elves and communication between the Michelle territory and Alvenheim.

Of course, we didn’t forget to consider potential variables. Especially since Mother wasn’t strong, someone must protect her just in case.

We didn’t think the elves would take hostages, but things don’t always go as planned. If Mother gets overly stressed and something happens to Lily, it will be a real problem.

“Then, Lady Anna, I’ll protect you. With Lord Hawk and Princess Cecily, they should be able to subdue them.”

“Thank you. I’m sorry for causing inconvenience even on our first meeting.”

Fortunately, Siris being responsible for protecting Mother blocked all potential variables. If they launch a surprise attack, no matter how powerful the elves are, they’ll be taken care of by Cecily and Father.

Then, we carefully reviewed and re-reviewed to make sure there weren’t any overlooked parts. With little time, meticulousness wasn’t a choice but a necessity.

Finally, when all the preparations were complete, I checked the time. It was exactly 6 o’clock. Now it was time to have dinner.

“Shall we start wrapping things up now? Let’s have dinner first and then double-check everything.”

“Sounds good. What about Siris?”

“I’m fine not eating. Right now, it’s more important to assess the situation.”

Siris left the mansion without having dinner, opting to trace back the lead. Following the map drawn by the father should lead to some news soon.

After resolving everything until dinner and reorganizing our plans, we each returned to their bedrooms. We didn't forget to deliberately place the manuscript on the desk.

We could wait quietly for news from Siris, but...

“No, it won't do.”

“Why? Are you sure the elves will really come tonight?”

“I don't know, but there's a possibility. So put it on again.”

“Tsk.”

With my firm reminder, Cecily pulled up the straps of her partially undressed evening dress. Her lips pouted in annoyance.

Earlier, Mora had warned that if I didn't want to face an embarrassing situation, I should avoid any romantic encounters tonight. Now that it was night, I could understand the reason.

However, it wasn't just about being embarrassed; Cecily disliked the idea of showing her intimate side to others.

“However, Isaac.”

“Yeah?”

“You said you will spread the news about having your hand injured, so are you taking a break from serialization for a while?”

Cecily, dressed in an evening dress, asked with a puzzled expression. Frankly, it is a concern. If my hand is injured, it's only natural to take a break from serialization, but I can't help but think that my itchy hand might end up writing the manuscript anyway.

However, if I claim to have had it neatly fixed at the temple, there shouldn't be any problem with the serialization itself. Although unexpected events might occur during that time, I wouldn't know about them.

“Maybe I'll rest for about a month. In the meantime, they might be searching for a person who injured their hand.”

“Now you’re even bluffing, our Isaac has grown so much.”

Cecily gently stroked my head, as if impressed. I didn’t really like being treated like a child, but since it felt good, I let it go.

‘Damn brats. I hope they get fucked.’

I’m really looking forward to tonight.

Translators note:

There are 3 chapters today. This is the 3rd one.

3/3

Chapter 177: Trap (1)

After the publisher's CEO sent the letter, the elves, who had been quietly tracking him, set out to trace its whereabouts without knowing what was happening at the mansion.

At one point, when the man intentionally tried to mislead their route, they almost lost track of him, but they were elves – masters of magic. By using magic, they could easily track him, including the flow of mana in his footsteps. If that wasn't enough, they could use even more advanced magic, so the difficulty was not an issue.

“The path continues here.”

A fair-haired elf male with shoulder-length hair murmured while looking at the entrance of the mansion. His eyes reflected the imposing door firmly closed.

In front of the gate, guards stood motionless, though it was a dazzling night with stars shining brightly. Despite the darkness, the elves could see as clearly as in broad daylight. Of course, this was also thanks to magic.

“By the way, wasn't this territory the place where the exhibition was held?”

“That's right. It was a few months ago when there was an exhibition for Xenon. Such a ridiculous thing to hold an exhibition just for one writer.”

Another elf male asked the group, and an elf woman with brown hair laughed and replied. Her stereotypical elvish attitude was rather condescending.

'A bit unsettling, though...'

The elf male named Mael muttered inwardly as he gazed at the mansion's gate. The process of successfully tracking and reaching the mansion was smooth.

The problem was that it was too easy and straightforward. The messenger's attempts to alter their route to delay time were meaningless in the face of magic. To erase tracks cleanly, they needed magic at least on par with his. That's why he felt even more uneasy.

Currently, Xenon was believed to be a prophet or someone related to the future, so there was no way he could fall prey to mere ‘tracking.’

Unlike the other companions, Mael couldn’t help feeling uneasy because the others were underestimating Xenon. Of course, it was a fact that he was overestimating him, apart from his true feelings.

“Now, what should we do? Should we go in when it gets bright?”

“No, we should go in right away. We might fall into a trap if we wait. Is there protective magic here?”

“There’s some, but it’s at a basic level.”

The elf woman, Lena, answered the leader’s question. The protective magic was at a relatively high level from a human perspective, but it was difficult for it to function properly in front of them. They were not ordinary elves but personnel dispatched directly from the Council of Elders.

Even though they were already elves with extraordinary abilities, their powers were even more formidable. They might not be as strong as warriors, but they were more than capable enough to be considered a formidable force.

The elf leader, Kalas, wore a confident smile, feeling that the task was going to be easy. Of course, even if there was protective magic, it was probably just some kind of human-level enchantment, easily surmountable.

“It seems the task is becoming easier. Everyone, follow me. First, let’s check the first floor.”

“Do you think Xenon is really here?”

“It doesn’t matter if he’s not. Since the trace ended here, there must be something.”

Lena chuckled confidently and waved her hand. Then her body temporarily turned transparent and eventually vanished.

Although since she wasn’t hiding her body in the darkness like a Dark Elf, a faint afterimage remained. Even so, it would be difficult for anyone without keen eyesight to detect it.

Afterward, Kalas and Mael also concealed their bodies using magic. They did not forget to use stealth spells to avoid detection.

“Still, be cautious. Hide your footsteps. We will communicate through telepathy from now on.”

“Understood.”

In this way, the three elves activated their concealment magic and infiltrated the mansion. To prepare for any unforeseen circumstances, they effortlessly leaped over the walls with their superior physical abilities instead of using conspicuous mana-intensive teleportation.

The fact that elves no longer engaged in dirty deeds wasn't only a thing of the distant past. However, their behavior was different when it was for the “greater good.” This greater good meant that Xenon possessed dangerously powerful knowledge. Until now, they could have dismissed the novel as just a novel, but now they had a compelling reason to act.

Despite the warning from the gods not to intervene, they had only come to verify and “persuade,” with no intention of doing what was warned against.

[It seems the first floor is occupied by employees.]

[I don't notice anything particularly suspicious.]

[This room is the same.]

The elves communicated through telepathy.

The first floor of the mansion served as both the employee quarters and a dining area with a lounge. There were employees patrolling with lamps, but they couldn't detect the elves.

After a short time, thoroughly examining every corner of the first floor without finding anything, the elf tracking party proceeded to the second floor. The second floor housed not employees but family members, including the lord.

Kalas inspected the first floor just in case, but he had already anticipated that there was a high probability of finding clues on the second floor. Therefore, he planned to examine the second floor more closely.

[I'll check the lord's office and bedroom. You guys start searching from other places.]

[Understood.]

[Yes.]

After giving instructions to his subordinates, Kalas moved towards the room that was presumed to be the lord's bedroom. Usually, rooms associated with the lord had not just one but two doors attached.

Soon, Kalas arrived at a place where two doors were side by side. He used magic to sense if anyone was inside. Seeing that there was no one, he assumed it was the office.

'But I feel like I've heard the name Michelle somewhere before...'

Before entering, Kalas pondered over the Michelle family. He was sure he had heard it somewhere, but he couldn't recall the details.

Due to his characteristic as an elf, Kalas remembered things very well. He could remember what he had for breakfast ten years ago, let alone a name.

He rarely forgot a name he had heard, but for some reason, he couldn't remember where he heard about Michelle. In most cases, it would have been a passing rumor.

'I should investigate first.'

Kalas teleported a short distance and entered the office. He looked around. As expected, it was the lord's office, where the lord handled his official business.

The office was generally ordinary, from the distinct smell of paper to the desk placed in the center.

With confidence coming from somewhere, he hoped there might be clues here. With an excited heart, Kalas smiled and walked briskly towards the desk.

Eventually, when he saw the tightly closed drawer with a lock, he became convinced that there must be clues related to Xenon here. He used mana to easily unlock the drawer and carefully opened it, making sure not to make any noise. The drawer opened silently without even the typical creaking sound.

'...It's empty.'

Inside the drawer, there were only stacks of documents, nothing related to Xenon. Well, considering the importance of these documents, it wasn't surprising to have them locked away.

Kalas gritted his teeth inwardly and began searching through another drawer. Before long, he found a piece of paper in another drawer.

'A photo?'

Indeed, it was a photograph. Some might wonder how there could be a photograph in a time where cameras didn't even exist. But it's possible through 'magic,' another wonder of this world.

With magic, images or photographs could be captured and printed on paper. However, this technology was not yet widely available to the public and is mainly used for military purposes.

In Alvenheim, where most elves can use magic, seeing a photograph wasn't a novelty. But what caught Kalas's attention were the people captured in the photo.

In sharp color, the photograph depicted Lord, or rather the former Knight Commander, Hawk, standing side by side with his comrades. Kalas, who usually looked down on humans as an inferior race, couldn't help but focus on the people in the photo. The reason being that the prominent feature of Hawk, who stood proudly in the center, was his 'red' hair.

In addition to this, the golden eyes shining like a fierce beast captivated Kalas with their brilliance.

'Red hair and golden eyes...'

Such a unique combination was scarce, not only among elves but almost nonexistent across all races. Beyond rarity, it can be considered nearly unparalleled.

'Wait a moment. Michelle is...'

When one faint memory surfaced in his mind, a chain reaction occurred. "Michelle" and "red hair" merged in Kalas's mind.

Though he heard it as if passing by, humans with red hair were incredibly strong. There have been frequent reports of Elven reconnaissance teams returning with broken limbs after confronting those humans at the border zone.

While they recovered quickly and their lives were not at stake, these individuals possessed enough strength to “subdue” the Elven reconnaissance teams. Though human, they were not to be underestimated, even by Albenheim’s standards—a target to be wary of.

A man who single-handedly eliminated the wild savages causing trouble at the border, thereby restoring imperial security. The Red Lion, Hawk Ducker Michelle.

‘...My goodness.’

Kalas quickly discarded the photo and straightened his bent back. He never dreamed this place would be the Red Lion’s mansion.

Until now, he had only heard the title and hardly knew the name. However, he was well aware of the Red Lion’s reputation.

Even Kalas, who typically disregarded humans, couldn’t afford to underestimate the Red Lion.

‘We must leave this place immediately...’

And then, it happened.

Bam!

“Aaargh!”

While Kalas was briefly distracted, someone grabbed the back of his neck and thrust him onto the desk. It was a surprise attack so sudden and overpowering that he couldn’t resist, and the pressure on his neck was terrifying.

No matter how hard he tried to manipulate mana to escape, he couldn’t. The mana that had already flowed from his neck had completely taken control of his body.

Kalas struggled and turned his head back as much as possible. In the darkness, he saw golden eyes gleaming ominously, looking down at him.

The gaze was nothing short of that of a ‘beast.’ It overwhelmed Kalas, who was considered one of the skilled among the elves.

“You, you...”

“Shh. Be quiet.”

As Kalas was about to speak, the person holding his neck placed a finger on his lips, silencing him. At the same time, Kalas felt the amount of mana passing through his neck increasing. The mana moved toward his heart, swirling around it even though it didn't make direct contact.

Kalas understood what this meant. If he resisted unnecessarily, his heart would explode.

It was a mana control that would be impossible for an ordinary human, but the opponent was the famous Red Lion—a man rumored to be on par with the warrior commander.

Meanwhile, the person holding Kalas down looked at him and smirked.

“Don't mess with someone else's house.”

Meanwhile, while Kalas was subdued, Lena and Mael were investigating together as a team of two. They believed that it would be more efficient to search in a pair instead of having one person in charge of each room, even if it took more time.

They started their investigation meticulously from the empty rooms. Originally, Dave's room would have been one of those rooms, but he had already enlisted, leaving the room unoccupied.

Next, they searched for Nicole's room, but she had also vacated her room for the enlistment test. Naturally, it was impossible to find any evidence related to Xenon there.

In the end, there was only one room left: Isaac's bedroom.

[By the way, why haven't we heard from Kalas?]

[I don't know. Let's focus on our task. He's probably concentrating on something.]

The two quietly sneaked into Isaac's sleeping quarters. Before opening the door, they made sure to check if any servants were wandering around.

As they stepped into the room, a unique scent stimulated their senses. It was the distinctive musty smell of old books.

Pointing to the source of the smell, Isaac's room contained several bookshelves filled with books.

[It feels like it might be here, right?]

[Let's search quickly.]

The man and woman, engulfed in the smell of books, entered with a subtle certainty. Just to be sure, they checked the bed, finding the room's owner peacefully asleep, oblivious to the world.

As long as they investigated quietly, it would be over soon. Mael and Lena walked towards the desk next to the bed first.

They discovered a stack of papers and a letter placed on the desk. The two elves were instantly excited but remained composed as they each checked the items.

[This is... My goodness, it's the draft of the first volume of Xenon's Biography!]

[And this is a letter. It's from the publisher's CEO.]

They quickly realized that the stack of papers was the draft of the first volume of Xenon's Biography, and the letter was sent by the publisher's CEO.

With this, their suspicions were confirmed. The owner of this bed was indeed Xenon. Lena exchanged looks of excitement as she alternated between the letter and the draft before glancing towards the bed.

The room's owner, seemingly unaware of the unfolding events, continued to sleep soundly with closed eyes.

[What should we do? Should we take him with us?]

[Of course, we should take him. We have no choice but to do a proper verification.]

[Right. We'll return him by the next morning, no big deal.]

Having confirmed Xenon's identity, the two elves wasted no time in planning their kidnapping scheme. In their eyes, greed had taken hold in an instant.

Just finding Xenon was already a remarkable achievement, but persuading him too? That would further solidify their position within the Council.

Even if the persuasion fails, it doesn't matter. Since, if they threatened Xenon to stop writing any more books, it would be enough. Once it's proven that he possesses dangerous knowledge, that would be enough of a reason.

Upon thinking this, Mael and Lena each placed the manuscripts and letter on the desk and turned their gaze toward the bed. And...

“No, you don’t~”

Tempting voice of a woman flowed from behind them. In addition to this, she carefully covered the mouths of the two men and women with her hands.

It wasn’t just words, she truly ‘gently’ covered their mouths, but as soon as their mouths were covered, the sharp eyes of the elves quickly became blurred, as if consciousness had completely vanished. Even though it seemed like they had lost consciousness entirely, they remained standing upright. The woman who covered the elves’ mouths, Cecily, smiled charmingly and spoke quietly.

“Kidnapping is a bad thing. Little elves.”

She had even eavesdropped on the elves’ telepathy.

Chapter 178: Trap (2)

Even a person with exceptional abilities will meet their doom if they become complacent. This holds especially true during critical moments. This common sense applies even to elves. Especially among the older generations of elves, there was a strong tendency to underestimate other races.

However, it was merely a narrow-minded way of thinking, akin to a frog in a well. Among humans, there are monsters with skills comparable to elf warriors, and there are even demons with abilities comparable to elves.

To carry out important missions, considering each and every variable was not a choice but a necessity. Of course, no one could have imagined there being a human warrior of equal caliber and demons of higher status among those variables.

“Are these three all of them?”

“Yes. The publisher also confirmed three, and the dark elf lady said it’s these three.”

“Is mother alright?”

“She woke up in the middle, but she’s probably asleep again.”

After hearing my father’s words, I looked ahead. In front of the desk, three elves, two males and one female, were kneeling with their hands tied with ropes. They were still unconscious and had their heads lowered, but when I saw them earlier, they possessed the beauty typical of elves. It was fascinating to see that their hair colors were different.

However, these individuals were villains who not only intruded into our mansion but also planned to kidnap me as soon as they realized I was Xenon. Considering the laws of the Minerva Empire and the current era, executing them immediately would pose no problems.

“But Isaac, did you really have to reveal yourself as Xenon?”

Cecily, who easily subdued two of the three elf intruders, asked me with doubt. She was the one who figured out their real-time kidnapping plan by eavesdropping telepathically.

I looked at the elves in front of me and replied.

“It wouldn’t have taken long for them to realize that I am Xenon anyway. I might have let my guard down, but I’m not that foolish. Just the fact that I set a trap should have given them some idea of what to expect.”

“But it’s still too risky... What if these people leak the fact that you are Xenon?”

“Then, I’ll have to detonate the ‘ear bomb’ for real. If not, there’s also the ‘pact’.”

“Ah.”

When the magic used to establish a master-servant relationship, the ‘pact,’ was mentioned, Cecily showed a nod of understanding. As everyone knows, a pact was made between Arwen and Cecily at the time of Rain’s punishment.

The pact imposes a significant penalty on the ‘servant’ if they don’t act as written in the contract, and the ‘master’ also becomes aware of it. Thus, concealing anything is absolutely impossible.

In the past, slavery existed and was frequently used in human society, but it disappeared over time. There have been cases where slaves collectively committed suicide, stating that they couldn’t live like that, and events where they rose up in rebellion.

The pact is powerful enough to prevent unnecessary actions.

“We’ll have to make good use of it so that they can’t exploit any weaknesses. For example, they should never reveal Xenon’s true identity. What happens if the pact is broken?”

“Initially, it causes intense pain in the heart, and if you try to force it, it stops beating. If you receive emergency treatment, you can be saved, but they would never consider revealing it.”

“So, transmitting information through writing or code instead of speaking?”

“Don’t worry. Anything related to your identity cannot be done without violating the pact.”

It was reassuring to see Cecily so confident. Even if it's not a pact, we can use Siris to prevent any foolish actions. I'll have to discuss this separately with Arwen. In any case, we've managed to lure even the ancient fish, now all that's left is handling the aftermath.

Frankly, we could dispose of these elves silently without any major issues. From the council's perspective, they will think that the pursuers just met their demise and will send another pursuit team. This fight will continue until we eliminate the source.

“Alright then. What about... When will these people regain consciousness?”

“Shall I wake them up now?”

“Yes.”

Snap—

Cecily listened to my request and lightly flicked her fingers. I felt a faint wave of mana.

“Ughh...”

“Ugh...”

Before long, the restrained elves began to regain consciousness, groaning in their sleep. The room relied on a few candles, so it would take some time for them to recover their sight.

Moreover, although the ropes themselves were ordinary, Cecily had used magic to prevent them from using mana, eliminating any chance of resistance.

“Ugh... My head... What?”

“W-What? Why am I...”

“... ..”

As soon as they realized they were tied up, the two elven men and women looked startled, but the elven leader in the center remained silent. He merely confirmed the situation, restrained by ropes, with an expression that seemed to say “as expected,” showing almost no reaction.

According to what their father had said, unlike the other two elves, he had acted alone. The possibility of the blond elf being the leader seemed likely.

“This, what on earth... I’m certain...”

“What, who are you all?”

While the woman was still trying to grasp the situation, the man asked in an anxious voice, seemingly having noticed us. The woman, who had been fidgeting, also raised her head to look at us.

Lastly, when the hazy blond man also turned his gaze towards us, I stepped forward and crouched down to meet their eye level. As soon as our eyes met, I felt a twinge in my heart.

“R-right now, untie these ropes, human! It seems like you don’t know what you’ve done...!”

The brown-haired elven woman demanded urgently, either boldly or arrogantly in an elven manner. I could hear my father sighing behind me, frustrated.

I looked at the elf who seemed completely clueless about the situation and smirked as I cut to the chase.

“What we’ve done? We caught a bunch of intruders in our mansion.”

“... ..”

“And it seems like we know roughly what you came to find.”

“...Are you Xenon?”

A blonde elf, presumably the leader and not the elven woman, asked in a soft voice, and then the subordinates on both sides belatedly realized the situation and closed their mouths.

However, it didn’t take long for their expressions to contort. It seems they must have tried to use telepathy, but they must have realized that using mana itself was impossible.

In the end, one of the subordinates conveyed the truth with an expression of helplessness.

“This... This man is definitely Xenon. There were notes and letters on the desk.”

“I see.”

Unlike the subordinates, the leader maintained composure. I can't fathom why they would even try to use telepathy having mana disabled.

Cecily and Father seemed to notice that as well as they subtly moved. First, Cecily stood beside me, and Father stood behind the elves.

It was an expression that meant they would immediately stop any futile actions. I must admit, it made me feel secure and oddly confident.

Meanwhile, the leader of the pursuit unit trembled when he saw Cecily approaching me.

“Could it be Princess of Helium?”

“Do you know me?”

“I might. I saw you from afar during the speech.”

Cecily was also present during Arwen's speech. At that time, they had an unexpected encounter at the immigration checkpoint, and she got to know the true nature of the elves.

The elven leader gazed silently at Cecily for a moment, then smirked and made a remark that gently teased her nerves.

“Indeed, you knew who Xenon was. So I suppose that's why you were capable of doing such things.”

“Hmm. I'm not so sure. It doesn't seem like an elf who has done dirty deeds should be speaking. Is your conscience doing well?”

“... ..”

He got hit after poking his nose where it didn't belong. I guess a certain level of cheekiness was necessary.

“Anyway, can you tell me your names? If you don't want to, you don't have to.”

“...Kalas.”

“The others?”

“Mael.”

“Lena.”

The elves responded in curt tones, unwilling to bend their pride even when cornered. Honestly, I didn't expect much.

But soon enough, they would have to swallow that pride. I'll take my time building up until then, it's not an urgent situation for me, but it is for them.

Their safety is now in my hands.

“First, let me ask this question. Why did you bother looking for me? I haven't done anything to harm you.”

“Your knowledge is very dangerous. So we tried to persuade you.”

“Persuade?”

“We were willing to pay a price in return if you would help us.”

‘Persuasion’ was pure nonsense. The very same bastards who declared they would censor my book couldn't utter a word when faced with persuasion. It was so amusing that I couldn't find the words to express it.

Cecily seemed to share a similar sentiment as she pointed out Kalas's contradiction with an astonished voice.

“So, those people attempted to censor Xenon's Biography? They went to such lengths, and now they're willing to negotiate. Truly cunning.”

“Censorship wasn't our doing. It was a direct order from the Queen herself.”

Now, Kalas even shamelessly resorted to lies. If being able to lie shamelessly without a change in expression is a skill, then he surely possesses that skill.

And they claim that elves don't engage in dirty deeds. I found out through Kalas that it's all nonsense.

I scoffed at the empty words and spoke to Kalas with a chilling voice.

“What about the Queen? You all received orders from the Council, didn't you? Don't think I'm ignorant.”

“I don’t know where you heard that nonsense, but you’re wrong. We follow the Queen’s...”

“Fieren Garrit Stormwalker.”

“...!”

As soon as I mentioned the name of the Council’s leader, the one who gave orders to them, Kalas’s eyes widened significantly. It was an expression of disbelief, asking how I knew that name.

The other elves had similar expressions. Mael’s jaw dropped in astonishment, and Lena seemed to be trying to verify the truth of what she had heard.

From their perspective, just the fact that I knew Fieren would complicate things in their minds. They might think that I’ve been playing them from the beginning or that they’ve been fooled by me.

Either way, as long as I lead them to the situation I desire, that’s all that matters.

“That old elf gave you an order, didn’t he? To find Xenon. Didn’t he?”

“How, how did you... No, you can’t be...”

“I don’t have to explain myself. Anyway, you must know it too. From the moment you were caught by me, you are nothing more than abandoned dogs. If you go back now, you might disappear silently, or you might face the punishment of having your ears cut off. And for you elves, having your ears cut off is a worse punishment than death, isn’t it?”

I’ve heard about Fieren, the Grand Councilor, from Arwen. He wields immense power as the head of the Council of Elders and goes to great lengths to maintain that power.

After the racial war, when even the Council of Elders was on the brink of collapse, Fieren forced a revival. At that time, Fieren was a prominent figure in the Council and just about to soar to new heights when the racial war broke out.

Naturally, Fieren must have hated the idea of the Council of Elders fading into history. Once you taste the power, it’s harder to quit than a drug.

And now, Fieren was constantly keeping Arwen, who poses a threat to his power, in check, even resorting to various dark schemes.

The reason these elves came to the publisher to check the manuscript in the first place is that Arwen accidentally left her speech behind, which was obtained through a certain channel. Arwen noticed it belatedly and tried to burn it, but the damage was already done.

The saying that elves don't do dirty tricks is only applicable in war. In front of power, whether it's humans or elves, everyone's the same.

“So, here's my proposal. You wouldn't consider staying attached to the Council of Elders, talking about loyalty or anything like that, would you? No matter what happens, your life is the most important thing. Especially for you elves, your ears would be more valuable.”

“Hah, do you really think you can manipulate us with such threats!? Just a mere human!”

The elven woman introduced as Lena snarled with some pride still left in her, but her voice was trembling, likely consumed by fear.

I looked at her expressionlessly. Lena stared back at me with a defiant face, but as I remained silent, her resistance gradually subsided.

“Should I just cut off your ears here? Do you really think you can return to Alvenheim with your ears cut off?”

“Hick...”

Lena whimpered as I threatened her in a relentless tone. The atmosphere was tense, and even a seemingly minor threat like this was enough to put considerable pressure on her.

With no mana available, and two lions waiting with their mouths open, ready to pounce, there was no guarantee for her life.

If these were humans who valued honor more than life, they might have said, “Go ahead and kill us!” But they were elves. Honor and nonsense aside, their lives came first.

“No need to emphasize it further, your lives are in my grasp. And with my noona, Cecily, you can't pull off any tricks with magic. Bound up like this, you're in a vulnerable position. Got it?”

“...If you plan to use us, it's better to get rid of us. The Council of Elders won't send us off nicely either way. It might be cleaner to handle it here.”

“Well, in that case, if the Council suspects something, they might send more people our way. It’s probably better to uproot everything.”

“Hah, do you think that’s possible? Even if you use us as bait, you won’t gain anything.”

“I don’t know. I see it differently.”

I showed my right hand to Kalas, who had been calling me a fool. In response, Kalas narrowed his eyes slightly.

As he said, the Council of Elders boasted a history of over hundreds of years as a political organization. Even during the racial war, it has survived like a cockroach, enduring through the ages.

However, since the racial war, there has been a growing opposition to the Council of Elders. Especially after the speech, support for Arwen has increased significantly.

If we ignite the fuse of discontent here, the Council of Elders will be unable to lift a finger and face its downfall. With a cold smile, I spoke to Kalas.

“What would happen if I said something like this? Blaming my right hand injury on the elves, making it impossible for me to continue my duties for a while. Xavier, who annoyed me with the idea of me being canonized as a saint, will undoubtedly join forces with Helium. The human kingdoms will do the same.”

“... ..”

“Even if it’s Alvenheim, it won’t last more than a few months. Just cutting off the trade routes alone will cause massive damage. War will break out before that. What decision should we make to prevent this?”

The more I spoke, the stiffer Kalas’ expression became, eventually turning pale. No matter how the Council of Elders decides to handle this, they will undoubtedly be eradicated.

They will probably claim it was an independent action, something they know nothing about. From their perspective, it’s a desperate situation.

If they do it this way, they’ll lose their ears, and if they do it that way, they’ll lose their lives. Even if they plead with the gods, they won’t listen to their sins.

“Even if you ask the gods for help, it will be useless. They warned you directly, but you still committed such a deed, so they will probably bring down divine punishment instead.”

“... ..”

“So what will you do? Will you help me and eradicate the Council of Elders, or will you just quietly disappear? Honestly, it won’t matter much if you’re not here. Eventually, the Council of Elders will come looking for me again.”

That’s all I had to say. If you’re smart, you should have a rough idea of the situation by now. The rest is up to you.

Whether you cooperate with us to crush the Council of Elders for what they’ve done, or quietly vanish.

I hope you choose the former if possible.

“Ka-Kalas...!”

“Y-You must accept our request! It’s the only way we can survive!”

Mael and Lena pleaded with Kalas with desperate eyes. Even if they were chosen as a race favored by the gods, they were still just people when they begged like this.

No matter how strong their honor and pride were, they meant nothing in the face of a situation where their lives were at stake. There was no point in glorifying sacrifices.

Kalas listened to his subordinates’ pleas and hesitated for a moment before meeting my gaze. My face reflected in his blue eyes like a mirror.

“Then... what do we gain?”

“Hmm?”

“We should have something to gain, shouldn’t we?”

“Haha.”

Look at how shameless he is until the end. He must have been utterly flabbergasted for Father to even chuckle. I, too, lowered my head and let out a laugh, as if agreeing with him.

The impulse to just cut off their ears and send them back to Alvenheim grew stronger by the moment. However, we need to use these elves until all the events are concluded. In fact, it could be considered the most crucial aspect. I slowly lifted my head again and met Kalas's gaze.

His expression was stiff, but the corners of his mouth subtly lifted, indicating that he expected to gain something from this deal. Of course, there were some benefits for them as well.

“Yeah. There is something. Something very good for you too.”

“What is it?”

Kalas asked with anticipation.

“I'll let you live.”

“... ..”

“There should be some limits to shamelessness, right? Where did your conscience go?”

I delivered my verdict kindly.

Translators note:

Chapter 179: Trap (3)

I'll say it again, I currently have the authority to make immediate decisions regarding these elves. Not only is it specified in the law, but there's also no one here who would say anything about killing thieves.

However, just as you need to use bait to catch a fish, I must use these elves well in order to destroy the Council. Nevertheless, the Council isn't completely foolish and meticulously planning our moves wasn't a choice but a necessity.

First and foremost, the 'pact.' The pact was difficult to use because it requires the consent of the other party, but in a situation where their lives are at stake, it can be useful. Of course, the owner could die or take advantage of the flaws in the pact to escape, but it didn't matter since Cecily will handle it.

The problem lies with the elves. I'll say it again, in order to establish a pact, you need the consent of the other party. Arwen accepted it willingly as a token of her sincerity, but whether these elves will accept it is doubtful. As everyone knows, elves, especially the older ones, have a terribly strong pride. Many tales circulate about them needlessly provoking fights and ending up dead or humiliated, leading to a mental breakdown. Considering such a race, how would they react to a pact that is akin to a slave contract?

"We refuse! Are you telling us to become slaves of demons?"

"Such disgrace... It might be better to die."

Naturally, the moment I mentioned the pact, they loudly refused with defiant voices. They know well what kind of magic the pact involves, and they are adamantly rejecting it.

Above all, the subject of the pact is not me but Cecily. Given that she's a demon, the older elves would start with disgust with no room for pride to allow it.

However, I didn't fail to predict this either. As I watched the defiant elves with irritation, I turned to their father who stood behind them and asked,

“Father, do you have a sharp knife?”

“Are you planning to cut their ears?”

“What else can I do? They don’t listen. I have to cut them.”

“Wh, what! Not the ears...!”

“We were wrong!”

When I used their strong pride against them and threatened to cut their ears, the elves flattened themselves on the ground. Why are you making such a fuss?

As a result, the elves entered into a pact led by Cecily. Since they couldn’t use mana, we proceeded by unbinding them one by one, just in case.

Every time they made a pact, the embarrassed expressions on the elves’ faces were quite amusing. Of course, they got upset, so whenever that happened, I pointed to my ear with my fingers.

If necessary, I would threaten to cut their ears, and they would contemplate and relax their expressions. Honestly, I had no intention of actually cutting their ears, but given the situation, they had no choice but to believe it was true.

So, having made the pact, I faced Kalas for the experiment. Kalas had a cold expression, as if he had never experienced such humiliation before.

“Now. Shall we ask a few questions for the experiment? Tell me where Xenon lives.”

“That’s...”

Perhaps Kalas also knew the effectiveness of the pact, as he couldn’t continue his answer and hesitated. Arwen couldn’t participate in such an experiment due to lack of ill feelings between us, but Kalas could.

I stared fixedly at Kalas, whose lips were quivering, and quietly spoke as I exhaled deeply through my nose.

“If you don’t talk, you know what will happen, right?”

“Mm... Miii...”

In the moment when Kalas was about to respond to my threat, he suddenly widened his eyes and let out a pained scream before clamping their mouth shut. Just mentioning the letter ‘M’ from Michelle’s Domain was enough to have a tremendous effect.

A little while later, Kalas slowly lifted his head, seemingly having recovered from the pain, and took a slow, deliberate breath. How agonizing must it have been? His sweat flowed profusely even in that short span of time, causing his hair to suck to his damp skin.

This couldn’t possibly be an act. There doesn’t seem to be a need for separate confirmation.

“The pact seems to have been firmly established... What’s left is...”

“Should I implant an exploding spell in their ears?”

“Ehm!”

As I stroked my chin and mumbled, Cecily suggested from the side. Then, we heard a sound of someone clearing their throat from the front.

Implanting a bomb in their ear wouldn’t be a bad idea in itself, but since the pact has already been made, it wouldn’t hold much significance. Eavesdropping or recording spells would be more fitting.

However, eavesdropping spells were too conspicuous. While the pact wouldn’t be discovered even if their bodies were searched, eavesdropping spells would be detected in eight or nine cases out of ten.

Moreover, those like Fieren, who had immersed themselves in politics for hundreds of years, prioritize safety and certainty above all else, making it highly likely they would search their bodies.

“No. It’s okay. The pact alone should be sufficient. Instead, we need to prevent these people from causing any trouble...”

“That, that will never happen! I can swear to it!”

“Yes, that’s right! What more do we need than a pact placed on the line?”

Even though they were pleading so desperately, it didn’t feel very reliable. While watching Mael and Lena’s earnest request, I glanced at Kalas.

Kalas was still catching his breath, as if the pain still lingered. Beads of sweat were also forming at the edge of his forehead. In truth, the future depended on how well these people could act their part. If we were to raise suspicions from the Council of Elders, it would lead to nothing but trouble.

As I pondered over what to do, I decided to bring up more specific questions to establish a detailed plan. This was about the situation after I had dismissed them.

“When you return, are you planning to report to the elf named Fieren?”

“...Yes.”

“Then you’ll speak of the results of the tracking.”

Instead of replying verbally, Kalas nodded his head. This was where we needed to make good use of the pact. The covenant had the effect of inflicting severe pain when revealing the ‘truth’ related to Xenon, but I had set it up so that it wouldn’t have any effect if they were telling lies.

So, if these people mixed lies into their report, they would pass through without any issues. Even if a bit of truth was mixed within falsehoods, the pact would still be triggered. There was almost no way to escape from its grip once it took effect.

‘However, openly admitting that we intentionally used the pact would cause problems.’

People naturally come up with various ideas when they are pushed into a crisis. Therefore, it would be wise to prepare for the unexpected. The question is, can we prevent even that? Or can we make it impossible to even have such thoughts? We must choose one of these two options.

“Hmm...”

“Do you have any concerns?”

Cecily cautiously asked, noticing my preoccupied expression. In response, I let out a sigh and replied with a pained voice.

“In truth, if these elves were to show signs of risking their lives for a solemn sacrifice, the situation would become complicated. I’m curious if there’s a way to prevent even that. Should we really plant a bomb in their ears or something?”

“Wouldn’t that create a problem? They’d realize they fell into a trap.”

“That’s quite a headache...”

“... ..”

As our conversation continued, the elves’ complexion grew increasingly pale. Observing this, I lifted the corner of my mouth.

‘Attaching Siris will surely solve the situation easily.’

In reality, all the above conversations were a prearranged bluff. There’s a simple solution at hand, and there’s no need to ponder deeply.

Let’s send the elves away and attach Siris to follow them from behind. She’s also well-versed in magic, so instructing her with eavesdropping and recording should suffice.

The stealth skills of the Dark Elves are difficult to detect even for skilled individuals, and Siris was a seasoned warrior. Even if Fieren was cautious, it would be hard for him to discern her presence.

Moreover, the likelihood of not predicting the situation where a Dark Elf is watching was high. I should discuss this with Arwen, but she will probably agree. The reason for weaving such an elaborate lie was simple – to instill confidence in those Elves.

If we can demonstrate that we’ve gone through countless deliberations to arrive at a suitable solution, they will believe it wholeheartedly. Honestly, given the circumstances, they have no choice but to believe.

In a situation where lives and ears hanged in the balance, who wouldn’t be skeptical? For a while, I pretended to be deep in thought, then snapped my fingers as if I’d had a great idea.

“Ah! That’s it. Noona.”

“Yes?”

“Can you lend me your ear for a moment?”

I straightened my bent knee and asked Cecily to lend me her ear. It’s necessary to include such meticulous details, as displaying the whole process openly might arouse suspicion.

Elves have exceptional hearing, as keen as their long ears, but installing soundproofing magic resolved that issue. As Cecily proceeded to set up the soundproofing spell, I leaned in close to her ear and muttered softly.

“We might have to stay at our mansion for a while. I’ll let our parents know in advance about the situation, at least broadly. You understand, right? Oh, and I love you.”

When I withdrew my mouth from her ear, Cecily blinked, her expression tinged with puzzlement. Her acting skills, befitting a princess, were truly remarkable.

Although her face blushed a little at the words “I love you,” it was too dark for anyone to notice.

“Is that enough?”

“Is it difficult?”

“It’s not too difficult.”

“Then start right away.”

As soon as Cecily heard my words, she walked up to the elves and reached out her hand. The direction her hand pointed to was none other than the symbol of the elves, the ears.

With her long fingers, she lightly tapped Kalas’s ear, then quickly pulled back. A slight flow of mana entered, only subtly perceptible, but nothing more.

While Kalas gave Cecily a questioning look as if asking what she had done, she sequentially touched the ears of Mael and Lena. Unlike Kalas, the two men and women trembled all over as their ears were touched.

When Cecily finished the entire process and returned to my side, I examined the faces of the elves. Expressions of doubt, fear, and terror mixed together were evident.

“You must be curious about what Cecily Noona just did. It’s actually quite simple. You all know about black mana, right? The mana that demons use, the symbol of devils.”

“... ..”

“She injected that mana into your ears. Non-Demons might not know, but black mana is lethal to other creatures. Especially to elves. It might be fine for a few days, but just like dropping a drop of ink onto white paper, your ears will gradually start turning black. It’s

not a curse, but pure mana, so divine power won't work against it. To solve this, another demon needs to absorb that mana. Since no one else can absorb black mana. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Finally, I asked nonchalantly. The elves' faces turned pale, and they looked as though they had lost their souls. Their ears didn't turn a sickly gray like those of dark elves, nor did they turn a sickly yellow like those afflicted by a plague.

It was a gruesome phenomenon, to the point where cutting seemed preferable, but even that wasn't a real option. In other words, it meant they had to seek help from the demons. For those who lived with the pride of being chosen by the gods, it was a punishment that completely crushed that pride.

However, there was something they didn't know at all here.

'It's all a lie.'

I explained at length, but it was all a lie. While it was true that black mana harmed other races besides demons, it didn't discolor their skin. According to records, it only generated a defense reaction within the body, causing a slight fever, similar to a virus or bacterial infection.

Furthermore, this applied only to the first-generation demons. Over time and through continuous prayer, the black mana of the demons became closer to pure mana. The difference lies in their nature, much like water and oil.

The reason this lie was convincing was that there was very little known about demons. Until Xenon's Biography and the like emerged, demons were treated as devils, making it impossible to know the truth even if one wanted to.

Not to mention the older-generation elves. They already held a negative perception of demons, making them susceptible to such trivial lies.

"So, if you don't want to cut your own ears, it's better to listen well. It's pure mana, so even if you search for it, you won't detect it. Got it?"

"I understand... Fine..."

"Th-then, understood! So, please, at least as much as our ears..."

"Really, will you really heal us? Yes? Please say that you will...!"

Kalas despaired, and Mael and Lena began to plead while crying. Though it pricked at my conscience to see an elf with such a graceful appearance react like that, it was they who had first offered their conscience for sale. I'm just resisting and defending myself.

This world was infinitely lenient towards self-defense, so I could strengthen my resolve as well.

“Don't worry. Depending on what you do, I'll decide whether to take action or leave you be. Now then...”

Only one thing remained.

“I will inform Fieren of the report you will send. I'll do it in your place.”

It was time to bait the fish.

Translators note:

Hello! I apologize for no uploads recently as I was busy with life stuff but now that I took a few days off for my birthday I will resume uploading again!

And so... 12 chapters today!!!

1/12

Chapter 180: Bait (1)

The elves should tell Fieren a certain lie. It goes something like this: Xenon's real name and residence, appearance, and finally, the fact that measures have been taken 'hostage' to prevent him from writing any more. Since this lie doesn't violate the agreement, and considering Fieren was willing to entrust them with tracking, which implied a reasonable level of trust, making it highly likely he will buy into these lies.

Of course, Fieren isn't a fool, so he'll probably demand evidence. To prepare for that, there's the 'fake pact.' Although pacts require mutual agreement to be effective, being a kind of 'contract,' they are often subjected to fraud. Among the most significant fraudulent methods was, as mentioned before, the fake pact.

People frequently lie about having made a pact, showing seemingly acceptable terms even though no agreement was reached. Since there are various ways to confirm whether a pact was formed, it doesn't work well with strangers. Hence, this method is only effective with someone who has built a certain level of trust. Kalas stated that Fieren indicated them for a reason, not necessarily implying full trust but enough to merit credibility, so it should be plausible.

However, meticulous manipulation was essential to ensure that the fake pact remains undiscovered. Cecily assured that this aspect was not a concern, so there shouldn't be a significant issue. All the bait should be ready. All that's left is to wait for the opportunity.

Amid various preparations, the sunrise was nearly upon us without us realizing it. I looked at the exhausted Kalas and his group and sought confirmation.

"Do you understand? If you don't want your ears to turn pitch black, it's best to do as I say."

"...Understood."

Now even Kalas, perhaps with his pride worn down, used polite language. After enduring hours of pressure in a strained state, it's no wonder their spirits would be

drained. Moreover, they were elves. They likely never experienced such a situation before.

“Isaac, I’ve written down the pact here.”

“Hmm...”

A little while later, I received a fake treaty from Cecily and confirmed its terms. I had asked her to write it from the perspective of an arrogant elf, and I’m curious about how she actually wrote it.

[From now on, Xenon’s Biography will be written with the supervision of the Council.]

Okay. Just looking at Clause 1 was enough. There was also a clause asking to exclude all the negative aspects of the elves and only write down the positives, but the first one was sufficient.

Even if it contained clauses that could easily please Fieren’s egoistic mind, filled with racial superiority, it wouldn’t matter if all those clauses were not included. If I had written Xenon’s Biography according to these terms, it would surely become mere propaganda.

The terms were written solely with the focus on the elves, uncomplicated and concise.

“Sign here... You too, sign.”

Kalas signed on the fake treaty and tucked it into his robe. With the fake treaty also prepared, I warned once again.

“Remember. Depending on how you come out of this, it might not be your ears, but your life that you lose. Got it?”

“...We will keep that in mind.”

“Then return to that old elf, Fieren. Make good use of what I’ve taught you.”

As I gestured and spoke, the elves hid their appearances without needing anyone to signal them. Seeing the waves of mana, it seemed like they had used teleportation.

It was slightly amusing to see them fleeing as soon as the opportunity presented itself, but there was still work to be done. As soon as the elf tracking party disappeared, I spoke to Cecily.

“Noona. Did you tell Siris?”

“By now, she’s probably gone after them.”

“Is there no issue using teleportation?”

“Yeah. If you understand the principles of teleportation, tracking isn’t difficult. In fact, the risk of teleportation being traced is high. Do you want me to explain the principles?”

“No, it’s fine.”

Attributing magic to a fantasy was beneficial. I have a lot of knowledge thanks to my past life memories, but I’m not necessarily well-versed.

“Do you really believe it will succeed, my son?”

My father asked me, his arms folded, seemingly sensing that the situation had reached a certain conclusion. His face held a sense of doubt. While I did provide a rough plan before the elves invaded the mansion, he still appeared skeptical.

I hadn’t directly stepped into politics, but having observed from afar, I’m concerned about the current situation. Like my father, I don’t believe there’s a 100% chance of success either. The world doesn’t always go as one desires, and people tend to exhibit unpredictable behavior when cornered.

But as the saying goes, with strategy, one can win a hundred battles. In reality, we hold a significant advantage in this fight. There are allies who can block any unexpected variables that arise, so the overall course of events won’t be disrupted.

“Well, I don’t think we’ll completely succeed. However, the flow should remain intact. The rest depends on how well the queen can use it.”

“Incitement... I heard her speech was apparently excellent, but I don’t quite understand ‘incitement’.”

Since my father had never personally heard Arwen’s speech, he scratched his chin and spoke with a slightly uncertain tone.

However, originally, a speech and incitement are merely a sheet of paper apart. Especially if a small amount of falsehood is mixed within a great truth, people have no choice but to believe it.

Moreover, this is a world where not only the internet but even information doesn't spread properly. Someone from my past life left behind such a famous saying.

Incitement can be achieved with just a single sentence, but to counter it, dozens of documents and evidence are needed. And when one tries to refute it, people are already swayed by the incitement.

There was a rumor that the famous Nazi orator, Goebbels, said something like that, but there's no evidence. However, the fact that such words can be attributed to Goebbels demonstrates his skill in incitement.

And the Arwen I saw possessed a powerful speech ability, not as great as Goebbels, but still remarkable. I merely provided the speech, and it was Arwen who successfully delivered it, so it's fair to say her ability wasn't lacking.

“It will surely go well. Father knows well how favorable the public opinion towards the Queen is, right? Even the blending of purebloods and half-bloods into one is Arwen's doing.”

“That's thanks to your speech. But now there's probably nothing you can do to help...”

“So, it all depends on the Queen's hands. She's probably still preparing even now.”

From Arwen's perspective, it's a golden opportunity to completely overthrow the Council of Elders that was nothing but a thorn in her side. Since she was informed through Siris, she must be making preparations accordingly.

I'll just wait leisurely and observe the situation. If a problem arises in the middle, then I'll take action at that time.

“Hmm... I don't know much about Alvenheim politics, so I'm just asking. But I'm curious if the influence of the Council of Elders and the Queen is roughly equal.”

“They're somewhat similar. Because of the symbolic nature of the Council of Elders, they couldn't easily make moves since there were many aristocrats who held grievances. The monarchy was established in the first place to keep in check the Council of Elders's power.”

No matter how skilled Arwen is in diplomacy and politics, it's mentally exhausting to be under constant restraint alone. Considering how many times the ruler of Alvenheim's throne has changed hands, one can roughly understand how severe the restraint is.

However, seeing Arwen endure steadfastly, even prominent figures are looking at her with a sentiment of ‘Hmm, she’s quite resilient, isn’t she?’ Moreover, her support from the nobles has become even stronger since she captured the hearts of the people through her speech.

“Well, then it might not matter, but it seems inevitable that a storm is brewing in Alvenheim. Just the fact that your hand is injured is a significant matter, but if it’s revealed that the culprit is the Council of Elders...”

“Arwen is surely aware as well. But considering that she permitted it, it seems she has taken it into account and formulated a plan.”

The Council of Elders is undoubtedly a group that obstructs the progress of Alvenheim, but its symbolism cannot be undermined. If Arwen were to break that symbol, the shock among the people wouldn’t be insignificant.

The aftermath that follows will be something she has to endure entirely. I secretly hope that she can handle it wisely. With the weakening of Alvenheim, there’s a high possibility that surrounding nations will exploit the opportunity to exert pressure.

“So, what are you going to do now?”

“For now...”

I responded to Cecily’s question with a smile, then in a weary voice, I added,

“I’m going to sleep. I’ll write the letter later.”

After the pact with Isaac, the Kalas gang fled from the mansion as if escaping, desperately squeezing out the remaining mana and moving to a safer location. Teleportation consumed mana exponentially more when the distance was greater, but given the circumstances, they had no choice.

And so, in their haste, they moved to an area far from the Michelle domain. The area they arrived in was not a city or a town, but a forest, which was nothing short of a sanctuary for these elves.

“Now, what do we do?”

Lena, an elf woman with brown hair, spoke with an anxious and restless voice. Her eyes trembled, and her hands were touching her ears.

Mael wasn't much different from her. If there was a difference, it would be the expression of near-desperation. It was a look that seemed to have already given up.

“Sigh...”

Kalas heard Lena's question, let out a deep sigh, and rummaged through his pockets. In his hand was a false pact with the demon princess, Cecily.

In his heart, he wanted to tear the pact to shreds or even burn it, but he couldn't. If his ears turned pitch black, all elf pride and everything else would vanish.

At the moment, there was nothing they could do. Kalas opened his mouth quietly, a voice tinged with resignation.

“For now, let's return to Alvenheim. We'll have to hope that Fierin notices.”

“But the pact...”

“Just because it's a pact doesn't mean it's flawless. There must be a way out.”

The pact only takes effect if it's based on the truth; if it's a lie, it won't be effective. So, they would use this in reverse. Kalas, as if he had come up with a good idea while pondering, erased his resigned expression and smiled. Lena and Mael's expressions also brightened slightly at that smile.

“Yeah, that's right. When we report to Lord Fieren, we can indicate that we're lying. Since the pact doesn't work with falsehoods.”

“Th-then that should work! But how do we lie...”

“When people lie, their body reacts. Like shifting their gaze to the left or fidgeting with their hands, among other things. There are many signs. Lord Fieren wouldn't be unaware of that either.”

Given Fieren's extensive political experience, his intuition was quick. Furthermore, once he gets a hint, he won't let it go until his suspicions are resolved. Even if they didn't lie, once Fieren became suspicious, he would keep digging and digging.

And they can use that to their advantage. The ears rotting due to the black mana? What's crucial now is buying time. It's most important to somehow delay Fieren from taking

action.

“But be careful. We don’t know who the traitor within Alvenheim might be. Considering he even knows Fieren’s full name, the probability of him being from one of the prestigious families is high.”

“Why would a mere human like him have ties to a prestigious family... even a young one...”

“There must be a connection. Or perhaps he’s really from the future. Surely the gods have imposed limitations on him, not allowing him to act recklessly. So, we...”

Skkrt

Thud!

During Kalas’s speech, a strong gust of wind swept through, making a sharp sound as it struck something. Startled, Kalas and his companions turned their heads towards the direction of the sound.

A dagger was lodged into the stem of a plant, stretching high into the sky. Tied to the hilt of the dagger was a note. Kalas stared at the dagger stuck right above his head with a dumbfounded expression, then reached out his hand. He carefully removed the dagger, and with trembling hands, he untied the note.

Gulp...

Amidst the sudden ambush, the sound of someone swallowing nervously could be heard. Kalas unfolded the note with a mixture of anticipation and anxiety.

And on that note was...

[Don’t do unnecessary things.]

A clear warning was written.

“... ..”

Kalas felt his blood run cold in real-time. He urgently cast detection magic around but found nothing.

“How? Did they use teleportation? What kind of trick is this?”

Could it be the ability of that demon princess? Demons were utterly enigmatic, with no known facts about them, so the impossible wasn't ruled out.

Above all, demons, like Dark Elves, were a prominent race that revered Morah. Concealing oneself in darkness wasn't out of the question, especially for something like this.

Truly, he was surrounded by eyes and ears in every direction. Even the path to Alvengard would be under surveillance. For Kalas, it felt like his world was crumbling.

'What is that guy...?'

Xenon, or rather, Isaac. Just how powerful was he? Kalas looked up at the sky with a despondent expression.

In stark contrast to his feelings, the sky was brilliantly clear.

'It's over.'

Kalas let out a bitter laugh, consumed by a sense of futility.

Chapter 181: Bait (2)

Council of Elders.

Boasting a history long enough to rightfully claim a place in the annals of Alvenheim, the political institution with a storied past. In any civilization, a 'leader' to guide the civilization forward is essential, most often taking the form of a 'king'. This king holds the duty and responsibility to ensure the people's more stable lives and the nation's robust growth against surrounding threats.

However, during the founding of Alvenheim, there was no 'king'. A king, by nature, reigns over the people with formidable power, a being to which ordinary citizens must look up. At that time, the Elves vehemently resisted being ruled by anyone due to their pride in being chosen by the gods. They believed that only the gods could govern them and thus decided to operate the nation under the guidance of their trust in the gods.

Consequently, the initial leaders were 'priests'. The clergy offered high-quality offerings to the gods and received their direct guidance, efficiently managing the nation. Despite some grumbling among the people of Alvenheim, life continued without issues.

Until the event of the 'Devil War', which led to some doubts about the gods' power.

Fortunately, having received the seed of the World Tree as a gift, the Elves managed to repel the threat, but they realized the potential danger. They understood that it might be too late to heed the gods' voices in the face of a similar crisis in the future.

They came to the realization that it should not be the gods, but the Elves themselves who must oversee Alvenheim's progress. This realization gave birth to the political institution known as the 'Council of Elders'.

At first, the elves were wary of being dominated by mortals rather than gods, but as time passed, that thought gradually faded. Furthermore, as is often the case with beginnings, the Council led Alvenheim wisely, with pure hearts and uncompromised beliefs. Among them were also the Dark Elves. In truth, one could say that this was the last true era of the elves.

However, power has a tendency to corrupt and decay as it grows stronger. The Council of Elders began to restrict other forces in order to secure their own interests. Dark Elves were a prime example. They were a convenient target for oppression due to their distinct ethnicity, skin color, and even the deity they worshiped. The result was the exile of the Dark Elves.

In a sense, the involvement of the Council of Elders in the exile of the Dark Elves was substantial. Externally, the religious disputes had escalated into madness, but the Council of Elders had ignited the fuse of that powder keg.

Subsequently, through divine intervention, the madness subsided, and the Council of Elders, in an attempt to hide the worst aspects, even erased records. Despite its inherent corruption, the political entity of the Council of Elders managed to persist instead of being dissolved.

The Dark Elf exile incident was a major event in itself, but it triggered a full-scale racial war, revealing the Council of Elders's corruption. They imprisoned even the capable warrior commanders who could have turned the tide of war, and led the nation to defeat.

What used to be silent discontent erupted all at once, causing an increase in demands for the dissolution of the Council of Elders and ultimately leading to the birth of the "monarch." Nevertheless, the Council of Elders managed to persist relentlessly.

The Council of Elders, merely by its existence, symbolized a part of Alvenheim's history, whether positive or negative. Erasing this symbol would be a significant loss for Alvenheim.

It can be said that elves, unlike other races, particularly dislike 'change'.

"Please, have a seat. Ah, is there anything you'd like to eat?"

"No, thank you."

In the reception room of a mansion in Yggdrasil. Two men were facing each other across the table in the modestly decorated room. The head of the Council of Elders, Fieren, and his subordinate, Kalas.

Fieren had a smile like a gentle grandfather, while Kalas seemed slightly tense, his face somewhat stiff.

"A cup of tea brewed from the leaves of the World Tree. Perfect for fatigue."

“I’ll gladly have some.”

When Kalas hesitated upon Fieren’s offer to drink, he looked at the liquid in the cup. It had a faint greenish hue and emitted a subtle fragrance that tantalized his senses. Tea brewed from the leaves of the World Tree was outrageously expensive, as the name suggested.

There were few who could approach the World Tree directly, and magical treatment was necessary to preserve the freshness of the leaves. However, its effects were remarkable as well. It was excellent for fatigue, and its calming effect was exceptional, similar to a tranquility potion.

It was a perfect choice for Kalas, who was currently nervous. As he finally took a sip of the tea, a refreshing taste spread through his mouth. Unlike its greenish appearance, it had no discernible flavor, only a sense of coolness.

“So, did you find Xenon?”

Fieren cut through the trivial words and got straight to the point. He had given Kalas the command to find Xenon, so it was only natural that he was eager for updates.

He hesitated for a moment, but then Kalas flashed a natural smile. If Fieren were to have any suspicions here, he would have no choice but to let his ears rot away.

No matter how esteemed he might be in the Council, it’s not worth sacrificing one’s own ears.

“Of course. Humans are truly unremarkable. Especially a publishing company executive, an utterly incompetent human – easy to track.”

“Oh, impressive. I thought Xenon might have concealed his identity by borrowing power from another race. Like demons, for instance.”

While Fieren spoke casually, Kalas couldn’t help but feel a pang.

A demon was in Xenon’s mansion. Not just any ordinary demon, but Princess Cecily of Helium. Even Xenon’s father was known as the Red Lion, a renowned knight. The publishing executive may have let his guard down, but the people around him had far surpassed the realm of ordinary individuals.

“He must have had confidence in himself. Otherwise, it wouldn’t make sense.”

“A fitting price for arrogance, I suppose. So, can you tell me the name and whereabouts? I’d like to see his face later if possible.”

Finally, the moment had come. While Fieren asked questions and sipped his tea, Kalas rolled his head, ensuring Fieren wouldn’t catch on.

Back when he was captured in Michelle estate, Isaac had recited the report to Fieren in painstaking detail. The alias, the living area, and finally, a detailed description.

With a calm demeanor, Kalas whispered the information to Fieren, ensuring he wouldn’t notice.

“Name was Xenon Cloud. He was an elderly human living in the Hask region of the Ters Kingdom. His appearance... well, one could only say he looked wise at first glance. He had a neatly trimmed beard, and his white hair was accompanied by blue eyes.”

“That’s enough of that. By the way, I wonder if the ‘persuasion’ worked.”

Fieren playfully rolled the word ‘persuasion’ off his tongue. The persuasion he mentioned was what the ramifications of Xenon’s Biography were called in the Council of Elders.

The High Council, a political organization in Elvenheim(in the book), as everyone familiar with Xenon’s Biography knew, was the motif taken from the Council of Elders. It was as clear as day.

The problem was that the actions of that council were just as serious and significant as those that actually took place in the real Council of Elders. The banishment of the Dark Elves was the prime example.

It was unclear how Xenon knew, since the Council of Elders was only involved even though they didn’t directly banish the Dark Elves, but it was impossible for them not to be pricked by it.

So, they were determined to persuade him in any way possible. But if persuasion failed, the plan was to establish a forced cooperative relationship using ‘means’. Given that their identities were exposed, they were practically in a superior position.

In response, Kalas smiled a seemingly sinister smile and answered casually,

“Well, as expected, the persuasion didn’t work. He seemed more willing to stand up against those who censor his precious culture rather than joining the same side as them. Isn’t that the nature of an artist?”

“That is indeed a characteristic of artists. So?”

“We’ve taken some measures to ensure he never entertains such thoughts again. He was quick to break down in tears and beg, saying he’d rather not write for the rest of his life.”

“Hahahahaha!”

Fieren’s satisfaction was evident as he burst into hearty laughter in response. It was a feeling of satisfaction that had been building up inside him. But when people’s moods turn positive, their judgment tends to become extremely clouded. This was a story that applied even to Fieren, who had been active as the leader of the council.

If only he had thought a little deeper, just a bit more, he might have caught onto Kalas’s “mistake” much earlier. He could have realized how great Xenon’s reputation was at present and how strong its repercussions were. It was perhaps Fieren’s biggest mistake to have regarded Xenon only as a potential threat.

“Very well. I’m curious about this action you mentioned. Can you tell me more?”

“Well... I’ve broken their fingers so he won’t be able to write for a while. The Hask province is far from the city, so he won’t be able to receive treatment at the temple. Instead, I provided him with potions.”

“Satisfactory. And?”

“I’ve brought something that I believe you will find pleasing, Lord Fieren.”

As Kalas searched his pockets, Fieren’s eyes filled with curiosity and anticipation. While he was already satisfied with the fact that Xenon had been dealt with, it seemed this loyal servant had even better news to deliver.

Subsequently, as Kalas handed over a piece of paper, Fieren’s excitement grew evident. It wasn’t an ordinary piece of paper, judging from the mana contained within.

“This is...”

“A pact, my lord.”

“A pact?”

“Yes. Please read it.”

As Kalas urged, Fieren began to read the terms in the contract with anticipation. A smile formed on his lips from the very first clause, but as he read on, his satisfaction grew.

He never even thought it would come to the point of signing such an agreement, let alone feeling this content. Originally, he had intended to settle for finding out the identity and whereabouts of Xenon, but Kalas had raised the stakes. He had addressed all the concerns that might have troubled Fieren.

“Truly... impressive. I never expected we'd come this far. Looks like I underestimated you. I apologize.”

“No, it's not like that. I was just lucky. And besides, didn't we both not know what kind of person Xenon was until now?”

“That's true, but your abilities are outstanding, there's no denying that. Thanks to you, the Council of Elders will be able to exert its influence.”

Though it seemed like a heartwarming scene on the surface, the true emotions were quite the opposite. Suppression, manipulation, and the dirtiness of political maneuvering were rampant.

And there was one person observing all this filth from the shadows...

'...This makes me want to throw up.'

Dark Elf infiltrator, Siris, who had bypassed all the protective magic of the mansion. She watched every bit of this situation, recording it all with her eyes.

If she were an ordinary thief or wizard, she might have been detected by the security spells. But she was a Dark Elf. If she moved cautiously, infiltration wasn't difficult.

Moreover, she didn't forget to receive divine power from Mora in preparation for the worst-case scenario. No matter how skilled a dark elf's infiltration abilities were, there were clear limits.

Perhaps it could be considered somewhat fortunate, but Fieren's mansion had surprisingly weak security, fitting the owner's personality. It seemed no one expected

that the mansion would be infiltrated.

“You’ve done an excellent job indeed. Keep up the good work.”

“Thank you. However, it seems like there aren’t any young ones trying to join the Council of Elders lately. Is that okay?”

“Don’t worry about that. We don’t need uncertain individuals like those. We need talents like you.”

Upon hearing this conversation, Siris almost smirked. The reason the new generation of elves distanced themselves from the Council of Elders was simple: they recognized that even if something was rotted, it could still rot to dust.

As if corruption wasn’t already inevitable with power, who knew what would happen to the Council of Elders. Especially with the elves’ longevity, the phenomenon of the ‘rotten water’ would inevitably become more pronounced.

As time passed, the Council of Elders’s power would weaken, but since that would take too long, who knew what incidents might occur in the meantime?

‘Now, that time will probably be moved up.’

Siris listened to the conversation between Fieren and Kalas and then disappeared quietly. Since they had already obtained decisive evidence, all that was left was to relay it to Arwen.

‘How long will it be until we can enter Alvenheim?’

The Dark Elf Exile occurred just 800 years ago. There were still some dark elves who remembered that event, but they still longed for Alvenheim. Some of the younger generation of dark elves couldn’t understand them, and Siris felt similarly. However, after reading the recently published Xenon’s Biography, her feelings had changed somewhat.

Living in the forest was impossible for long, and even though they had cut off their own ears, they still held on to the pride of being chosen by the gods. Xenon’s Biography moved not only the hearts of the elves but also the hearts of the dark elves gradually.

‘The queen will surely succeed.’

With subtle emotions in her heart, Siris walked towards where Arwen was staying.

A few days later, in the Minerva Empire's publishing house.

“Is, is this real?”

“...Yes. It is. Though it's crooked, the fact that there's even a genuine signature...”

“Ah...”

The CEO of the publishing house despaired upon reading the letter sent by Isaac. The content of the letter was as follows:

[Dear readers, I apologize. Due to a villain's attack, my right hand has been seriously injured. Serialization will be impossible for the time being...]

They had enough matches prepared in advance to light the fuse.

Chapter 182: Big Fish (1)

The most important body part for a novelist is undoubtedly their ‘hands.’ Even if their legs or back hurt, as long as they have their hands, they can write, even if they have to lie down. Even if their eyesight deteriorates, as long as it’s not complete blindness, writing is still possible. However, if their hands are injured or disabled, writing becomes a challenge not only for their literary work but also for their daily life. While it’s possible to write with the other hand, it takes much longer and feels awkward.

As a result, when readers learn that a writer’s hands are injured, they express sympathy and wish for a speedy recovery, as injuring the hands is a significant loss for a writer. This is because both the writer and readers suffer from such a situation.

Currently, the author of Xenon’s Biography, Xenon (Isaac), was facing a similar situation. Especially since Xenon has gained fame worldwide rather than in a specific country, countless readers have expressed their concern for his safety. If anything were to happen to him, the release of Xenon’s Biography could be delayed indefinitely, and it’s uncertain when the next installment would come out.

Moreover, while it typically takes around 1 to 2 months to publish a single book, Xenon’s Biography has been released much more frequently, to the point where it might seem excessive. The publishing frequency was notably fast.

Furthermore, there have been mentions from the publishing company about bloodstains on the manuscripts, which has heightened concerns about his well-being. Currently, since new installments have been coming out consistently, there haven’t been significant problems, but...

[“Xenon’s Biography” author, Xenon. Attacked by villains, he suffered a severe injury to his right hand...]

[Fortunately, his life is not in danger as the perpetrators have retreated. However, Xenon’s Biography...]

[An involuntary forced hiatus, and his right hand is injured...]

The news of Xenon being attacked by someone and injuring his right hand shocked readers beyond belief. It's not just any body part, but his right hand, of all things. What's more, it's not just a minor injury; his fingers were severely deformed, reaching an extremely critical state.

The publisher, at first, didn't believe it, as it was from a ghostwriter, but upon seeing the crooked handwritten signature, they accepted it as the truth. For a novelist, their hands, which are practically their greatest asset, being injured to that extent could potentially lead to a worst-case scenario of an 'indefinite hiatus.'

[Readers' anger because of Xenon's Biography. They gather in front of the publisher, demanding explanations.]

[Key figures from various countries are also striving to find the culprit. However, searching for the culprit is virtually impossible when they don't even know Xenon's true identity.]

[The Holy Kingdom Xavier. Offering significant tributes, they asked Lumineus for divine punishment. However, the response they received was, 'Wait. Time will resolve it.']

[Where will the blade stained with anger be directed?]

Readers were furious. Xenon didn't just have an accident; they were attacked by the culprit and injured their right hand. While the security in the capital might be sufficient, the outskirts of this world are far from ideal.

There are areas where bands of bandites frequently emerge to plunder, and even in the capital, it's not entirely safe at night. Occasionally, news of someone being attacked by a mugger and severely injured or killed can be heard, making Xenon no different. Especially at night, the rogues out and about are mostly on a mission to attack.

There's no guarantee that Xenon wouldn't accidentally become a target, and given that they've suffered a serious injury to their right hand, readers' anger began to swell to an immeasurable extent.

[Efforts began to find Xenon. With the significant injury to the right hand, there's a chance they might be found if luck is on their side.]

[In the Bellua Republic, they found someone who injured their right hand around the same time, but it wasn't Xenon. Just an ordinary knight.]

The anger of the readers has also increased, along with those who are trying to find Xenon. While there could only be so many people with injured right hands in this world, if someone was attacked by criminals during a similar period, the scope narrows significantly.

It was a reduction in range from searching for a needle in a desert to searching for a needle in a sand pit, but even that at least could actually be found.

Amidst this situation, there were criticisms about wanting to find Xenon, but there are also unavoidable aspects since it would be difficult to locate Xenon otherwise.

[Is Xenon's right hand the only thing injured? Or did the villains know who Xenon was?]

[While it's possible for the right hand to get injured due to frequent use, the probability that these villains knew Xenon's identity and targeted them is significant.]

[Was the villain's purpose really Xenon's right hand? Or was it just a coincidence?]

It wasn't as if there were no rational thinkers amidst the whirlwind of anger. Of course, if the villain indeed targeted Xenon's right hand and caused harm, that would be a bigger problem on its own.

As the events gradually descended into chaos, the readers' anger was reaching its boiling point, almost on the brink of exploding.

[Queen Arwen of Alvenheim. There is a fact that the citizens need to know.]

[Will Queen Arwen reveal this fact in such times? The surrounding nations, including Alvenheim's citizens, are looking at her with suspicious eyes...]

[The second nationwide address since the half-blood incident. What is she going to reveal in the future?]

Unexpectedly, Queen Arwen of Alvenheim officially announced that she was preparing for another nationwide address after the half-blood incident. In the current situation where Xenon's Biography was temporarily on hold, this move was somewhat difficult to understand.

However, Arwen was currently receiving fervent support from the citizens of Alvenheim. People from other countries, including their leaders, were momentarily intrigued and have shifted their positions, curious about what she might reveal.

She quelled the socially significant issue of mixed lineage with her exceptional oratory skills, and went further to unite the elves as one. Therefore, neighboring nations considered this a matter of concern.

Even though Xenon's right hand was injured due to the attack by the villain, the state affairs had to be attended to. Numerous individuals, like the figures involved in the mixed lineage incident, were heading to Alvenheim, waiting to see what Queen Arwen would say.

All of this while having no clue of what events would unfold there.

Arwen's speech took place in the Great Plaza of Yggdrasil, just as it did the last time. Dignitaries, including members of the council of elders, were seated towards the front to get a better view of Arwen, while VIPs from other countries sat in chairs arranged behind them.

The rest of the citizens and tourists gathered around as the elven warriors instructed, encircling the area. It wasn't an ordinary speech, but a direct address to the entire nation by Arwen herself, attracting a large crowd.

"What exactly does she intend to say in this nationwide address?"

"Well... I have no idea either."

Fieren, the head of the council of elders, couldn't hide his bewilderment as he absentmindedly stroked his chin in response to his aide's question. Making a nationwide address in this situation was quite unusual.

Even if she had prepared the speech beforehand, the circumstances weren't favorable in many ways. The mixed lineage issue has been skillfully resolved, so it shouldn't be related to that.

Especially during times of turmoil, making a speech at this moment might not yield significant political effects. This was just a temporary situation, and it's obvious that soon enough, attention will shift back to Xenon, as clear as daylight.

'What on earth? It's not like she'd be upset just because her lover got hurt... He wouldn't even have a reason to tell the Queen...'

Fieren touched his chin while the speech was being prepared, deep in thought. He had already internally confirmed that Xenon was Arwen's former lover.

Furthermore, the possibility that Xenon had informed her of the culprit was close to zero. It was written in the pact they had made. The letters he sent to the publishing company only contained sentences about being attacked by a villain, he didn't reveal his identity.

While it could be seen as exploiting a loophole in the pact, it wasn't decisive evidence. Therefore, Arwen's speech was likely purely coincidental.

Usually, speeches are given for significant political gains, but Fieren was unsure about the current situation. He didn't know if it's his lack of intuition or if she's revealing another fact.

'What is this uneasy feeling...?'

In his daily efforts to restrain Arwen, he had learned many facts about her. Firstly, Arwen possesses not only unique rhetoric skills but also outstanding political abilities.

Originally, politics involved establishing clear "enemies" to rally one's own side. And Arwen treats the Council as her opposition, systematically recruiting prominent figures to her side.

After the racial war, the Council has been described as a setting sun, a toothless tiger, but it still couldn't be ignored. Arwen alone cannot face them.

Due to this unease, he wondered if there might be something she's hiding. However, the pact that Kalas brought a few days ago was undoubtedly true.

It was a moment when his intuition that had been developed through centuries of involvement in politics was triggered, yet the cause behind it was unknown. Fieren absentmindedly touched his chin, contemplating, and then belatedly realized that the seat next to him was empty. He had personally vacated the seat for Kalas, who had played a significant role in this matter, but the protagonist himself had not shown up.

"But where is Kalas? Where did Kalas go?"

"He said he had a family matter to attend to."

"A family matter... well, there's nothing we can do then."

While the Council held significance, if there was a family matter, there was little that could be done. However, this only amplified Fieren's unease.

Was Kalas really absent due to a family matter? If so, what was causing this unease? The reason Fieren had been able to participate in the Council for centuries was due to this intuition, yet without knowing the cause, he couldn't act recklessly. Because trusting intuition doesn't make the world emotionally predictable.

Ultimately, he had no choice but to hold his position until the anxiety was alleviated, even up until the moment right before the speech began.

“Everyone, be quiet! Her Majesty the Queen is entering!”

Just before the speech began, the announcer used amplification magic to announce Arwen's entrance ahead of time. Unlike last time, the announcer's voice was raised even before Arwen stepped onto the platform.

The roaring crowd that had filled the square immediately hushed, and a subtle atmosphere began to circulate within the hall. The onlookers had patiently waited for Arwen to ascend the platform.

Tap tap tap

The sound of footsteps echoed in the quiet square. People looked at Arwen as she ascended the podium. Even Fieren, with his arms crossed, silently observed her ascent with a somewhat haughty demeanor, still carrying an unknown unease within his chest.

Tap

Finally, Arwen, the Queen of Alvenheim, stood confidently on the elevated platform in front of the crowd. The spectators scrutinized her figure on the podium closely. Silver-gray hair and eyes resembling the milky way.. Delicately defined features like a girl's, with a slender frame. Yet, the curved hip line below her slim waist exuded a mature charm.

During the half-blood incident, Arwen had appeared in a verdant dress that radiated freshness, unlike the silver dress she had worn now. She gazed around the crowd before meeting eyes with Fieren, who sat at the very front.

Despite their eye contact, Fieren remained silent and observed her motionlessly. The gray irises seemed to pull him in, concealing thoughts that were utterly unpredictable.

“...Everyone has gathered. Some have endured a long journey to be here.”

Arwen exchanged glances with Fieren, then turned her gaze forward and quietly began to speak. Her voice, amplified by magical means, enveloped the entire square like the flow of precious gems on a silver platter.

“You must be curious. Why, in such a crucial time, I have summoned you here to deliver a speech. It might seem puzzling or even absurd. However, what I am about to reveal to you, and perhaps to this world, might become an incredibly significant part of your lives.”

Continuing the calm speech, Arwen suddenly turned around and waved her hand as if beckoning someone to come. This action raised questions in the eyes of the observers.

Calling someone was inappropriate behavior during a speech. However, Arwen gestured as if she planned inviting them to come right from the beginning.

While everyone held doubts in their hearts and waited, someone slowly began to ascend onto the platform. Not by coming up directly, but being pulled by the warriors on either side.

Thud thud thud

“...K-Kalas?!”

“M-Mael and Lena... what on earth...?”

The people who were brought up to the platform by the warriors were none other than Kalas and his subordinates. Naturally, Fieren and his associates could only be perplexed.

Although they seemed fine at a glance, if you saw the expressions mingled with despair and resignation, you could sense that something had gone wrong. Only then did Fieren realize the true nature of his underlying anxiety.

Even if something went wrong, this went horribly wrong. To a serious extent.

As a seasoned politician who had been involved in politics for hundreds of years, he overworked his head trying to figure out how this situation came to be, but nothing came out. Kalas wouldn't have betrayed them, and the pact was undoubtedly true.

There was not a single possible reason for this mess, so Fieren couldn't understand what had happened at all.

“Who are those people?”

“Well, who knows? They seem like criminals or something...”

“Why would they bring criminals up to the platform? What big mistake could they have committed?”

“Perhaps...”

The crowd, unaware of the detailed circumstances, could only speculate that they must be criminals. They have no idea how grave their mistakes are.

As soon as Kalas and his subordinates stepped onto the stage, Arwen glanced at Fieren inside the turbulent square. With a pale complexion, Fieren was revealing his emotions.

In response, she held a bitter smile within and shouted with strength in her voice.

“Everyone must already know the news that Xenon's right hand has been injured by an unidentified villain! Look at the faces of these sinners! The sinners' names are Kallas, Mael, and Lena!”

As Arwen shouted, the rumbling of the crowd quickly subsided.

Lastly, using her compelling voice, she yelled to the crowd.

“Under the orders of the leader of the Council, Firen Garit Stormwalker, they are the criminals who attacked Xenon!”

The fuse was all burned out, and the bomb exploded.

Chapter 183: Big Fish (2)

As mentioned earlier, Fieren's political career spanned over hundreds of years. From before the Racial War to the present day, he has held significant influence within the Council of Elders and has experienced various challenges during that time.

There were times within the Council when factions divided and choices had to be made. During the Racial War, the Council of Elders made ill-fated decisions that even threatened its existence.

However, Fieren managed to barely survive each of those crises. The methods used to navigate these crises were diverse – through manipulation and instigation, truth and logic, and sometimes even through underhanded tactics that no one knew about.

Based on these approaches, Fieren has sustained the Council of Elders through times of crisis and ultimately ascended to the position of High Councillor, wielding immense power. But the pure convictions he had upon entering the Council of Elders in the distant past have been tainted over time by power, leaving only greed and arrogance. Those who have tasted the flavor of power cannot escape it, much like being addicted to a drug.

Fieren managed to keep the Alvenheim kings, who always sought more power, in check at critical moments. As the royal authority grew stronger, the influence of the Council of Elders diminished.

Throughout their life, Fieren encountered various crises, overcoming them smoothly with experience and adaptability. However, the crisis of a lifetime has now returned.

“Intruders who attacked Xenon under the orders of Fieren Garit Stormwalker, the leader of the Council of Elders!”

Arwen shouted with a powerful voice that echoed through the square. The amplification magic caused her voice to reverberate in the square.

As if the echo had consumed all other sounds, the reverberations faded, leaving the square eerily quiet. The silence was so deep that even the sound of a cough could be

heard loudly.

Her revelation plunged the citizens gathered in the square and foreign dignitaries into a massive shock.

“What... What was that?”

“Clearly... She said it’s Fieren, a member of the Council.”

“Those... criminals over there attacked Xenon?”

The unbelievable truth began to stir the crowd. The citizens of Alvenheim knew well what the Council of Elders represented and who Fieren was.

The Council of Elders has silently held its position as a symbol of Alvenheim for hundreds of years, so it’s not surprising that many things about it remain unknown. Furthermore, during the time of the racial war, the horrific actions of the Council of Elders led Alvenheim to defeat, making it impossible to even consider favorable evaluations.

However, Arwen’s actions here were not merely fanning the flames in a place already ablaze, but rather pouring oil relentlessly onto the fire.

“Lord Fieren, what in the world is...”

“... ..”

Just like his bewildered attendants, Lord Fieren was equally startled. No, it was beyond surprise; he felt his heart sink.

Where exactly had things gone wrong? The pact was not a lie, and there was no suspicious behavior from Kalas. It was even dubious to label him a spy. He had met Kalas face-to-face for decades, and seeing him captured and put on trial like a criminal, he was definitely not a spy.

Hence, it was through some means that he had deduced Kalas’s crime, yet even after thoroughly investigating the past, nothing came to light. While Fieren was lost in profound confusion, Arwen, who had delivered the bombshell statement earlier, spoke. Her voice was incongruent with her petite stature, resonating with authority.

“These criminals harmed Xenon, who bestowed upon us unimaginable favors, not for his graciousness, but merely because they possessed dangerous knowledge! They

mercilessly defiled the right hand of Xenon, who granted us immeasurable grace! They acted unilaterally, disregarding the opinion of Alvenheim's queen, me!"

Even as Arwen shouted, there was no appropriate response. That's only natural, considering how shocking the situation was, compounded by the severe lack of definitive "evidence."

Her oratory ability has been demonstrated as seen before, but this time it was on a much larger scale and significantly more impactful. If not careful, Alvenheim might succumb to pressure from neighboring countries and could even face war in the worst-case scenario.

Once manipulation based on falsehood takes root, undoing that falsehood requires substantial evidence, making manipulation all the more challenging. Even if public opinion currently favors Arwen, the citizens are not easily swayed.

"How do you all view the Council of Elders? Do you truly believe they are working for the advancement of our Alvenheim? Due to the Council's wrongdoing, we've suffered the disgrace of defeat in racial war, and furthermore, they've suppressed numerous areas all under the pretext of being the chosen ones! They're even attempting to suppress our brilliantly shining culture now!"

Therefore, Arwen began to meticulously point out the wrongdoings committed by the Council of Elders one by one. Given the Council's wide recognition, its wrongdoings are also widely known.

Occasionally, minor misdeeds could have been concealed by the Council's manipulation of history, but just as seen in the racial war, significant transgressions can't be covered up. Even common folk understand this, and the citizens of Alvenheim explicitly acknowledge this fact.

The Council of Elders is a group filled with corrupt power. Yet, it's maintained steadily thus far due to its status as a symbol.

Not only the new generation of elves but also the previous generation acknowledged the achievements of the Council of Elders, yet they remained cautious. They support it solely because it's a 'symbol' that shared history.

"The world is rapidly changing! However, they're turning a blind eye to this fast-changing world, merely prioritizing their current well-being! Not for the well-being of Alvenheim, but for their own safety, they're suppressing our beautiful culture! But will they only suppress Xenon? Are you all truly going to suppress only Xenon?"

“The world is changing rapidly! However, they are turning a blind eye to the swiftly changing world and simply prioritizing their current well-being! Not for the well-being of Alvenheim, but for their own security, they are oppressing the beautiful culture! But will they only oppress Xenon? When you all are building up the beautiful culture piece by piece, if the Council does not approve, they will bring harm just like they did to Xenon! And they will shatter that culture into pieces!”

“W-well, you’re right. Xenon was hiding his true identity.”

“What makes us any different?”

“Those Council folks... causing trouble again...”

Normally, if a convincing story is presented, sedition tends to sway people easily. Just like now.

If the Council’s usual behavior had been righteous and clean, it might be different, but due to their past actions, the masses started to sympathize one by one.

Even Xenon, who had been living in hiding, was harmed. Is there really any difference when it comes to themselves? Can they freely express their art in this country?

Even if they were to immigrate to another country, if they don’t align with the Council’s views, they’ll chase them down to the end, just like they did with Xenon. Is freedom then possible?

Impossible. As long as the Council exists, not only will culture be suppressed, but even negative remarks about the elves are likely to be oppressed.

Like ripples forming when a stone is thrown into a tranquil lake, the hearts of the masses were also deeply stirred.

Upon seeing the crowd somewhat shaken, Arwen immediately shouted at the Kalas’s group.

“I ask the sinners! Is it true that you followed Fieren’s orders and harmed Xenon?”

“...Yes. That’s correct.”

“Xenon has never caused harm to you. So why did this happen?”

“The knowledge Xenon possessed... it’s dangerous, that’s why.”

Kalas replied briefly, but thanks to the amplification magic on his voice, the crowd could all hear. His testimony continued, and the crowd grew more aggressive. However, one final blow was missing. Arwen shifted her gaze towards Fieren for that final blow.

Fieren maintained a composed expression outwardly, but his pale complexion betrayed the turmoil he was undergoing internally. In response, Arwen spoke in a quiet voice.

“From the mouth of the sinner, Fieren, a member of the Council of Elders, was named. Councilor Fieren, step onto this platform.”

“... ..”

“If you do not step forward, we will bring you up by force.”

Simultaneously, Elven warriors began to approach Fieren’s side with powerful strides. There was no hesitation, as if they had discussed this beforehand.

“Stand aside! I will walk on my own!”

“... ..”

Yet, whether out of pride or some other reason, Fieren staunchly refused their guidance. The Elven warriors proceeded to the platform, forming a protective escort without uttering a word.

Eventually, Fieren adjusted his slightly disheveled attire and approached the platform where Arwen stood. Even as he ascended, the crowd’s murmurs and roars showed no signs of abating.

Finally, Fieren, a member of the Council of Elders, stood upon the platform where the queen was present. Before meeting Arwen’s gaze, he cast a piercing look towards Kalas and his subordinates, who were kneeling like sinners.

Not long ago, Fieren had been one to praise him, but now that was not the case. Having failed in his mission and having pushed himself into jeopardy, he seemed nothing more than a villain.

If this situation is passed over, not only will they expel him from the Council of Elders, but they also plan to pressure his family. With this incident, the influence of the Council of Elders will undoubtedly diminish further.

“... Your Majesty, this time you’ve gone too far with your jest.”

Fieren maintained composure as much as possible while addressing Arwen. However, it was easy to see that he was tense, as sweat trickled down his cheek. Arwen also noticed this immediately and smiled inwardly. There was still one move left, but she was aiming for the right timing.

“You call it a jest? I spoke the truth.”

“The truth, you say, but I don’t know who those people are.”

“You don’t know? Your name was mentioned by those criminals, and yet you’re pretending not to know?”

“Isn’t it natural to deny knowing someone you don’t know?”

Fieren continued to lie in order to find a way out. Their conversation was being broadcasted through magic.

“How amusing. You roared that you had to find Xenon for me... Are you really pretending? If you admit your guilt obediently, I, as a member of the Queen, will offer you the utmost leniency.”

“Seeing you fabricate nonexistent crimes, it seems you disliked me so much. If I’m guilty, wouldn’t there be evidence? Just the testimony of mere criminals is insufficient.”

“Evidence... Right. Evidence. As you say.”

Snap!

When the keyword ‘evidence’ was mentioned by Fieren, Arwen smiled and lightly flicked her fingers. In an instant, a wave of mana surged, forming something rectangular and flat on the stage.

It was about the size of a movie theater screen. Even the crowd watching from a distance, including Fieren, could see it vividly. All eyes turned towards the screen.

And what the screen was showing was...

[So, did you find Xenon?]

It was the image of Kalas and Fieren having a discreet conversation in the mansion. As soon as Fieren saw the image, her face turned pale in an instant.

[Of course. Humans are truly unremarkable. Especially a publishing company executive, an utterly incompetent human – easy to track.]

[Oh, impressive. I thought Xenon might have concealed his identity by borrowing power from another race. Like demons, for instance.]

As the conversation progressed, Fieren's complexion became more dismal, and the crowd fell silent in an instant.

With clear evidence before them, who could present any disagreement? Recording magic could be edited, but manipulation was absolutely impossible.

However, Arwen excluded the part where Xenon's true identity (although fake) was directly revealed. It could potentially cause confusion no matter how fake it might be.

[That's enough of that. By the way, I wonder if the 'persuasion' worked.]

[Well, as expected, the persuasion didn't work. He seemed more willing to stand up against those who censor his precious culture rather than joining the same side as them. Isn't that the nature of an artist?]

[That is indeed a characteristic of artists. So?]

[We've taken some measures to ensure he never entertains such thoughts again. He was quick to break down in tears and beg, saying he'd rather not write for the rest of his life.]

[Hahahahaha! Very well. I'm curious about this action you mentioned. Can you tell me more?]

[Well... I've broken their fingers so he won't be able to write for a while.]

The onlookers had similar thoughts upon witnessing this scene. They felt like they were going to vomit. They wished they could just look away now and begged them to stop. Some tightly shut their eyes, while others sealed their lips as if not believing what they were seeing.

While it was impossible to fully comprehend the extent of Xenon's suffering, the more they listened to the story, the more vivid their imaginations became. How agonizing it must have been. How humiliating. How challenging. For an artist, shattered by these greedy individuals filled with avarice, merely surviving without committing suicide was an act of great courage.

[I've brought something that I believe you will find pleasing, Lord Fieren.]

[This is...]

[A pact, my lord.]

[A pact?]

The fact that they even formed a 'pact' that was beyond imagination left the crowd in awe. Just like elves, who are known for their magic, they also understand what kind of pact it is.

Once it is made, they have no choice but to act according to what's written in the pact. In other words, this means that Xenon can't write the stories he wants to tell in his Xenon's Biography anymore.

In short, because of those greedy elves, it means that the development of the Xenon's Biography has been completely ruined.

[Thanks to you, the Council of Elders will be able to exert its influence.]

With Fieren's words, the evidence came to an end there. However, no one, including Fieren, spoke hastily.

The evidence Arwen showed was something that could shake not only Alvenheim but the entire world.

Around the time when the long silence had settled in the hall like that.

"Well, what a damn bastard!!"

Starting with someone's vehement shout, the crowd erupted.

"Choke that damn elf's neck right now!!"

"It's disgraceful to call him a fellow elf!"

"The Council of Elders should be abolished quickly! Otherwise, there's no hope for the country!!"

As one, the crowd began to criticize Fieren. It wasn't just criticism but blame, insults, and words too vile to be spoken all surged like a storm.

Arwen looked at Fieren while listening to those sounds as if her ears were blocked. Fieren had a bewildered expression as if he couldn't believe this reality.

“I, the Queen of Alvenheim, command.”

“... ..”

“The representative of the Council of Elders and the sinner, Fieren Gerit Stormwalker, to be restrained!”

As soon as her command fell, Fieren's sanity returned. However, it was already too late.

Thud!

“Ugh!”

Suddenly, the approaching elven warriors subdued him swiftly. They first forced his arms, preventing any resistance, and then made him kneel.

Once again, Fieren was not a soldier but a politician. Moreover, he was too old to stand against the warriors, his wrinkles speaking of his age.

“Let go, release me! How dare you...”

“Seems like you still haven't regained your senses. Councilor Fieren, no, a criminal.”

“You...!”

Now, throwing away all formality, Fieren even released his words. Arwen watched him with scornful eyes.

The Council could no longer persist. In a precarious situation to begin with, the council's existence was hanging by a thread. And now, with the seal snap, there was only disappearance left in the future.

“Do you really think you can rule Alvenheim well without us? The inexperienced queen who knows nothing about how the Council has governed Alvenheim until now!!”

“I know well. But can I keep a rotten leg?”

Even though Fieren shouted in frustration, Arwen's response was clear. Naturally, Fieren was engulfed in anger.

“Strike his neck now!!”

“Your Majesty! Please, wipe away that filthy thing! It’s an embarrassment for the elves!”

“How dare you harm Xenon, who even the gods have acknowledged?! If Alvenheim falls, it’s all your fault!!”

Even amid this, the voices of the crowd grew louder. Some occasionally couldn’t contain their anger and attempted to lash out, but they were quickly restrained by the warriors. As the barrage of insults against him continued, Fieren felt himself weakening, while also realizing that he couldn’t end things here. Arwen picked up on that part as well. However, she remained still. She had a rough idea of what he was about to reveal.

Next, Fieren made up his mind and instead of addressing Arwen, he shouted towards the crowd. “Listen up, everyone! His name is Xenon Cloud!”

“... ..”

“He’s an old human man living in the Hask region of the Ters Kingdom! He sports a well-groomed beard, and his eyes are blue amidst his white hair!”

As if he couldn’t die alone, Fieren began to expose Xenon’s fake identity. But it fell far short of quelling the exploding crowd. Of course, there were those who would listen, but it didn’t matter. Since everything was fake anyway, it didn’t matter whether it was revealed or not. At that moment when Arwen was about to signal to lead him away, Fieren blurted out a bombshell.

“And he’s also the lover of Arwen Elodia, who is supposed to be a queen and is engaging in absurd acts!”

“...What?”

What is this nonsense again? Arwen, of course, and even the crowd, upon hearing that bombshell declaration, were taken aback and stopped their anger.

“Did you think I didn’t know? I sensed it from the moment I heard the story that you gave a speech he wrote you! Could I not tell that, unless you were lovers, would you continue to stay in contact until now and do something like this?”

“W-what are you...! Take the criminal away immediately!”

Arwen gave the order hastily, unable to conceal her bewilderment. However, even as Fieren was being dragged away by the warriors, he didn't stop his outburst.

“This age will be recorded in history like this! A usurper who lost the kingdom for the sake of a mere human lover! What will that mean once that human dies!! I will watch over everything! Everything!! With my own eyes!!”

“... ..”

Afterward, Fieren was led down from the platform, but...

“The Queen... is she really with Xenon?”

“Is that true?”

“What's the deal with the story about the speech?”

The crowd began to murmur in a different sense.

“Wait. Come to think of it, could Xenon also have failed to connect with the elven queen and wrote that story in a book?”

“Really? Then...”

“Doesn't the whole thing fit perfectly?”

Villains, originally, are known to cause problems until the end.

Chapter 184: Big Fish (3)

A few days ago, the misconduct of the Council of Elders came to light. I was leisurely spending my vacation at the mansion after all preparations were complete. The Kalas group had been dealt with effectively, and the publishing house had spread the news of my injured hand.

Though I felt somewhat sorry for the publishing house, it was unavoidable to fabricate such a story to attract attention. So, I planned to tell soon that a passing priest helped me, and that my hand was completely healed. Thus, at the moment, I was idly passing time, hoping Arwen would handle the follow-up measures well.

Three days after news of my injured hand had spread, Marie paid a surprise visit to our mansion. Usually, she would send a letter in advance and announce her intention to visit, but due to the circumstances, it seemed she had rushed over urgently. Coincidentally, I had also stepped out of the mansion to engage in some exercise.

When Marie got out of the carriage and our eyes met, she seemed startled before quickly hurrying over. Initially, I was slightly puzzled, but I soon smiled because I had a rough idea of what she might say.

“Oh, Isaac! Your hand...”

“Look.”

As Marie approached, I immediately showed her my right hand. My right hand, characterized by its long and slender fingers, was perfectly fine without a single injury. Upon examining my hand, Marie’s expression turned bewildered. Well, considering the commotion in the newspapers was far from reality, it was only natural for her to be taken aback.

“Oh? What’s this? I’m sure the newspaper...”

“Well... the story might be a little complicated. Let’s go inside for now.”

If I don't explain the situation to my fiancée even after talking to my family, Marie will probably feel disappointed. As I entered the mansion, Marie followed along with a bewildered look on her face.

“Hello, Marie? I knew you'd come eventually.”

“Ah, hello. It's been a while... Is that how I should say it?”

Although she had just heard Marie's voice, Cecily warmly welcomed us as we entered the mansion. She was wearing a black dress with minimal exposure. She seemed to have already known that Cecily was at our mansion, and she brushed it off lightly.

Nevertheless, her expression remained the same. After exchanging greetings with my parents, Marie moved to the guest room for a private conversation. Incidentally, Cecily followed along too.

“...What was that all about?”

“Yeah. You don't really need to worry.”

After explaining the situation for a while, Marie finally showed a reaction that indicated she had grasped the entire situation. She was surprised when she heard about the connection with Arwen due to the high-level theft incident, but she quickly regained her composure.

“I was worried, you know. When I heard that your hand was injured, you can't imagine how surprised I was, right?”

While speaking with concern, Marie didn't hide her disappointment. Well, it was my fault for not saying anything to my fiancée. Since it could have been an issue that would affect trust, I apologized properly.

“I'm sorry for making you worry. At least I should have told you.”

“No, it's alright. I guess you didn't tell me because you thought I'd be worried. Above all, I don't think there would have been anything different if I knew it.”

Fortunately, Marie passed it off without much concern and even left a word of gratitude for Cecily. It was characteristic of her to think in such a way.

As I was smiling warmly, Marie alternated her gaze between me and Cecily, who was sitting next to me. Then, with a mischievous expression, she playfully asked in a teasing

voice.

“By the way, Cecily. Are you now sitting next to Isaac as if it’s a given?”

“We promised. You said you’d give in during the vacation.”

“I remember well. So... did you?”

“... ..”

Cecily responded to Marie’s curious question with a faint smile. Seeing her cheeks slightly reddened, she seemed to be feeling somewhat embarrassed.

In response to that reaction, Marie nodded as if she understood, then shifted her gaze to me. I wanted to divert my attention, but her gaze was so intense that I couldn’t help but nervously open my mouth.

“Why are you staring like that?”

“I hope the vacation ends quickly.”

Marie replied with a grin that carried her characteristic playfulness. After all, even with the compromise, there must be limits to how much she can endure.

In fact, considering her overwhelming desire, it could be considered remarkable that she managed to hold back until now.

“I can give in for a day. The choice always rests with you, Marie. Honestly, isn’t it hard to endure?”

Cecily willingly expressed her intention to compromise. However, Marie firmly shook her head and decisively declined.

“No, I can’t. A promise is a promise. You two should get along well with each other. It’s true that it’s hard to endure, but if I hold back for a few days, it’ll be okay. I plan to be more disciplined at the academy for a while.”

“Why?”

“My grades... have dropped a bit. Hehe.”

Marie brightly smiled while addressing a very practical issue. Studying is something that should be done consistently, not just during exam periods, but she has been

cramming during exam periods.

The rest... you can probably guess. After classes, we would go on dates, and at night, we would head straight to an inn. With this pattern continuing, it's impossible for her grades to improve.

Thanks to me rigorously teaching her history, her situation might be a bit better, but for other subjects, tears would probably be shed.

"While it might not be ideal, it's still a matter of pride. Isaac might be able to write more as well, so it could be a win-win situation?"

"So how often? Every few days?"

"Maybe every 3 to 4 days?"

"... .."

Right back to square one. And although she says that, the probability of her not enduring even for three days is even higher.

"Anyway! Let's stop the depressing talk here. So, what's Isaac going to do now? Since you announced that you injured your hand, you won't be able to write for a while, right?"

"It's no problem. I plan to tell soon that a passing priest helped me, and that my hand was completely healed. Still, the next volume will probably be published late."

"Sigh... a bit disappointing. But it was something you had to do someday, so I can't help it. Will you go back to Helium?"

"I'll go back eventually, probably a few days from now. I'm curious about any news from Alvenheim."

The news of my injured hand has been spreading since 5 days ago. Arwen will reveal the culprit within a week at the latest. Until then, I plan to stay at the mansion. Even if I go to Helium, there's not much I can do, and unexpected variables could arise. It's best to at least discuss things roughly with the family.

"Really? Okay, then. I guess I should head back soon."

"Huh? You're going back right away? Take a day to rest first."

“No, I shouldn’t. You won’t be able to focus with me around. I have some sense of propriety too. If you’re really sorry, give me a hug at least.”

When Marie subtly requested, I glanced at Cecily. It was a sign that I could hug in front of her. Cecily read my eyes, smiled gently, and nodded. Both Marie and Cecily, they were broad-minded in various ways. To have such women who even love me, I am truly a fortunate guy.

“Come here, Marie.”

“Hehe.”

As I opened my arms wide to welcome her, Marie didn’t miss the chance and jumped into my embrace. The warmth of her hug, something I hadn’t felt in a long time, made my heart feel warm.

While Marie and I shared a tight, intense hug for a while, she playfully pressed her face against my chest, showing affection. She was expressing the desires that had been suppressed during the vacation.

“Sniff, sniff. Yeah, it’s this scent. Isaac’s unique smell. I can’t even fathom how much I’ve yearned to feel this.”

“If you want, you can stay at the mansion for a few days.”

Seems like Cecily felt a bit sorry for Marie, as she kindly offered. However, even after hugging me, Marie shook her head hesitantly.

Then, while still holding onto me, Marie looked at Cecily and said with a bright smile.

“No, I’m content with this. I just realized something – having the person you love right next to you seems to fill up the empty places in your heart.”

“Ah, I think I know that feeling.”

“Hehe.”

As soon as Cecily agreed, Marie smiled brightly and pressed her ear against my chest. It was as if she was trying to listen to the sound of my heartbeat, enjoying the warmth with her eyes closed.

I gently stroked Marie’s snowy white hair and gave her a light kiss on the forehead. In response, Marie trembled and shivered slightly.

'I hope this kind of life continues now.'

Enjoying a happy life with the women I love while doing what I enjoy. How blessed this life is. Compared to my previous life, it's something that I could not have even dreamed of.

The Council of Elders, which had been annoying, is soon to be dissolved by Arwen. Now, there is only one thing left – to dispel the misunderstanding that I am a prophet. Of course, as time goes by, it's something that will eventually be resolved, so I just need to continue writing Xenon's Biography consistently.

“Isaac.”

“Yeah?”

“When did your hair get long?”

“Is there something wrong with that? Don't you like it?”

“No. Even if your hair gets longer, you're still Isaac. I love you.”

“I love you too, Marie.”

Could jealousy have arisen from the affectionate exchanges between me and Marie? Cecily pressed my arm with her fingers.

As I turned my head, Cecily was gazing at me with gleaming red eyes, as if she was eagerly anticipating something. Like a cat that wanted to be petted, I embraced her gently with one arm.

“Of course, Cecily.”

“Thank you.”

I hope these happy times continue like this.

[Shocking! The culprit who maimed Xenon's right hand was the Council of Elders from Alvenheim! But...]

[Was there a romantic relationship between the Queen of Alvenheim and Xenon? Nothing has been confirmed yet, but there is a strange persuasiveness...]

[Were all the speeches by the Queen of Alvenheim actually the work of Xenon? Is it really true?]

[As the stories from the novel gradually come to life, their relationship is also becoming more realistic.]

“...?”

What is this strange sound again?

“Sigh...”

Arwen let out a sigh of frustration. It was because of a single fact that had been spread before Fieren was captured, as she knew.

She couldn't fathom on what grounds such an absurd act had been carried out, but as the situation came to an end and she slowly recollected the past, it was almost understandable to have such misconceptions.

In reality, Isaac had even shown kindness to her, so it was not strange to not think in that direction. Moreover, it involved the responsibility for an unforgivable act, the theft of the manuscript.

“To the bitter end...”

Since Fieren's misconduct had been revealed to the world, the Council of Elders naturally went through the dissolution process. Public opinion had reached its worst, and the hidden corruption began to be unveiled one after another.

With the head gone, it was a natural course for the limbs that followed commands to be destroyed. It was a positive development that the troublemakers who had been causing problems for Alvenheim disappeared, but the post-processing was not yet complete.

The Council of Elders had been supported by the older generation of elves, but now the situation had turned into dissolution. Perhaps a second Council of Elders could emerge, so there was no choice but to be cautious.

Moreover, the biggest issue was herself. The rumors circulating within Alvenheim have unsettled Arwen's ears.

'Me and Isaac in a romantic relationship? That's just absurd...'

While it's true that Arwen was on friendly terms with Isaac, he already has two lovers. One is a human woman named Marie, and the other is Princess Cecily of Helium. Although Cecily hasn't officially confirmed it like Marie, it would become insignificant after Isaac revealed his true identity. Considering that Xenon and the Princess of Helium being together was somewhat understandable.

However, with such rumors circulating while Isaac's true identity remains undisclosed, it was an uncomfortable situation for Arwen. But there's an even bigger problem here.

'...But why is Isaac showing me favor?'

Arwen herself was starting to get confused. This phenomenon emerged alongside the kindness Isaac was showing her and the events from Xenon's Biography becoming real. Even if it's not now, isn't it possible that it could become true in the distant future?

A groundless delusion. But given that Isaac was currently being speculated as a prophet or regressor, her thoughts leaned in that direction. Of course, it was all about 'possibility,' so no hasty conclusions were drawn.

However, the moment doubt creeps in, it tends to grow exponentially. The destination of that doubt was unknown, but at least it could be certain that it wasn't in a negative place.

Knock knock knock

Someone knocked on the study door at that moment. Arwen, upon hearing the sound, turned her gaze from the documents to the door.

"Your Majesty. It's Navir. May I come in?"

Navir was the newly appointed advisor. Among the capable individuals brought in as the Council of Elders was being disbanded, he was one. Navir was an ordinary member, having no distinct ideology, solely affiliated with the Council for the purpose of 'work.' That's why he could be brought in without much trouble. Arwen cast aside her complex emotions and gave permission in a calm voice.

"Enter."

Creak-

As soon as permission was granted, Navir entered. She was an impressive woman with round glasses and an expressionless face.

“What news do you bring this time?”

“The clergy have received a response from the deity.”

“What? Is that truly the case?”

Arwen was taken aback by Navir’s firm response and rose from her seat. Normally, she would have reacted indifferently, but not now. This matter was deeply connected to the rumors currently circulating, even causing confusion for Alvenheim.

The confusing rumor was about Arwen’s relationship with Isaac. To prevent further confusion in Alvenheim, Arwen sought help from the clergy, thinking that if the god, who presumably knew the future, could provide a clear answer. If the gods knew the future, wouldn’t they give a definite answer? With this thought in mind, Arwen personally asked the clergy for assistance.

“Then, what kind of answer did they give?”

“They didn’t say it in words. Just...”

“Just?”

Nabir raised the fallen glasses and calmly explained.

“They said that the glass is filled only halfway.”

“...What does that mean?”

“I’m not entirely sure either. But they said that’s the answer.”

For reference, the question they asked the priest was something like this.

[I wonder if Isaac and I will become lovers, just like the story in the book.]

But Luminous ambiguously said that the glass is filled only halfway. Normally, one wouldn’t be able to understand the meaning of the oracle, but...

‘...Filled only halfway? Does that mean they’re not denying? Because the future is uncertain?’

Hearing it like that, Arwen had no choice but to think positively.

“...Alright. Go out for now.”

Following Arwen’s instructions, Navir nodded and left the office. Alone now, Arwen sat at the desk, deep in thought, and muttered softly.

“...Really?”

Chapter 185: Interpretation over dreams (1)

The revelation that the culprit who harmed Xenon's right hand was a member of the Council of Elders was already a significant shock, but an even more attention-grabbing rumor had surfaced.

The rumor was about Xenon and the Queen of Alvenheim, being in a romantic relationship with each other. In other words, it was said that Arwen and I were in a relationship.

As someone who was merely munching on popcorn from a distance, this was an incredibly absurd rumor. I have no idea why such a rumor started, but according to the newspaper, an imaginative someone named Fieren said it as a final act of defiance.

However, there was enough truth to that, since I passed on a speech to Arwen and provided various forms of assistance. Since there's nothing particularly wonderful about trying to compete with Arwen and she has also been of great help to me. Nevertheless, it seems that Fieren has simply concluded that Arwen and I are in a romantic relationship based solely on these reasons.

[Ters Kingdom. There was no Xenon Cloud in the Hask region. The villagers had never heard the name before...]

[The Council of Elders in Alvenheim has undergone dissolution procedures, and the Grand Councilor Fieren Gerit Stormwalker received the punishment of having both ears severed. Additionally, the three individuals, including Kalas, who directly attacked Xenon, will remain imprisoned for eternity...]

[Kalas' confession. The pact was false, and all information about Xenon is lies. So, what about Xenon's right hand now?]

Furthermore, there were investigations into Xenon's information spread by Fieren's final stunt, but naturally, nothing turned out to be true.

From the perspective of the Ters Kingdom, they must have been disappointed as they merrily made their way to the Hask region, only to find nothing. Perhaps they felt really unfair..

Fieren once again became the laughingstock after suffering another setback, but Xenon's identity once more turned into a mystery. While it's 'true' that the right hand was injured, the situation was rather confusing, as Kalas and his group invaded and ended up being countered, creating a tangled scenario.

[The Queen of Alvenheim would have noticed this fact in advance and informed Xenon. All that was needed was a pretext.]

[Will it end in tragedy like Kair and Elisha, or will it continue like Xenon and Mary?]

[In a situation where the attention of many people, including the citizens of Alvenheim, is focused, Queen Arwen is avoiding answering, stating that state affairs are a priority.]

Of course, more than half were paying attention to my relationship with Arwen. At first, I thought it would just be baseless rumors, and that it would quickly dissipate like bubbles after a while. But as time went on and neither side provided any explanation, signs of them trying to establish their own conclusions were gradually appearing.

If things continue like this, they might really conclude that Arwen and I are lovers, so I hurriedly sought opinions. First and foremost, it was Marie and Cecily. Marie didn't stay at the mansion and immediately returned, only to come back as soon as she heard the news.

In the end, because we didn't know what else might happen, we decided to have her stay at the mansion for the time being. My parents were aware of the situation and readily accepted.

“Using this situation might not be a bad idea, right?”

After the three of us discussed it, surprisingly, Marie presented a positive opinion. It was even more surprising because she had conceded a step to Cecily, and her expression showed unexpectedness. It seemed that Cecily felt the same way.

“For what reason?”

“After all, it's not like you're really dating, right? If we use it well politically, it should work out. It's a gain for the queen too, not a loss. It would be easier to think of it as a strategic marriage concept.”

I nodded as I listened to Marie's explanation. Indeed, making use of rumors in a strategic marriage fashion didn't seem like a bad idea. Arwen could maximize her popularity among the citizens, and I could easily play along with such a narrative. However, we needed to clarify matters before revealing my identities.

If we were to disclose our identities, it would be necessary to acknowledge the fact that Marie and I were engaged, not to mention Cecily too. Otherwise, there was a risk that unfavorable rumors could spread.

"But Marie, Isaac is only 17 years old. Isn't it too young to label him as an elf's lover?"

Cecily, who had been pondering deeply, expressed a slightly negative opinion. Her concern stemmed from the fact that the rumors about me and Arwen being lovers were circulating due to my undisclosed identity.

Although there were occasional speculations that I might be an elderly sage, opinions had gradually emerged suggesting that my age might be surprisingly young, starting from the contamination of the World Tree's roots. Prophets or regressors didn't necessarily have to be old.

"Again, I've never said they would be in a romantic relationship. They just share a 'connection'; but never held feelings for each other. Time-wise, it's not an issue. Remember when Isaac coincidentally met the Queen during the previous exhibition? We can spin the story around something like that, right?"

"A story?"

"Yeah. Something like, 'We met when I was around 10 years old, and we've been in touch ever since. Oh, the Queen also likes reading? What a coincidence! We've been recommending books to each other, and it's evolved into this over time.'"

"Hmm..."

It feels like strange rumors would be circulating more and more. For instance, situations like me confessing to Arwen after growing up from my childhood, or the opposite scenario, and so on.

These kinds of situations are common even among the same humans. The story of a kid growing up and confessing to the adult they've had feelings for since before. It's often explained as a situation where the roles were reversed.

If it were in my past life, it would have been seen from various perspectives, but in this world, most things are just accepted and moved on from. Moreover, with the increasing prevalence of love between different species, even the seemingly impossible isn't entirely out of the question.

Still, there doesn't seem to be a better solution for the current situation.

"It seems okay. But I should ask Arwen for her opinion as well."

"Should I call her right away?"

"Yeah. But I need to get permission from my parents first."

"Just be careful not to let Dame Adelia find out."

As I got up from my seat and headed outside, Marie cautioned from behind. She had also learned the fact that Adelia had become my guardian knight.

Then, there was a subtle expression change as if she sensed something. Most likely, being astute as she was, she might have caught onto the fact that Adelia had some favorable feelings towards me.

For now, she'll continue to see us as close siblings, but if Marie were to find out about Adelia's true status and background, I don't know how she'll react. Knowing Marie's personality, she'll probably show understanding.

'Still, it's not the right time yet.'

I've heard something subtly from Mother. If I really want to accept Adelia, I should decide after hearing her choice when I reveal my true identity in the future.

I am not a fool, so I know very well what that choice is. It's probably closely related to the Kingdom of Ters. Even though she is currently keeping her distance and watching from afar, human hearts are prone to desires. Especially considering Ters's status as a cultural powerhouse, they will surely make efforts to establish a connection with me somehow.

There's a strong possibility that by granting Adelia the title of royalty rather than a commoner, they can link me to her. Furthermore, the fact that we were known to be close adds to the strategic advantage.

'Once my identity is revealed, things will become truly difficult.'

We recently faced a crisis, but luckily we overcame it and even managed to create the best situation. The rumors about Ardwen and me were unexpected, though.

Afterward, I explained everything to my parents. They told me to handle it as I see fit and respected my decision.

When I asked where Adelia was at one point, I was told that she finished all her training and is currently taking a bath. Since there's plenty of time to talk, I can set a later date for our conversation.

With my parents' approval, I returned to the bedroom where the two women were waiting. Even in my absence, it seems they were engaged in a lively conversation; their expressions were as bright as sunshine.

“What were you talking about?”

“Nothing important. So, did you get permission?”

“Yes. They said we could talk privately. Father also mentioned that from now on, I can handle matters related to me on my own.”

After this incident, my father said he wouldn't intervene unless I directly asked for help. Well, this time he was just a collaborator; he didn't formulate or execute any part of the plan, after all.

I walked towards the desk, carrying a piece of magic paper to summon Siris. Cecily had seen it many times, but Marie was seeing it for the first time, looking at it with an expression of fascination.

“If you tear that, you can summon [someone]?”

“Yeah.”

Rip-

I briefly answered and tore the summoning paper without hesitation. The torn paper immediately transformed into blue particles and scattered into the air.

“Did you summon me?”

Soon, Siris was summoned in mid-air. She greeted politely with her distinctive husky voice.

Marie's expression of fascination at seeing a Dark Elf for the first time in her life didn't last long. She was taken aback by Siris' revealing attire. Even though she was wearing armor, it was practically no different from underwear, so it was only natural to be surprised.

"Is, is she really a Dark Elf? But her clothes..."

"It's because of the Dark Elf's abilities. You'll get used to it as you see more."

"Ugh..."

Surprisingly, Marie seemed weak in situations like this. She turned her gaze elsewhere, embarrassed. However, with Siris' figure being what it was, she occasionally peeked and eventually stared openly.

Cecily gently smiled, her eyes twinkling, as she softly stroked her hair while she found the mentioned story amusing. Siris herself didn't seem to react much.

Taking a brief moment to admire Siris's impressive figure, I cleared my throat to break the atmosphere and made a request to her.

"Siris, could you possibly call Arwen for a moment? If it's too taxing, you could even assume the role of a messenger. The conversation might end up being a bit lengthy."

"Understood."

Upon hearing my request, Siris promptly teleported away. During her absence, I didn't forget to play a prank on Marie.

"Marie, are you really shy about it?"

"Well, still... this attire is..."

"But you wore something even more revealing on our first night."

"I, I covered up everything important back then! That's not armor, just underwear!"

With a bright red face, Marie let out an embarrassed squeak. Sitting beside her, Cecily watched this unfold with an enigmatic smile.

If Marie found out that Cecily had donned a garter belt during our first night, what kind of reaction would she display? I wanted to play a mischievous prank, but I decided to leave it at this level.

“...Isaac.”

“Yes?”

“Do you happen to like this sort of thing?”

“I don’t dislike it.”

“...I see. So, you actually enjoy this kind of thing...”

It somehow feels like I’ve given Marie unnecessary motivation, but let’s just overlook it.

“Isaac.”

“Oh, you’re here.”

A little while later, Arwen appeared with Siris. As soon as Arwen appeared, Marie quietly stood up from her seat.

Although it was not an official occasion but rather an informal gathering, Arwen was still the queen of another country. Moreover, this was their first meeting, so it was important to make a good impression.

“Hello, Your Majesty. I am Marie Hausen Requilis, the daughter of Duke Requilis. It’s an honor to meet you.”

“I am Arwen Elydia, the queen of Alvenheim. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

The two women exchanged greetings according to the customs of their respective countries. Cecily had met Arwen once before, so a brief exchange of glances was enough.

Eventually, they all took their seats around the round table. However, Siris remained standing beside Arwen.

“So, what is the reason for summoning me to this place?”

“Well, actually...”

I conveyed to Arwen the story I had told her before. She seemed startled when she heard the rumors that were currently circulating, but soon she listened attentively as I explained one thing after another.

After a while, when the explanation was over, Arwen displayed a contemplative expression. Occasionally, she would meet my eyes and seem like she wanted to say something, her lips moving as if about to speak, but I patiently waited in silence.

About a minute had passed like that. At around that point, she seemed to have judged what things were better than she thought and nodded her head. It was a sign of agreement.

“It’s a good approach. We don’t have to deny the rumors, but we should make it clear that it’s not a romantic relationship, just a simple connection...”

“Simply showing goodwill towards each other should be enough. But we should draw a clear line.”

“How so?”

“Maybe something like having an engagement partner?”

“An engagement partner...”

Arwen looked at Marie at the mention of the word “engagement partner.” Marie smiled beautifully as soon as their eyes met, then lowered her head slightly.

It was somewhat amusing how she was making an effort to divert her attention from Siris. Her hand, clenched into a fist under the table, was trembling slightly.

Meanwhile, Arwen glanced at Marie with a subtle expression, then turned her head to the opposite side and looked at Cecily. Her face became even more complex and intricate.

What could she possibly be thinking? I waited quietly until she decided to speak.

“...Alright. Let’s decide to do that, then.”

“No issues, right?”

“Issues with that... Isaac.”

“Yes?”

Arwen gazed at me with gray eyes resembling galaxies. After her lips quivered once more, she spoke with effort.

“When you see a glass filled halfway with water, what kind of thoughts come to your mind?”

“What?”

“I asked what thoughts come to your mind when you see a glass filled halfway with water. I want to hear the opinions of not just Isaac, but also all of you.”

Arwen also sought the opinions of Marie and Cecily. Since it was an unexpected question, both the women on my sides, and me, showed slightly startled expressions.

However, Arwen seldom spoke unnecessary words. Surely, there must be meaning behind that question.

While I pondered deeply, Marie promptly expressed her thoughts.

“I lack the insight to understand what the Queen is asking with such an ambiguous question. Is there any significance to it?”

“Let’s start with trust.”

“Trust... I cautiously offer the opinion that it might mean to have a drink and regain composure, rather than just a glass of water.”

“...”

Marie spoke her mind without hesitation. Arwen’s reaction to her words was quite interesting to observe. Her already pale complexion seemed to whiten even further.

Meanwhile, Cecily, who had been thinking deeply, offered another perspective.

“Could it mean that it varies depending on one’s perspective? Some might think the glass is only half full, while others might see it as half empty.”

“Hmm...”

With a hint of hesitation in her voice, Arwen nodded while lowering her voice. It was a sign that things were somewhat fine but not entirely clear.

The only remaining person was me. Since it was called a “trust,” there must be some significance to it.

I can't help but wonder what kind of joke Luminous might have played again, but at least I should offer some positive words, like interpreting it as a premonition rather than just a dream. Otherwise, I might feel unnecessarily down.

With that in mind, I looked straight at Arwen, who had an expectant look in her eyes, and voiced my opinion.

“It's ambiguous, but it could have various meanings. It could mean filling up the remaining portion of the cup, or on the contrary, pouring the water on the ground. Depending on one's intentions, they could choose to fill it or empty it, right?”

“Filling it up or emptying it...”

“It could indirectly express the idea of making a choice. It might not be about filling the water, but rather smashing the cup altogether. It's so vague that even I'm not sure.”

“... ..”

Arwen, having listened to my response, seemed to deeply contemplate for a moment before raising her head and looking into my eyes.

For reasons unknown to me, the corners of her mouth lifted slightly, showing a relieved expression.

“I understand. It seems I did well by seeking opinions from your companions.”

“So, can you tell us what kind of question led to this trust being bestowed upon us?”

In response to my question, Arwen's smile grew even brighter.

“It's a secret.”

She gave a response that could sound somewhat teasing or alluring.

Chapter 186: Interpretation over dreams (2)

[The Queen of Alvenheim finally speaks out! Xenon and I are merely connected by chance, not lovers...]

[A few years ago, there was a chance meeting between Xenon and me. We've kept our connection since then due to our shared love for books. He also has someone he promised a future with.]

[Stop inflating rumors any further. Alvenheim is in a state of confusion due to the Council of Elders. We should focus on governing the nation from now on.]

Two days later, as agreed upon with Arwen, we made the announcement. We were not lovers, only linked by a simple connection, which has persisted until now. The reason I could give her a speech was that we used magic to stay in touch, and recently, although we've been too busy to communicate regularly, we still manage to see each other's faces occasionally.

There was a hint of skepticism, not entirely unfounded, but when Arwen made the public statement, the label of "lovers" seemed to still fit... Not without lingering dubious gazes, though. Once suspicion takes root in a person's mind, it tends to grow until it's completely eradicated. And as Arwen made the announcement, another round of stories began to circulate.

[The Queen of Alvenheim knows Xenon's true identity.]

With just that sentence, one can roughly anticipate the situation Arwen was about to face. Articles aside, dignitaries from various countries started to express their positions one by one. A range of statements poured in, but most of them were expressing a desire to meet Arwen promptly. From the Minerva Empire to the Ters Kingdom, the Belua Republic, and even the maritime kingdom across the sea.

For those who didn't know Xenon, the situation was inevitable as Arwen was their only point of contact. However, Alvenheim, despite having been defeated in the racial war, was once a powerful nation.

Arwen rejected all demands, citing the need to strengthen her own position. If an envoy had visited, she diplomatically and cleverly sent them back in good terms to avoid any diplomatic issues.

Normally, they would have restrained Alvenheim, which was susceptible, but due to the situation where Arwen was the sole connection and they could potentially lose her support, they were left with no choice but to be cautious.

Thanks to Arwen, Alvenheim had gained a formidable shield and received unintended benefits.

And there's one more thing. A piece of fortunate news reached the readers of Xenon's Biography amidst the misfortune.

[Hello, dear readers. It's Xenon. Lately, in various ways... (omitted)... Therefore, my right hand, with the help of a passing priest, has fully recovered. I won't reveal their identity, but I express my gratitude to the clergyman. The new volume of Xenon's Biography will be out in as early as two weeks, or at the latest, within a month.]

Xenon's right hand, which was said to be badly injured, had recovered. Those readers who cared only about Xenon's Biography rejoiced.

When it was said that his right hand was severely injured, one couldn't fathom how distressed he must have been. At least half a year, maybe even a year, was expected for recovery, possibly even needing to write with his left hand.

But just as there are villains in the world, there are also virtuous people. One virtuous person, by chance, aided Xenon and alleviated people's anxious hearts all at once.

[The attack by the elves is true. What about the pact?]

[Alvenheim's queen. The pact is all lies. Xenon handled them and contacted her personally.]

[How powerful is Xenon's force that even the elves can't win?]

Furthermore, even strange delusions were added like seasonings. That Xenon's strength was great enough to subdue the elves who attacked him in return.

With Arwen's testimony, people came to regard Xenon as someone endowed with both 'literature' and 'combat.' While it was known that someone had ghostwritten for him, the focus remained solely on Xenon.

Thanks to this, Xenon's value naturally soared. A person possessing not only knowledge but also power is a rare find in the world, let alone achieving victory against elves.

Amidst the onslaught of numerous misconceptions like a typhoon, the true protagonist...

"Are these all fan letters?"

"Yeah."

Like being in the eye of a storm, I was peacefully reading the fan letters.

With my arms crossed, I glanced at the pile of fan letters on the desk. Cecily and Marie were looking at them with expressions of curiosity.

After everything was settled and I sent a letter to the publishing company, I requested fan letters. The publishing company gladly complied and sent me a substantial amount of fan letters. And this is the result.

However, the quantity was ridiculously large. I've been so busy that I haven't been receiving fan letters, and in the meantime, an enormous amount has accumulated.

According to what the publishing company president told me, this is only a 'portion.' I can't even fathom how many fan letters are piled up.

"Do you plan on reading all of these?"

When I was pondering which letter to read first, Cecily asked me with a hesitant voice. I heard her question and scratched my temple as I replied.

"Yes, I should read them all. They're letters fans sent."

"Can I read them too?"

Marie asked, her expression full of curiosity. She had decided to stay at the mansion for a while to observe the situation. About two weeks remained until the end of the vacation. We planned to stay at the mansion for about three days before returning to Helium, and during that time, Marie would stay at our mansion.

Hearing her request, I thought for a moment and nodded my head to indicate that it was okay. After all, I could just read them again if needed, so there was no problem.

“It’s fine. Just make sure to put them aside after you read them. I need to read them too.”

“Got it.”

“Isaac, what about me?”

“You can read them too, Noona.”

Saying that, I picked up one letter from the pile that was stacked high. I wasn’t sure how long it would take to read them all, but with my practiced speed-reading skills, I would likely finish them quickly. Roughly estimating, it wouldn’t take more than 1 to 2 hours. If there were any contents that seemed like “persuasion” or “threats,” I could simply discard them right away.

“If there’s anything weird written in the letters, you can just ignore it.”

“Weird content?”

“Like saying they’ll make me rich and famous if I join them or something.”

“I see. There might be things like that.”

“Well, it would be strange if there weren’t.”

Marie and Cecily both showed expressions of understanding, then each picked up a letter. As they tore open the envelopes and began to read, I also shifted my gaze to the letters.

Knowing that there was no worry of someone entering the bedroom in the meantime, as I had already informed the servants, I confirmed the sender before tearing open the envelope.

[Cherry Blossom Roseberry]

‘It’s this person again.’

Among the numerous stacked envelopes, there was a particularly noticeable pink one that caught my eye, and as expected, it was indeed from them. Among the consistent fan letters that had been coming from the beginning until now, this was one of the few people to whom I had responded.

Upon receiving my response, it seemed like they were moved, as the interval between their letters had become much shorter than before.

Rip--

I neatly tore open the envelope, which was pink like cherry blossoms, and pulled out its contents. Then, I unfolded the letter paper that was entirely pink like the envelope and slowly began to read the contents.

[Hello, Xenon-nim! Red-tinted autumn leaves are falling, and the cold winter is already approaching. The villagers are complaining about the winter coming faster than last year. I'm curious if Xenon-nim enjoys the withered flowers of winter. I don't like them personally.]

As expected, the elegant handwriting, like the letters I've received so far, was impressive. In addition, there were words imbued with a girl's sensibility. Just like the last time, I felt it too, that a single letter can be written so sweetly, warming the heart of the reader.

If the atmosphere of Xenon's Biography flows smoothly like a river, changing like vast waves, then this woman named Cherry must be wafting a scent of blossoms, attracting butterflies and bees.

I've never met her in person, not even once, but somehow, an approximate image has formed in my mind. A literary girl emitting the aura of cherry blossoms.

[Soon, I'll be entering Halo Academy. I want to acquire as much knowledge as Xenon-nim has. My parents oppose this, but won't there come a day when I write like Xenon-nim? Unlike an adventure, I want to focus on the love between two people, like the elf and human love story you wrote, Xenon-nim. Love is sweet but also has a bitter taste, a complex yet intense emotion. I want to write in a way that captures that feeling well.]

Cherry, the girl who will soon enter Halo Academy. As I was reading the letter slowly, a question arose in my mind, so I shifted my gaze to Marie.

Marie was concentrating with her index finger against her lips. Although I felt a bit sorry for interrupting her concentration, I wanted to resolve my curiosity.

"Marie."

"Yeah?"

“Do you happen to know about the Roseberry family?”

“Roseberry? Are you talking about the Roseberry Viscount family known for their pink color?”

“Probably?”

As expected, just like a skilled diplomat, she even knew my middle name. As Marie and I engaged in conversation, Cecily also became attentive to our discussion.

While idly tapping her index finger against her cheek, Marie eventually began to share information about the Roseberry family.

“The Roseberry family is famous even within the Minerva Empire. Like many noble families, they’re wealthy, and they are particularly renowned for producing exceptional philosophers through generations.”

“Philosophers?”

“Yes. More than half of the philosophy books published within the Minerva Empire have come from the Roseberry family. Even the philosophy professors at the Halo Academy are graduates of the Roseberry family.”

A family that places such importance on philosophy was somewhat unique. However, considering the era, philosophy was one of the most crucial disciplines. The development of human rights in my past life was rooted in philosophy, with figures like Sakyamuni, Confucius, Plato, Nietzsche, and others. The philosophies left behind by numerous prominent individuals continued to wield significant influence in the modern world.

Moreover, philosophy was deeply intertwined with the framework of “ideology,” which moved nations. The anecdote of Hitler drawing inspiration from Nietzsche was well-known, and the father of communism, Marx, needs no introduction.

Furthermore, given that gods actually existed here, philosophy was bound to flourish even more than on Earth. It wasn’t entirely strange for a family to revolve around philosophy, and it wasn’t uncommon even in the past life.

‘It makes sense she’s exceptionally skilled at writing.’

Considering she was born and raised in a family that regarded philosophy as fundamental, it wouldn’t be surprising if her writing skills were remarkable.

As I made a convincing expression, Marie pointed to the letter I was reading and asked.

“Is that from the Roseberry family by any chance?”

“Yeah. Cherry Blossom Roseberry. She’s about to enter the academy soon.”

“Really? You might even have a chance to meet her. Even though we’re in different grades. Plus, you were appointed as a recommended student.”

“Hmm...”

Upon hearing those words, I shifted my gaze to the letter. There aren’t many people who can write so sweetly. Maybe I’ll have a chance to meet her at least once.

Of course, that’s a story for when circumstances align. For now, I’m just thinking about exchanging letters from the perspective of an author and a fan.

“Yeah, maybe we could meet.”

I shrugged and started reading the next letter.

In the midst of numerous headlines flooding the current news, it’s a well-known fact that many countries are striving to establish connections with Alvenheim. Creating a link with Xenon somehow could greatly advance cultural development. The leaders of each nation were putting effort into gaining Arwen’s favor in any way possible.

Among them was the Kingdom of Ters, renowned for its freedom and culture. When Fieren spread malicious rumors, they went to the Hask region with a carefree attitude, but returned empty-handed.

Only then did the Kingdom of Ters realize that Fieren had spread false information, and they couldn’t help but feel disappointed. With Xenon’s pursuit already thwarted, now even their last hope had been extinguished.

Ultimately, the Kingdom of Ters decided to proceed with its original plans.

“...So, you’re saying I have to go there?”

“It can’t be helped. It’s something you must endure for the sake of our relationship with the Minerva Empire.”

“But isn’t Lara here as well?”

“Lara is still young. And who knows what kind of impoliteness she might commit.”

King Friedrich of Ters spoke firmly while looking at the woman before him. She had sky-blue hair and eyes that flickered beneath her gaze.

Her name was Hiriya Duke von Kurchers, the second princess of the Kingdom of Ters. Unlike her older sister Adelia, who had a different aura and a lively impression, Hiriya exuded a somewhat sharp and cold beauty. Instead of the glamorous dresses that most princesses wore, she was dressed in a neat uniform, projecting a dignified image.

“But that doesn’t mean you’re sending me, right? I made myself clear. I’d rather become a knight than be dolled up like a doll.”

“I know.”

“But why are you so determined to marry me off? Is forming a connection with the Minerva Empire really that important?”

“We’re not sending you off in marriage; we’re merely spreading rumors. So don’t worry.”

“But Olivia noona...”

“Olivia really did hit it off. It’s not my fault. So, she’s still doing well, raising three children and all. The exchange with the Belua Kingdom has become much more active than before.”

“Sigh...”

Hiriya let out a frustrated sigh at Friedrich’s stubbornness. His personality was unwavering once he made a decision, and no matter how many times you asked, the answer remained the same. In order to foster better relations with the Minerva Empire, Hiriya, as one of the two princesses, would transfer to the Halo Academy.

There, she would build friendships with the crown prince or princess, thus bridging the gap between the two nations. Given the unpredictable nature of when and how war might erupt between the two countries, it wouldn’t hurt to become close.

Additionally, there was one unavoidable circumstance driving this decision. That was the fact that the Michelle Territory, where the exhibition took place, was Xenon’s

homeland. With just that, the Minerva Empire enjoyed unexpected profits, while the Ters Kingdom faced an unexpected blow from the dry skies.

“...Father.”

“Why are you calling?”

“Promise me. Promise that you won’t send me away in marriage until I want it.”

“For now, I promise. But if your feelings change, I’ll be sure to listen whenever that happens.”

“There’s no way that will happen.”

With resolute determination, Hiriya responded, and then, as if something had occurred to her, she questioned Friedrich in a curious tone.

“Come to think of it, isn’t Adelia at the Hailo Academy?”

“It’s nothing to worry about. Because she has already graduated and won’t be around. It seems she’s become a knight in the service of some noble family.”

“A knight?”

“Yes. So you don’t need to worry about meeting her.”

“Hmm...”

Upon hearing this, Hiriya smiled satisfactorily and spoke quietly.

“That’s a bit disappointing.”

“Huh?”

Friedrich raised one eyebrow in a questioning expression. But in response to Hiriya’s next words, he couldn’t help but let out a chuckle.

“I was actually thinking of using the pretext of a duel to teach her a lesson.”

“Hehehe.”

There were two weeks left until the academy’s reopening.

“Let’s torment her just enough. If she ends up resorting to suicide or something, it’ll be a headache.”

“I’ll consider that.”

Another storm was slowly approaching.

Chapter 187: 2nd Grade (1)

As all the events were resolved, time flowed rapidly as before, without any incidents. However, due to Arwen's statement about the 'person whom he promised the future to,' it got a little noisy. The 'person whom he promised the future to' referred to Xenon's fiancé, meaning someone in their twenties. Some pointed to Arwen, however this was soon buried quietly.

If Arwen were human, it might have been different, but she was an elf of the long-lived kind, a race that considered a few decades as merely a "brief" time. Furthermore, she had added an additional explanation that they had met a long time ago, making it even more difficult to guess my age.

All that was left for me was returning to Helium and enjoying sweet dates with Cecily. Marie also returned to her mansion in preparation for the Academy reopening. In the midst of this, Cecily suggested once again that Marie could accompany us to Helium, but she declined firmly, saying she would go after receiving a formal invitation later. Though she was ambitious, she was being subtly considerate.

And so, in the remaining time, while enjoying precious dates with Cecily in Helium and working on writing the next volume, the day before the Academy's reopening finally arrived.

Cecily suggested we meet at the Academy and returned me to the mansion, leaving me with a final kiss to express her affection.

Before heading to the Academy, she offered to teleport me there, but I declined out of politeness. This time, I planned to go to the Academy with Adelia.

"How is it? Is it okay?"

And back to the present. I was facing Adelia, who would soon become a guardian knight. She wore leather pants that showcased the graceful lines honed through training, along with a white shirt and a vest on top.

The sleeve of the shirt was also slightly lifted, giving off the image of a free-spirited adventurer. It was a stark contrast compared to the random things she used to wear during her days as a teaching assistant.

“Yeah. It looks really good on you. Your figure is great, so anything you wear would suit you well.”

“Really? Thanks for the compliment. And it’s not like my figure is that great.”

Adelia gained confidence from my praise, placing her hand lightly on her waist and showing off. I couldn’t help but smile at her confident demeanor, which I had seen many times before.

From now on, she would be acting as my escort knight, so she needed to dress neatly like this. Iron armor was uncomfortable, and it couldn’t be used within the academy.

However, the genuine sword could be used, but unless my life was in danger, there wasn’t much reason to use it.

“You know how to operate within the academy, right?”

“Of course. Apart from classes, I always have to be by your side. If the lord doesn’t want it, I can go separately, but I need the lord’s permission for that. Otherwise, I have to stay in the escort knight’s exclusive residence.”

“You know well.”

“I’ve been in the academy longer than you have. So, it’s not that difficult.”

Escort knights are not mandatory, and if nobles wish, they can bring them along. Looking at the fact that Rina and Marie don’t have escort knights, it’s clear that it’s a choice.

The academy is known for its much better security than other regions, and up to the second year, it’s mainly about studying like crazy. There’s almost no worry about getting in danger.

Because of this, the number of people accompanied by escort knights was relatively small. Still, it’s not entirely absent; it’ll just attract some attention and end there.

“Our cutie was appointed as the recommended student, right? So, are you going to become a teaching assistant right away?”

“Yeah.”

Although I am only a second-year student, I have been appointed as a teaching assistant as a recommended student to assist Professor Elena. I just found out now, but even non-majors take a course called 'Culture' starting from the second year. For non-majors, the first year is just an adaptation process. Moreover, non-majors are classified as knights and wizards for different classes, but they all take history together.

However, because literature and martial arts students study differently, they are divided by class time. So, I will simply follow the professor around and assist as a teaching assistant.

"I might know about being a teaching assistant for martial arts majors, but I'm not sure about literature students."

"It's not a big deal. I just handle the professor's tasks and help with discussions, that's all."

"Have you seen other teaching assistants besides you?"

"Well..."

Come to think of it, Professor Elena has assistants like Cindy, but I've never seen any teaching assistants. It's quite distinct from other history professors who usually have two or three assistants. Even if history is not a popular subject, there should be at least one or two assistants, but I've never encountered them so far.

I wonder what the reason is. As I pondered, I shrugged my shoulders. It's okay to be alone, and I do like history as a subject and have confidence in it.

"No, there aren't any. I've visited the Professor's office frequently, but I've never met one."

"Really? Hmm... Well, it probably doesn't matter. Are you going to keep your hair as it is and go?"

While staying in Helium, Mora was very generous in imbuing me with a lot of "kind" divinity. Thanks to that, my hair, which at first had grown to my shoulders, went down all the way down to my waist. I was horrified.

Even so, I strongly protested that it shouldn't go all the way to my waist, but it didn't even budge. Cutting it was meaningless, as it would grow back again.

Thanks to this, every morning after getting up, I would wash and then gently comb each other's hair with Cecily. It wasn't all that bad, as it was a somewhat refreshing experience.

(TL: Holy shit Mora made Cale out of him XD)

Managing it was incredibly annoying, though. The fact that I would have to manage this damn hair on my own from now on already gave me a headache.

“Probably. Since it grows back even if you cut it.”

“Is it not some kind of illness? Have you been to the temple?”

Adelia, who didn't really know the situation, asked with a worried look in her eyes. Maybe I could tell her about the blessing Mora had given me.

As I looked at her reaction, I eventually let out a bitter smile and confessed.

“Well... actually, it's been like this since I went to the temple.”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“When I was staying in Helium, I went to the temple for a short while. It's been like this since then.”

As I explained, a stronger sense of doubt filled Adelia's vivid, sky-colored eyes.

Indeed, it's hard to understand that going to a temple would make your hair longer. Usually, temples are places for clergy or patients to go.

However, I learned something while visiting the temple of Luminous and Mora. The fact that these two are very human-like. Especially Mora, who had a higher levels of energy than Luminous and was a bit of a prankster.

“Um... come to think of it, Helium worships Mora instead of Luminous, right?”

“Yeah.”

“For some reason, Mora seems to like you. Sometimes that happens. Occasionally, certain characteristics are given to the worshippers that Mora likes. Like their hair getting longer, or they grow taller, or maybe they start emitting a floral scent.”

“Does Luminous do that too?”

Mora was the goddess I got involved with, so it's true for me, but I was curious if Luminous does the same.

“Yeah. Cutie, since you're into history, you know what kind of flower Luminous likes, right?”

“Luminous likes lilac flowers.”

“Exactly. If a worshipper emits the scent of lilac flowers, it means they're favored by Luminous. That's why they often offer lilac flowers as offerings. That's also why Luminous worshippers often use lilac-scented perfume.”

“That's an interesting story...”

As soon as I heard that story, I rubbed my nose against my arm in haste. If Luminous likes lilac flowers, then Mora likes peaches. So, I wondered if I emitted the scent of peaches. Suddenly, that thought crossed my mind. There's no guarantee that I would emit the scent of peaches like in the case of Cecily. But in this situation where I'm not even sweating, it was hard to tell what scent I was emitting. Cecily and Marie just told me that my scent is nice but didn't specify what exactly the scent was.

Sniff Sniff-

“...What are you doing?”

Adelia asked in a curious voice as I pressed my nose against myself, smelling all over. I answered as if it wasn't a big deal.

“I was just curious if I smell like peaches. Mora likes peaches, so I thought maybe since my hair has grown longer, my scent has changed too...”

“Is that so?”

Adelia replied slowly to my words. There was no change in her sky-blue eyes, but she seemed to want to say something, licking her lips with her tongue. Then she seemed to hesitate for a while, and eventually, with determination, she closed her eyes tightly. Could it be that she does it herself or something...

“Well, maybe if you ask Marie later.”

...It wasn't an unreasonable suggestion. For a moment, greed welled up, but I held my principles firmly.

“Ah, then that should work. Thank you.”

“I-It’s fine. It’s just a... small thing.”

She was trying to smile, but a hint of bitterness couldn’t be hidden as her lips quivered. Somehow it felt a bit awkward. I need a topic to lighten the mood somehow. Fortunately, there was a suitable one, so I can smoothly transition.

“Oh, by the way, take this.”

“Is this...”

“A summoning gem. I’ll probably come to Noona’s room myself most of the time, but it’s better if you have it for now.”

I handed Adelia a small, palm-sized blue stone. If I want to, the blue light will shimmer on that stone.

Adelia looked at the summoning stone resting on her palm, then clenched it tightly. She carefully wrapped her other hand around it and pressed it against her chest.

There’s a determination not to lose it. She might still be holding onto the handkerchief I gave her.

I’m not sure if she’s aware of it herself, but her pure feelings toward me were subtly revealed.

Adelia was deeply in love with me, an unrequited love.

“Take care from now on, Sir Guardian Knight.”

Before I knew it, the eventful first year had passed.

“Yeah.”

The even more eventful second year began.

You would likely know about the events where Lumineus praised Isaac and the Holy Kingdom Xavier began to canonize him as a saint.

Until now, he had only propagated the concept of the ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ and presented a new path in theology. However, the situation has now taken a complete 180-degree turn.

Isaac’s achievements have transcended imagination to the point where even Lumineus directly acknowledged them. No matter how much coincidence played a role, his merits will not disappear.

Xavier took significant actions, even had a Cardinal embarking on a pilgrimage, to find Isaac. The name of this Cardinal was Kate Louise Angelica. Born with potent divine power, she ascended to the position of a Cardinal at the tender age of 19, displaying exceptional martial prowess and concurrently serving as an inquisitor.

As time passed, at the youthful age of 20, she...

Crash!

She was in the midst of shattering the nest that the devil worshipers concealed underground in the city.

“Hii, h-hiiii...! Mon, monster!”

“Monster?”

The woman responded with an amused expression as the devil worshiper, clad in a dark robe, spoke in a trembling voice of fear. Despite the darkness prevalent underground, her emerald eyes gleamed brightly. Furthermore, although sprayed with blood due to the powerful blow she had just struck with her solid mace, her graceful appearance couldn’t be concealed. Rather, the splattered blood enhanced her aura of a formidable warrior.

Thud-

As she slowly raised the mace that had crushed the skull, bits of flesh and blood dripped off. The woman retrieved the mace, gazing silently at the trembling demon worshiper consumed by fear before finally speaking.

“Monsters can be redeemed. But demons... maybe. As for devils...”

“Oh, please! D-don’t...!”

The woman, regardless of whether the devil worshiper pleaded or not, flashed a cheerful smile and raised her mace high, speaking dryly.

“Only punishment.”

Thunk!!

Once again, she swung down her mace decisively, and the devil worshiper’s head burst open like a smashed watermelon, blood, flesh, and sticky brain matter splattering across her face. However, the woman didn’t even bat an eye.

“A devil worshiper dares such a thing.”

Wooo-wooom-

Muttering in such a manner, the woman swung her mace again with a satisfying motion. Various debris, including blood, scattered across the floor.

Without considering wiping her face, she scanned the scattered bodies of devil worshipers around her. All of them were missing their heads.

It was cruel without a hint of mercy, but these were devil worshippers, the ones who offered living humans as sacrifices to summon devils. The victims were obviously the ones who had gone missing recently in the vicinity. Due to the numerous reports of disappearances, she had investigated and found the presence of devil worshippers.’

If left unchecked, they would have caused even greater harm.’

She shifted her gaze towards the altar where the devil worshippers had been offering sacrifices. Bones of the victims were already piled near the altar.

Necromancy was a forbidden art of gaining power in exchange for life. The sacrifice offered became immediately a decaying bone.

“Oh, Luminous One. Please grant these souls rest...”

After mourning for the victims not yet found, the woman turned her back as if she had nothing more to see. The rest would be taken care of by the following generations.

Eventually, upon exiting the altar room, she met with the individuals who were already preparing outside. Among them, her gaze met the eyes of a woman who seemed to be giving orders.

“Ah, Lady Kate, have you finished organizing everything?”

“Yes. What about the rest?”

“We’ve contacted the organization. They will send priests soon.”

Satisfied with the answer, the woman named Kate nodded. The activities of demon worshippers had intensified lately, necessitating more hands.

She heard that it was because they were coming out in the open, since they had been already revealed and were causing disturbances. While Xenon had ignited the powder keg, it was better this way. It was more serious to not discover the victims at all, even if their numbers increased rapidly in a short period. They hadn’t even known about the existence of devil worshippers before Xenon’s incident.

This illustrated how well the devil worshippers had been concealed, even involving high-ranking nobles as collaborators.

“Understood. I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“Yes. By the way, may I ask where our next destination is?”

“First, I plan to head to the Minerva Empire. We need to find Xenon as soon as possible. Although I’d like to go to Alvenheim in my heart, since the queen is busy, we’re planning to proceed with the pilgrimage for now.”

“Hmm... Can we really find him?”

The priestess expressed a negative sentiment. Last time, Xenon had received help from a priest and healed his right hand, but they couldn’t pinpoint the exact location. In this world, there are many priests like Kate who embark on pilgrimages, and there are no small number of individuals who bestow offerings in return.

Xavier was initially intrigued by the news, but gave up immediately due to the lack of clues. As a result, even Xavier was in the process of sending Kate on a pilgrimage and searching for Xenon on the ground. The devotees requested hints from Luminous, but the response that came back was quite vague.

“Luminous surely gave me such a task to find him as well. While the gods may speak ambiguously, if you offer your sincere devotion, they will never grant you a false task.”

“But still...”

“It is our duty to comprehend the intentions of the gods, Sister. We mustn’t be suspicious.”

Kate spoke with a gentle yet firm voice. Her words represented her strong faith in Luminous. Upon hearing this, the priestess momentarily flinched, then quickly bowed her head in apology. If her words were misinterpreted, the consequences could be dire.

“I apologize. I spoke out of turn. Please forgive me.”

“Stand tall, Sister. Occasionally, it is necessary to harbor doubt to deepen our inherent trust.”

Kate, who touched the shoulders of the priestess, spoke with a boundlessly merciful voice, not as a blindly fanatical believer. The problem was that her hands were also stained with blood, much like the mace. Naturally, the blood had stained the priestess’s white robe red.

The priestess, who had anticipated this in advance, sighed inwardly. The blood wouldn’t easily come off even after washing, so the only solution was to purify it with divine power.

“... Thank you for your advice. Before you go, Lady Kate.”

“Yes. Please speak, Sister.”

“May I inquire about the reason why Cardinal embarked on a pilgrimage to find Xenon herself?”

Kate embarked on the pilgrimage to find Xenon not by Xavier’s command, but of her own volition. She even directly requested it from the pope.

It was a fact not widely known in the secular world, but those closely associated with the Church had a rough idea. However, they were unaware of the reason behind it.

With a beautiful smile that anyone could see, Kate revealed the reason aloud.

“Sister, as you know, Xenon has saved this world from crisis. Even Luminous has expressed gratitude personally.”

“I am aware of that.”

“Accomplishments translate to divine power. If he wishes, even the Pope will come to appear insignificant in terms of divine power.”

“That’s true.”

“I am undertaking this pilgrimage to receive the seeds of such Xenon.”

“... Pardon?”

What was that? As the priestess blinked her eyes round and displayed a bewildered expression, Kate gently stroked her lower abdomen. And despite wearing a warmer smile than anyone else, she began to make somewhat fanatical remarks one by one.

“I have risen to this position with the blessing of Luminous. A girl from the countryside, who had nothing, now possesses immense divine power... This can only be described as a blessing. It’s practically a form of grace.”

“Th-that’s right. But...”

“In order to repay that grace, I will receive the seed of someone with strong divine power. The child born between us will undoubtedly possess a much stronger divine power than me or the pope. If that child grows up to become a clergy, they will be of great assistance to Luminous. This is the way I will repay my gratitude to Luminous.”

Just to clarify, her rank was already that of a Cardinal and Grand Inquisitor. It’s an impossible position without considerable faith and divine power. Her mindset didn’t bow down to fanaticism.

Upon hearing those words, the priestess was left speechless, but suddenly, a practical problem came to her mind.

“What if Xenon were a girl?”

“It doesn’t matter. If either Xenon or I request from Luminous to change one of us into a man, it should not be a problem. It’s an actual occurrence, so there won’t be any issues.”

“... ..”

She could understand why the oracle was given in such an ambiguous way.

Chapter 188: 2nd Grade (2)

In the second year, just like in the first year, students aim to take various classes to avoid failing and repeating a year. There isn't much difference from the first year, but if there's any distinction, it's probably the change of professors.

However, even among the professors, there are those who change and those who remain the same. From the third year onwards, students become teaching assistants, helping professors or providing significant assistance in classes. At this point, they've essentially chosen their career path, so they're treated almost like half-graduate students rather than mere teaching assistants.

Even if they haven't decided on a career path, there's a process to obtain a graduation certificate, so there's no issue. In fact, there are fewer cases of students deciding on a career path in advance than one might think, which is why only about half of the literature students become teaching assistants from their third year.

Anyway, I planned to follow Professor Elena and assist her or directly participate in classes in the future. As mentioned before, history is a general education class that even non-literature students attend.

Unlike literature students, there are far more non-literature students, and their classes are also divided into several groups. According to Adelia's explanation, when she first entered, there were only three groups.

But now, there were over five groups. Surprisingly, more than half of them were commoners, and the number of nobles was unexpectedly low.

This basically means that within less than 10 years, Minerva Empire's talent recruitment ability has been elevated, and the system has been well established. The admission process is not based on relative evaluation but absolute evaluation, so the numbers can only increase over time.

As a result, there's a need for faculty to teach non-literature students, so they are currently hiring skilled individuals from various backgrounds. By the way, among them

was my father as well, but he politely declined due to being busy with territorial matters.

“Perhaps this year will be very busy. There are about 350 new students. Among them, 150 are liberal arts students.”

“Yes?”

I visited Elena’s research lab on the day of the academy’s reopening. While organizing materials, I couldn’t help but be surprised by the story Elena brought up. Last year, there were only 200 new students and 50 literature students. However, something happened in the meantime that caused the number of liberal arts students to triple.

Truly an explosive growth. As mentioned just now, the entrance exam is an absolute evaluation, so an increase in new students was a natural occurrence, but it was too much.

“Isn’t this increase a bit too much?”

“I thought it was strange at first too, but if you look closely, it’s a phenomenon that makes sense.”

“It makes sense?”

“Yes.”

Elena nodded her head and began to present a somewhat absurd hypothesis as I listened in disbelief.

“Do you know when Volume 1 of Xenon’s Biography was published?”

“Probably... about a year and six months ago?”

Since I was 16 years old when Volume 1 was published, it’s probably roughly correct. The significant surge in popularity started from Volume 5, but it had some popularity before that.

“But why bring up Xenon’s Biography? Are you suggesting that this might be because of that?”

“It could be?”

“... ..”

I clenched my lips as I watched Professor Elena, who seemed to be countering with a questioning gaze. I was left speechless with a feeling that my wit was escaping me.

It's true that Xenon's Biography is an easily readable book for people of all ages, genders, and social classes, but I can't bring myself to say it's beneficial for education.

Does reading novels improve language or comprehension skills? In that case, it's better to read another piece of literature or look up words in a dictionary.

While numerous critics praise Xenon's Biography, some point out its flaw as being too simple. It's overly straightforward, making it difficult for philosophical contemplation and deeper thinking.

Meanwhile, Elena pushed her slightly lowered glasses up and looked at me before speaking.

"The noteworthy aspect here is that the number of nobles is similar to last year, but the number of commoners has significantly increased. And Xenon's Biography is an easy-to-read book that disregards social classes. Can you guess why?"

"Not at all."

"You're still far from it. Well, considering you were born a noble, that's to be expected."

Even in response to my curt answer, Elena shrugged her shoulders and showed a reaction that indicated she understood. She seemed to be smirking, narrowing her eyes as she extended a finger and continued speaking.

"Until Xenon's Biography was released, commoners found it difficult to read books. Do you know the reason?"

"Because it was filled with unfamiliar words, and it was hard to grasp the overall flow. Isn't that right?"

"Very accurate. On the other hand, Xenon's Biography has a sentence structure and readability that allow you to imagine it even in your mind, to the extent that its narrative skill and ease of understanding are unparalleled. The content contained within, like the love between different races or the Sakran's story, becomes subtly profound when delved into."

Up to this point, it sounded like ordinary praise. So, in a moment when I was about to put on a smug expression, Elena provided a very important point.

“Thanks to this, it’s tailored perfectly for taking the first step.”

“The first step?”

“Yes. The first step. Regardless of what it is, the first step is crucial. You must know this too.”

No matter what you do, taking the first step is the beginning, as Elena said. Ironically, taking that first step is the hardest part.

People have curiosity about the unknown, but at the same time, they also have fear. The saying ‘the beginning is half the battle’ isn’t there without reason.

“So, are you going to tell a squire who’s just removed his novice badge to go and slay a dragon? Or will you tell him to kill an orc?”

“Of course, the latter.”

“It’s similar to that. Before Xenon’s Biography came out, the books were all so difficult. Not only lacking in fun, but also lacking in interest. Even if you had interest, the basic comprehension ability wasn’t there, so reading was very difficult. Fairy tales and such are practically meaningless unless kids read them when they start reading. “

“Um... So, Xenon’s Biography is well-suited for approaching the ‘book’ as a written form?”

“Very accurate.”

Elena nodded with a satisfied expression at my response. Only then did I realize what she was trying to say.

Xenon’s Biography is an easily accessible book in itself. Just like Elena’s analogy, if you were to ask a newly trained knight, who just removed his training badge, to go and subdue a dragon, he would likely end up dead before too long. Unless they’ve awakened some talent they didn’t know they had, it’s almost certain they’ll die. Unless it’s a talent granted directly by a deity, most talents require the support of effort.

Xenon’s Biography was similar to this concept. It’s more efficient than any other book when it comes to ‘growth,’ making it suitable for advancing to higher levels.

'Well, originally I had no interest in books either.'

I can deeply relate, having experienced a similar progression in my past life's skill tree. Back when I was fervently reading comic books, a friend recommended a fantasy novel, and I became captivated by its charm. However, genre novels have their limits, so I delved into other books and eventually developed a deep interest in history, leading me to read books related to that subject. If my friend hadn't recommended that novel back then, I probably wouldn't have touched history books and would have spent my time aimlessly browsing the internet.

The same held true after reincarnation. Because I cultivated the habit of reading, it saved me from just wasting time without purpose.

The current situation was quite similar. Xenon's Biography has garnered unprecedented popularity, increasing interest in books overall. Even though Xenon's Biography continues to dominate the publishing market, there's news that the sales of other books have also risen.

"By the way, this isn't just the case with the Halo Academy, it's the same in other countries too. The academy in the Ters Kingdom has seen a staggering 5-fold increase in literary students."

"That's impressive. Is the increase in non-literary students separate?"

"Yes, it's separate. Well, who knows if it will increase in the next few years. After all, there might be those who enroll thinking they'll become heroes like Xenon, right?"

While Elena spoke jokingly, a smile emerged as it seemed like she might actually mean it. After all, tales of heroes had always been enough to ignite a fire in the hearts of children. Of course, reality was horrifying beyond measure, but if that determination continued to the end, another hero could be born.

"Thus, I'm going to be very busy from now on. We used to put literature students all in one class, but now we have to split them into three. Not just for the first year, but also for the second year literature students and even the non-literature students."

"Do I have any free time then?"

Won't the time for me to write Xenon's Biography disappear? That's why I became the recommended student.

Elena seemed to sense some unease in my question and responded, raising one corner of her mouth.

“Of course you do. I might treat assistants differently, but I won’t push my teaching assistants too hard. You’ll have enough break time, so don’t worry.”

“Well, that’s a relief. But what about Cindy? Where did Cindy go?”

“Cindy went to the sanctuary for a short while. She’ll probably be back within a week.”

Since obtaining her doctorate, Cindy has been extremely busy. There are more days when her seat is empty than when I get to see her face. While it’s a bit disappointing not to see her distinctively hazy face, I wasn’t resentful as everyone has their own life. I’m going to be busy too, and I don’t have the luxury of worrying about others.

“The number of literature students has tripled, has the system changed too?”

“Things will probably change soon. From now on, assistant positions might only be appointed to recommended students. And by now, the upper ranks might be experiencing quite a headache. They probably never imagined it would turn out this way for themselves.”

“Xenon’s Biography is causing quite a lot of changes.”

“It’s laying the groundwork for leading the heyday of human literature. What Luminous said wasn’t just empty praise.”

Elena spoke like this and then checked the time before getting up from her seat. Just to note, the entrance ceremony was held yesterday, and orientation will be conducted starting from today.

Originally, history wouldn’t be taught at this time, but due to the division of the class into three groups, the number of classes has tripled. Not only that, but they also have to hold classes for the second-year students, so she will be quite busy in the future.

“Well then, let’s start preparing for the class. Do you have everything you need?”

“I’ve prepared everything.”

“Good. Don’t be nervous, just stand by my side and watch how the class progresses. Of course, I might pass things over to you from time to time, so don’t space out.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

Afterward, I followed her and walked to the classroom where the class would take place. Although the number of literary students has tripled, causing some disruptions in writing, it shouldn't be a big issue as long as I manage my time.

I haven't forgotten to consider dates with Marie and Cecily's from time to time. Anyway, since all classes end at 5 PM, that won't change.

While I was slowly revising my plans in my mind, a sudden question popped up. In fact, it's a thought that I've had even before coming to the academy.

Why does Professor Elena not have an assistant? Curious, I asked her as she stood in front.

"Professor Elena."

"Yeah?"

"Why don't you have any teaching assistants?"

"Oh, that? It's not a big deal. I don't take TAs unless they're recommended students."

"Why?"

As I wondered, she pushed up her glasses and replied with a nonchalant tone.

"That's where the satisfaction of growth comes from."

"... .."

"By the way, all the history professors in the history department were once my TAs."

It must be a mistake that I saw the gates of hell opening before my eyes.

'Yeah, it must be a mistake.'

It has to be a mistake.

Chapter 189: 2nd Grade (3)

Originally, the classes for first-year students were conducted in a single classroom. In that one place, professors of each subject came and went, conducting classes while students listened. However, this story is from last year when the student count was around 50, and this year's incoming literature students were a whopping 150. Splitting them into groups of 50 results in three classes, thus requiring three classrooms.

Of course, there's no academy with only one classroom. The Minerva Empire also predicted the increase in student numbers at some point and designed accordingly in advance. Thanks to that, there haven't been any disasters of having to teach students all together in one place.

Concerns about confusion in classes were also unfounded. Divided into three groups, each had its own set of lessons.

What if a student from Class A wants to attend the history class in Class B? It's fine. There aren't any bonus points anyway, and they would just be wasting their own time.

Exams are scheduled to take place at fixed times, so there's no possibility of cheating. Still, with the student count tripling within a year, there will likely be many vulnerabilities.

Since immediate actions can't be taken, the plan was to proceed with the classes for now, in a kind of a "let's give it a shot" approach.

"A Class is on Monday at 1 PM, B Class is on Wednesday at 1 PM, and finally, C Class is on Friday at 1 PM. By the way, this is for the first year; the second year is separate."

The lecture building they reached for the first class and orientation. Elena walked to the classroom where the classes would be held and explained the rough schedule.

For the second year, not only literature students but also non-literature students are together, making for a tight schedule. While there's only one class of second-year literature students, there are a whopping three classes for non-literature students.

One of the schedules was incredibly tight. Thankfully, the 3rd and 4th years have different history professors, or else there wouldn't have been time to write Xenon's Biography.

Thinking that there would be plenty of time, I became a teaching assistant early on, but it felt like I got even busier. Still, my graduation will go smoothly, so I'll take comfort in that.

"But can you graduate faster if you become a teaching assistant from the second year?"

"For the time being, yes. If the professors approve, you can graduate within a year. However, that's assuming you're working on your graduation thesis. With your writing skills, it might be possible."

"Are you really going to let me graduate?"

"If it appeals to me. If the topic of your thesis is interesting, I might be able to help. Or you could work together with Cindy."

"Um..."

I'm not sure if I should be happy or sad. Given Elena's straightforward personality, she would graduate me if I write a satisfactory thesis. But a thesis wasn't a trivial matter, and I haven't mastered the art of writing one yet. I can learn that gradually by Elena's side, though.

In the meantime, I'll probably also write Xenon's Biography, but I strongly felt that I would have a pretty busy schedule.

"Have you read all the books in the research lab?"

"No. I haven't finished reading them yet."

As I talked with Elena, we somehow arrived at the door of a classroom without realizing it. It wasn't the same classroom I used to go to in my freshman year but a different one. It looks no different on the surface, but it seems like it hasn't been properly renovated yet, as the distinct scent of wood lingered. However, it was more of a natural scent rather than an unpleasant one, and fragrant.

Soon enough, Elena opened the half-closed door and entered, and I followed her inside. As I stepped in, the classroom, which had been somewhat bustling, grew quiet.

“Huh? What’s this? An elf? There’s an elven professor?”

“But who’s the red-haired person next to them? An assistant, perhaps?”

“Seems like an assistant, but their hair is really long. Longer than mine, it seems.”

Amidst the tranquility, occasional sighs could be heard. Somehow, I felt tense amidst these unfamiliar emotions I hadn’t felt before. It might be natural, as this is my first time as a teaching assistant.

As my heart started to beat faintly, Elena stood at the center of the podium and slowly scanned the students. And the students, now faced with an elven professor instead of a human, displayed expressions filled with curiosity and interest.

During a brief silence, Elena adjusted her glasses and then opened her mouth with a clear voice.

“Hello, new students. I am Elena Heavensinger, the professor who will be teaching you history from now on. Please take care of me.”

Just as I did when I was a new student, Elena introduced herself and bowed politely. The students responded with enthusiastic applause to her introduction.

Then, as the applause subsided slightly, she pointed towards me and spoke.

“And this redhead is my teaching assistant. Say hello.”

“I am Ducker Michelle.”

As I greeted them with a slightly trembling voice, the students responded with another round of enthusiastic applause. I took a deep breath, calming my nerves, and looked around at the students.

Various colors of hair and eyes caught my attention. Each student had a unique appearance. I skimmed through to see if anyone else had red hair like me, but as expected, there was none. The same goes for snow-white hair like Marie’s.

However, there was one color that stood out conspicuously.

‘...*Pink?*’

Even though I was far away, there was one color that caught my eye – the color of hair that was pink like cherry blossoms. Although their face was obscured by the person in

front of me, it stood out prominently.

In this world, there are wigs but no hair dye. Therefore, the color of that hair was natural like mine. I turned my gaze away from the student, thinking that this world was also a fantasy world. It might arouse needless suspicion if I stared too intently.

“Today, I will explain how my class will proceed. Earning extra points in my class is simple. You can either answer the questions I ask or ask me interesting questions. The class I will give you is about the fundamentals and essence of history.”

Elena, with her distinctive and rhythmic pronunciation, explained to the students about the upcoming class content. Similar to last year yet with different content, I also listened attentively.

The teaching assistant, me, wouldn't just be left idle like a folding screen, surely she'll find some way to utilize me. Bringing a teaching assistant treated halfway like a graduate student all the way to the lecture hall – there must be some use for it.

Just as Elena's explanation was about to conclude, one of the students raised their hand swiftly. It was a female student sitting in the front row.

“Professor, does that mean Teaching Assistant Isaac will just stand there quietly and watch?”

A truly audacious question. Well, it's possible to think that I'm not doing anything while just standing there. Even I entertained that thought for a moment.

The student and even I turned to Elena, seeking an answer. After hearing the student's question, Elena chuckled briefly, then smiled as she provided her response.

“It's definitely not true. Assistant Isaac will engage in discussions with you when interesting topics arise. If Assistant Isaac leads the debate, you will receive a significant bonus point. Of course, it's up to you, the students, to bring up those discussion-worthy topics.”

“Wow!”

“... ..”

So, that's how it is. The girl who asked the question sparkled with excitement, but I let out a bitter laugh. While some of this might be due to the course's nature, it seems like she's planning to assign scores under the pretext of debates to properly evaluate me. I

might have won Elena's favor with my eloquent writing, but she probably hasn't properly assessed my level of knowledge.

"In addition, Assistant Isaac will handle tasks such as exam supervision and various administrative duties. Speaking of which, Isaac?"

"Yes."

"While I explain, could you distribute the papers?"

"Of course."

Following Elena's instructions, I began distributing the papers that I had prepared in advance, one by one. Calling them papers was hardly different from saying they're lesson plans for the future.

I can't even begin to describe how much my hands suffered while jotting this down. Ironically, Cindy being away on a business trip meant that I single-handedly operated the magic quill.

What's fortunate is that Elena can use the duplication spell. If she were human, I would've had to do everything manually.

"Someone once said, 'History possesses the power to predict the future through a dialogue with the past.' Just as there is a cause if there is a result, history is no different. Due to specific causes, significant events erupt, much like..."

While distributing the papers, Elena's lecture continued. The students also focused on her, and when I handed out the papers, they received them with both hands.

As I was distributing guide papers to the students seated at the back, I found myself facing the same pink I had seen earlier. It wasn't a mistake—her hair, flowing down to her shoulders, was entirely pink.

However, just as my gaze was fixed on her hair, when I lowered my gaze slightly, I couldn't help but startle. It was because of her chest, which seemed to display a particularly noticeable presence.

I had already guessed that she was a female student, but when I saw her size, perhaps even bigger than Marie, maybe comparable to Cecily, I couldn't help but be surprised. Although she seemed to have adjusted her uniform somehow, she was shouting for the clothes to be more accommodating.

“... ..”

Did she feel my gaze on her? Somehow, the female student, who had been bowing her head for some reason, slowly lifted her head. Thanks to that, I could properly meet her eyes.

Cherry blossom-colored irises that seemed to match her pink hair. With a delicate appearance that suited her large eyes, she gave off a doll-like image.

However, there was one problem that overshadowed all of this—the eyes.

It's not an exaggeration to say that there was no life in her eyes. Like a dead fish, there was no trace of light in them, creating a gloomy and eerie atmosphere. I couldn't really tell if she was truly alive or not.

As I mentioned before, if her features looked doll-like and cute, now she was literally like a 'doll' with no signs of life. A doll that moved as if controlled by a person.

With this, I even felt a sense of impending doom, wondering if she might end her own life someday.

“...?”

The female student looked at me without taking the paper and smiled. Even so, she blinked without showing any strangeness.

I hurriedly composed myself and cautiously handed over the paper. However, the female student didn't even take the paper and continued to stare intensely at my face.

Feeling a bit uneasy and eerie, I cautiously spoke.

“Aren't you going to take it?”

“... ..”

Only after my careful question did the female student finally shift her gaze towards the paper. She then slowly reached out her hand and took the paper.

With relief washing over me as she accepted the paper, I took a step away.

“...Red.”

I tried to ignore the voice coming from behind. Somehow, it gave me shivers.

'The Roseberry family's characteristic is...'

I had heard it from Marie before the start of the school year. Cherry Blossom Roseberry, the one who always delivers fan letters to me, her family was known for having pink hair as a characteristic trait.

If the Michelle family was famous for their red hair, and the Marie's family, the Requillis, was known for their white hair, then the Roseberry family was recognized for having pink hair.

Furthermore, in the last fan letter I saw, Cherry mentioned that she would be enrolling in the academy soon. Thanks to that, I had thought we would meet again soon.

However, the atmosphere was far from what I had anticipated. The Cherry in the fan letter was lively, passionate, and full of vitality.

However, the female student I had just met was not like her. Along with a gloomy atmosphere, her eyes were dark, as if lifeless. Not human, literally like a doll.

'...Probably not.'

I finished distributing all the papers and returned to Elena's side. As I returned, I didn't forget to glance at the female student. She was staring at me with her dead eyes, directly and precisely. Without blinking her eyes even once, she was gazing at me fixedly, as if truly inhuman or something.

Feeling a sense of unease and even fear, I tried my best to avoid making eye contact. Her face was beautiful, yet lacked any vitality, making it difficult to even look at her.

"...So, what do all of you think about history? Depending on your answers, I'll give extra points."

In the meantime, Elena's long explanation came to an end, and the question time followed. As with any first class, at the beginning, there was hesitation, but one by one, hands went up to answer.

Satisfying Elena, good answers came forth, as well as somewhat odd ones, but still, just the act of answering seemed to be sufficient. Even the commoners who were being cautious showed courage and expressed their own thoughts.

However, amid all this, the girl with pink hair remained utterly focused on me without a trace of wavering. Elena also seemed to notice it vaguely, but she didn't point it out to

avoid embarrassment.

Of course, not being attentive from the very first class and daydreaming was quite difficult to bear. After all the students finished answering, Elena cleared her throat and brought up a different topic.

“Thank you for your great answers. Now, before I explain the most important cause and effect in history... I’ll ask you a question that you might find interesting. Until last year, there were only 50 literature students, but now, there are a staggering 150. The number of literature students has tripled in just a year. Does anyone know the reason?”

“... ..”

It seemed like there was no student eager to tackle the rather challenging question. Well, before even listening, I wondered why it was like this. Perhaps it was a natural reaction.

Elena, as if expecting this response, looked around the class and offered a hint.

“Let me give you a hint. There’s currently one book leaving the biggest cultural impact. If you connect it, it’ll be very easy.”

“... Are you talking about Xenon’s Biography?”

“It seems like that might be it.”

“What’s the connection with Xenon’s Biography?”

Despite the hint, the students only murmured among themselves, and no one raised their hand with confidence. While the students were debating, I glanced at that girl from earlier, who was now in my line of sight.

Her gaze was the same, but perhaps due to the mention of Xenon’s Biography, there was a faint spark in her eyes. However, it was so subtle that the difference was negligible.

Could that girl really be Cherry? The sense of dissonance was so strong that it was incredibly difficult to conclude.

“Since no one is giving an answer, I’ll pick someone. First...”

Elena paused for a moment and then shifted her gaze to the back. Towards the girl with pink hair who had been staring at me intently from before.

Following that, Elena stared directly at the female student and quietly called out her name.

“The girl with the pink hair over there?”

“...?”

“Would you try to answer?”

When she was pointed out, the pink-haired girl turned her gaze towards Elena. I inwardly sighed with relief, waiting for the pink-haired girl’s response.

“...Me?”

The pink-haired girl answered quietly, tilting her head slightly with a playful smile. She seemed unaware that she had been singled out, staring blankly at me. Elena, too, instinctively sensed that something was amiss and asked with a somewhat trembling voice.

“...Yes. By any chance, what is your name?”

“...”

Despite the follow-up question, the pink-haired girl didn’t answer right away. Not blinking her eyes once until the end, she grew increasingly eerie. Then, the pink-haired girl turned her head slightly and shifted her gaze back to me. And in a quiet voice devoid of any vitality, she uttered word by word.

“Cherry...”

“...”

If Cindy’s tired voice had been wavering.

“Cherry Blossom Raspberry...”

Cherry’s had absolutely no strength left, as if she were about to die.

Chapter 190: 2nd Grade (4)

After hearing the introduction of the pink-haired female student, Cherry, I lost my mind for a moment.

The atmosphere she had shown in the fan letters and the atmosphere she was exuding now were quite different. It was almost as if someone else had ghostwritten the letters, that's how mismatched they seemed. The Cherry from the fan letters was lively, full of energy, and radiated a girlish sensibility, but the Cherry before me was entirely the opposite.

Her voice was devoid of strength, as if she could die at any moment, and her gloomy demeanor seemed to seep into her surroundings, making anyone who looked at her feel uneasy. And on top of that, her bright cherry blossom-colored eyes looked as lifeless as coal.

What on earth could have happened to that child? Could something significant have occurred while exchanging letters? No matter how desperate a person is, they don't become like this female student named Cherry.

Even bedridden individuals at least sit still, yet Cherry was attending classes. As I mentioned before, she truly resembled a doll that had come to life.

“Roseberry? From the Roseberry Viscount family?”

“Looking at her hair, it seems quite certain, doesn't it?”

“But there's something... strange about the feeling. Is she unwell?”

When Cherry revealed her full name, the atmosphere inside the classroom began to stir. The Roseberry Viscount family held significant power even within the Minerva Empire. More than half of the philosophical works published in the Minerva Empire had originated from the Roseberry lineage.

It's possible that the students' murmuring was due to her background, but it seems that the atmosphere was unsettling, leading to an awkward response. Even if her face was

doll-like and pretty, if her gaze was lifeless, anyone would look at her strangely.

“Okay. Student Cherry. Can you answer my question by any chance?”

“... ..”

While the classroom was filled with murmurs, Elena asked Cherry the question once again. As she did, the murmurs from the students also stopped simultaneously, and numerous gazes turned toward Cherry.

I too waited for Cherry’s response while trying to grasp the situation, but she stared at me without blinking once. Upon this, Elena, perhaps displeased with Cherry’s attitude, slightly narrowed her eyes and spoke again.

“Student Cherry?”

“...Yes.”

“I hope you would say you don’t know if you don’t know.”

“...I don’t know.”

Cherry immediately responded to Elena’s words. Her voice still lacked any signs of life.

Elena also seemed to notice something odd about Cherry’s response, as she raised an eyebrow and made a puzzled expression. However, that too was temporary, as she instructed Cherry to take a seat.

Following her instructions, Cherry took a seat, but her gaze toward me remained unchanged. I wanted to ignore it, but the intensity of her gaze made it difficult to brush off.

“Are there any other students? Even if it’s not the right answer, if you clearly explain the cause and result, I will give extra points.”

“Here!”

“Great. What’s the student’s name?”

Elena continued the lecture after that. I stood by her side and quietly watched. Occasionally, a few students would unexpectedly ask me questions, but I was able to

answer them easily. Most of it was content from Professor Elena's lecture, so it was relatively straightforward.

"Originally, history was not just about recording past events and incidents. Everyone has their own history. If you observe in detail what someone has done in the past, you can anticipate what they will do in the future."

"Well then, Professor. Can I ask just one question?"

"Yes. What's your question?"

"Just now, there was a discussion about Xenon's Biography, so I'm talking about that. How do you predict Xenon's actions? Oh, of course, I mean the author, not the Xenon in the book."

"Well..."

In response to a student's question, Elena pressed her fist against her chin and appeared deeply lost in thought. I felt a bit embarrassed that my story had come up for no reason, but I remained silent. Honestly, I'm curious about her answer as well.

When talking with Elena, I focused on history rather than Xenon's Biography. As history predicts the future through conversations with the past, predicting the actions of a particular person was not that difficult either. Of course, that's when the subject's past is clear; if it's uncertain, predictions are almost impossible.

"Being honest, it's difficult. There are countless hypotheses about Xenon, but very little has come out clearly. Predicting actions based solely on someone's achievements is truly challenging."

"So, how should we interpret historical figures whose records have been lost? Sometimes their actions seem inconsistent."

"What's the student's name?"

"It's Michael Destora."

With no middle name, he's presumably of common birth. He gives a neat impression with his well-groomed appearance, although not extraordinarily handsome, he exuded a warm atmosphere.

Elena's smile showed she was pleased with Michael's question. After all, questions like that come from people with deep curiosity, and as a professor, she would naturally appreciate them.

"That's a truly excellent question, Michael. I'll give you extra credit for it."

"Really? Oh, thank you."

"As Michael's question implies, history often involves periods where records are lost. Why? Because history is recorded by humans, not gods. While history should always be objective, ironically, it's influenced by human subjectivity. Especially in cases where records have vanished..."

Elena began to explain with earnestness in response to Michael's question. I stood next to her, quietly listening to her explanations.

However, despite that, there was something bothering me the most – Cherry. I wondered if she was still observing me. When I shifted my gaze, she was staring fixedly.

I couldn't figure out what kind of interest I had sparked that made her look at me like that. Is having red hair really that fascinating?

'She won't follow me later, will she?'

Then, how should I react? I couldn't bring myself to ignore her, so I met her gaze.

Even though Cherry and I locked eyes, she didn't avoid my gaze at all. For no reason, I felt a bit uneasy and lowered my head, and only then did she show a reaction.

Blink

Slowly blinking her eyes. Her lips also subtly changed, with an expression that seemed to hold curiosity.

In response, I let out a bitter smile and turned my head toward Elena. For now, I intended to focus on the lecture.

I'll consider Cherry's situation gradually, but I won't postpone it. How could I ignore someone who had sent passionate fan letters to me?

Because of my unease, I can't help but be interested. I'll watch for a while, but if I see any ominous signs, I'll intervene immediately.

“Today’s lecture ends here. Great job, everyone. Isaac.”

“Great job, everyone. We’ll count on you in the future.”

As time passed, the lecture came to an end. Elena and I headed out of the classroom, listening to the enthusiastic applause from the students.

The hallway was bustling with students, perhaps from another class that had already finished. It’s different from last year, and my mood has become oddly complex in this changed situation.

“Definitely different from last year. Last year, when I went outside, it was completely empty.”

“That’s true.”

“But hey, do you happen to know the person with the pink hair?”

In response to Elena’s question, I shook my head from side to side. I wasn’t even surprised, as they had anticipated such a question coming.

“No, we’re meeting for the first time. I don’t understand why you’re asking.”

“Hmm... really? Her eyes seemed lifeless, and she looked anxious as if she had depression... Do you know anything about the Roseberry family?”

“Elena, you don’t know?”

“I’m an elf, you see. I might know about history, but I’m not particularly interested in how human society works. Besides, since you’re also a noble, you might know, don’t you think?”

“I really don’t know. From what I’ve heard, they’re a family centered around philosophy, but I don’t know much beyond that.”

It seems like she also sensed that something was off about the atmosphere surrounding Cherry. Upon hearing my response, Elena seemed to be deeply contemplating something. She looked at the front in silence and then shrugged her shoulders.

“Well, that person probably has a reason to be interested in you. Maybe she finds your red hair or golden eyes intriguing. Did you feel the gazes directed at your head earlier?”

“Rather than that, there seemed to be more gazes directed at you, Professor. After all, you’re an elf.”

“Is that so? Anyway, how was the lecture? Was it easy?”

“It was manageable, I suppose.”

“From now on, you just need to do that. There are classes for the 2nd year tomorrow, so today, read books in the lab and then go.”

“Understood...”

Twak-

“Ugh!”

In the moment I was about to respond, I couldn’t help but pause as something tightly grabbed my hair. Already, because of Mora, my forcibly grown hair would occasionally get caught on something. I thought it might be the same reason now, but it felt different. It was as if someone had grabbed the hair tied together as one.

With many people passing by in the hallway, it could have been a prank. I turned around, grimacing at the pain that felt like my scalp was being peeled off. If it was a prank, I planned to scold them with a sharp remark. However, as soon as I turned around, I couldn’t help but be terrified.

“...Huh?”

“... ..”

The first thing that caught my eye was the pink hair. Adding to that, as my gaze lowered, I saw the decayed pink irises like fermented tofu, the doll-like pretty face, and lastly, even the ample chest that the winter uniform couldn’t hide. Cherry Blossom Raspberry, it was her. With one hand holding my hair tied together, she was looking up at me. The deep, deep pupils felt incredibly frightening.

“What are you... Student Cherry?”

Elena also seemed momentarily puzzled by my hesitation. However, as soon as she saw the pink hair, her eyes widened. Even while doing so, Cherry did not release her hold on my hair and continued to gaze at me intently.

Momentarily taken aback by this, I called out to her with an affectionate voice, suppressing my confusion.

“...What’s the matter? Student Cherry.”

“...Red.”

Cherry blinked her eyes slowly and opened her mouth. There was no liveliness in her like a living person speaking; instead, it was as if a doll was uttering the words.

Red, she said. What could be the meaning behind saying “red”? Neither Elena nor I showed any reaction that could make sense of it.

During this time, Cherry stared at my face for a while and then shifted her gaze down toward my hair. Afterward, she gazed intently, blinked once, and then rummaged through the pocket of her school uniform with empty hands.

Muttering again, she took out a small glass bottle no larger than a finger. It was sealed with a cork, making it look quite convenient for preservation.

However, what was stored inside was enough to send chills down my spine and beyond. Because...

“Uh...”

Inside the glass bottle was a single, thin strand of hair. And that hair was distinctly red.

When I couldn’t wrap my head around why that was inside the glass bottle, Cherry opened her mouth with her peculiarly gloomy voice.

“It’s from the letter.”

“... ..”

“This is also red.”

Continuing, she alternated her gaze between my hair and the strand of hair stored inside the glass bottle, then smirked.

“Author Xenon?”

Chapter 191: 2nd Grade (5)

Throughout my past life and present one, there have been experiences that were so chilling I couldn't even scream. In a previous life, there were moments like coming home, turning on the lights, and having a cockroach fly right in front of my eyes, or my parents using my computer without permission, and so on.

In my current life, there was the incident where I, overflowing with clumsiness, showed Marie a steam locomotive drawing. Fortunately, I drew it like a child's artwork, so she didn't catch on. Well, looking back now, it didn't hold much significance, so I don't dwell on it. However, I vividly remembered how my face changed in real-time.

“Author Xenon?”

And now, back to the present, I felt my heart race once again. It was none other than the pink-haired girl in front of me, Cherry. I'm not sure why she's keeping my hair so carefully, but regardless, the crisis remained unchanged. As I've mentioned before, red hair is extremely rare, to the point where it's rarer than diamonds or mithril. There's a legend that it's a symbol of a fallen royal family from the past, but I don't know for sure.

“Why is the name Xenon suddenly coming up?”

“Well, I wonder?”

At the moment, appearing confused was the most important thing. It would be one thing if it were just Cherry and me, but Elena was also there, and students who've finished their classes are milling about in the corridor.

Responding with a tense demeanor to Elena's question, I looked at Cherry. She was still tilting her head, her eyes lacking any sign of life.

Earlier, did she mention that there was a strand of hair in the letter? Since I had been diligently replying to her fan letters, it's possible that a strand of hair accidentally got in there. However, keeping that strand of hair in a glass jar... that's definitely not normal. To say such a thing made me feel sorry for her, but it's clear that something is off mentally.

With a gulp, I asked Cherry, who still had my hair gripped in her hand, gently.

“Cherry, can I ask why you referred to me as Author Xenon?”

“Red.”

When I asked, Cherry briefly answered, showing me the strand of hair in the glass jar. There was only one strand, but it displayed a vivid shade of red.

Though her response was brief, I seemed to understand what she meant by “red.” Perhaps it was because the hair in the letter and my hair were the same color.

However, there’s one thing she didn’t notice from all of this. Pretending to contemplate for a moment, I questioned Cherry.

“You mentioned that this strand of hair appeared in the letter earlier, right?”

Nod, nod.

“In that case, did you conclude that I’m Xenon because my hair color matches this strand of hair?”

Nod, nod.

Cherry nodded in response to my consecutive questions. Even so, she still held onto my hair tightly. I looked at her expectant expression, then pointed to the hair she was holding onto and began to speak.

“However, Student Cherry. Just like you see, my hair isn’t long, is it? The hair here is short.”

“...Huh?”

That’s right. When I replied to Cherry before Mora played a prank on me, my hair length was ordinary. However, now my hair has grown long enough to reach my waist. Even for women, it takes at least a few months to grow hair that reaches the waist, so what about a guy?

Cherry seemed to realize that too, belatedly, as she blinked her eyes slowly and compared the length of my hair with the hair inside the vial.

“And there are other people with red hair in the world, besides me. Isn’t it too hasty to label me as Xenon just because our hair colors match?”

“...”

As I pointed this out in a faint voice, Cherry’s grip on my hair loosened. Her eyes, which hadn’t been lively to begin with, grew even darker. In that moment of her anxious reaction, as I was getting uneasy, Cherry lowered her head and murmured softly in a hesitant voice.

“...Or is it not?”

“...”

“Red isn’t really... there...”

Can a person be this eerie? Hearing Cherry’s murmur, I felt a sensation of dryness creeping into my mouth.”

If I weren’t Xenon, it might be understandable, but since it’s true, I couldn’t easily let it go. I have to find a way to detach Cherry, but it’s not easy to do so. However, fortunately, there was someone who could bring this situation to an end.

“Cherry, are you not going to the next class? Even if it’s just orientation, you should attend, shouldn’t you?”

It was Elena, who had been watching the situation from the side. She pushed up her glasses and spoke to Cherry in her characteristic professional tone.

Her words essentially meant not to be stubborn and to go to class. In response to her words, Cherry slowly lifted her head that had been lowered.

After exchanging glances with Elena for a while, Cherry opened her mouth with her unique melancholic voice.

“...Where are you?”

“Huh?”

“The office...”

Is she referring to the study room? It seems she’s trying to gather suspicions and then come find me.

After hearing the question, Elena pondered for a while and then looked at me with an expression that asked what I would do. I was extremely embarrassed, but it didn’t seem

like I could just refuse outright.

This female student named Cherry gave off a strong vibe that she would follow me even if I refused. She might even skip the next class and follow me.

I sighed deeply at the increasingly complicated situation, then opened my mouth with mixed feelings.

“I’ll draw you a map. Come over there. It’s a building called the History Hall.”

“Thank you...”

After expressing gratitude, I took out a notebook and a magic pen that she always carried with her. By the way, I wonder when she’ll let go of my hair. As I was thinking about this, I was drawing a map on the notebook when I felt a strong gaze from the front. Most likely Cherry, but it was strong, almost too strong.

As I lifted my head to meet her gaze, I couldn’t help but feel startled. Her hazy and unfocused gaze, like that of a fish, remained the same, but for some reason, she was smiling in a creepy way. Her gaze was fixed directly on my hand.

“That’s right...”

“Wh-what do you mean?”

She mumbled something and pointed her index finger towards the back of the notebook, not the page where I was drawing the map. Curious, I flipped the notebook over.

On the back of the notebook, there were simple and mundane records that had nothing to do with Xenon’s Biography, such as things I needed to do today or important appointments.

At first glance, it might be difficult to notice, but I couldn’t help but realize as I listened to Cherry’s following words.

“The handwriting...”

“... ..”

“It’s just like the letter...”

Just as people have different personalities, handwriting also varies. Even deliberately trying to forge handwriting requires a lot of effort.

And my handwriting is beautiful enough to earn praise from my mother. Since I had been writing novels by hand, I put effort into making my handwriting beautiful.

However, due to the handwriting, it made me feel stifled and congested. Perhaps it's because we've been exchanging letters, but contrary to her appearance, she seems to possess keen observational skills.

Gulp

I didn't respond to Cherry's confirmation and tore up the map, handing it to her. Upon receiving the map, she cradled it in her hands as if she had received a treasure.

Her expression had also noticeably changed – the corners of her mouth lifted slightly, and her cheeks had a faint blush. However, the lifeless gaze in her eyes was no different from before.

Though I shivered at the sensation that the doll was smiling, I tried my best not to show any reaction.

“You can come here. At least stay until 6 o'clock and finish your classes before you come. Got it?”

“Yes...”

“I'm not sure what misunderstandings student Cherry is having, but for now, I'll say it's not true. I'm not that person.”

Just in case, I continued to deny it until the end. It seemed like she had already halfway figured it out, but I had no choice but to try to shake it off as much as possible.

However, Cherry seemed to interpret my strong denial as affirmation and responded with a subdued smile. Despite her pretty appearance and an equally impressive figure as Cecily, those eyes were undermining everything.

Just as I was about to turn around with a somewhat uneasy feeling and take a step, suddenly—

Thud—

Cherry unexpectedly grabbed my right hand and brought me to a halt. While it was fortunate that she didn't grab my head, my body still jolted uncomfortably.

Finally, as I subtly squeezed my impression, I looked at her as if asking what was going on this time. A peculiar sensation could be felt in my right hand. The callus on the middle part of my right index finger. Isn't she touching the pen hook I had for a long time?

“Pen hook...”

“... ..”

“I have one too...”

Cherry spoke while showing her own right hand. Her fingers were long and slender like almonds, but the notable point was her middle finger. Just like me, there was a pen hook on the middle part of her index finger. Does she often write like in the letters?

However, Cherry's expression was unusual, more than anything else. Somehow trying to smile, yet the corners of her mouth trembled faintly. From that, you could vaguely sense that she was afraid of something.

I had a hunch that uttering cold words would be the last thing to do, considering how unstable she already seemed emotionally. I couldn't be unkind to someone who already seems mentally fragile, right? With a smile, I spoke in a gentle tone.

“Seeing that you also have a pen hook, Cherry, you must have put in a lot of effort.”

“Oh...”

“I might not know what kind of effort you're making, but if you keep working hard, you'll see results in the future.”

I'm not sure if my words became a warm comfort.

“So, please don't give up. Alright?”

A faint light returned to Cherry's eyes.

“Haah... Haah... Haa...”

Isaac and Elena had left, and Cherry, without attending the next class, rushed somewhere in a hurry.

With her pink hair fluttering in the wind, even running was difficult due to her unnecessarily large chest, but she still moved her two legs quietly.

Pedestrians passing by looked at her strangely, but they averted their gazes and went on their way. Eventually, Cherry arrived at the girls' dormitory.

“Haa... Haa...”

After entering the dormitory assigned on the day of the entrance ceremony, she closed the door tightly and caught her breath. Her ample chest rose and fell repeatedly, and her pink hair, due to the rushed run, was sticking from sweat.

After calming down somewhat, Cherry lifted her head calmly. With eyes that seemed brighter than before, she quickly looked around the room.

As if representing her unstable mental state, nothing was organized, and even the clothes she had worn when she entered the academy were scattered everywhere.

The bag containing casual clothes, not the uniform, was the same. After swallowing her saliva, she walked towards the bag.

Rustle, rustle...

After fervently digging through the bag as if possessed, what emerged at the end was a substantial amount of paper. However, its condition was far from ideal.

It seemed as though someone had torn it apart and then clumsily reassembled it with adhesive, like patching together shredded pieces. There were even traces of rough treading, as if someone had stepped on it with force.

Even at a glance, the damage was severe. The reassembly effort was impressive in itself, considering the state it was in.

“... ..”

For a while, Cherry gasped for breath as she stared at the paper intently. This paper wasn't just ordinary paper; it was in the format of a manuscript suitable for writing novels.

And within that manuscript, there was a story written. The damage was so extensive that reading it properly was difficult, but it was evident that someone's strenuous effort and affection were poured into it.

As evident as the fact that someone had ruthlessly torn apart that effort and affection.

[Instead of wasting time on this trash, you should read another book on philosophy.]

As she gazed at the manuscript, a male voice echoed in her mind. In response, her small body started trembling.

“Ugh... Sniff...”

With all the effort, affection, and even her heart brutally torn apart, the day that came to her mind caused tears to roll down Cherry’s eyes drop by drop.

Like expelling all the suppressed emotions within her, the droplets gathered into distinct streams and clung to her chin.

“Please...”

She muttered in a plea.

“Just say it... Please say it...”

She wept softly, resembling a person teetering at the edge of a precipice.

Chapter 192: Dream (1)

After sending off Cherry, I returned to the history hall. Since I had given her a map, I planned to wait while reading a book.

“Hey, are you really Xenon?”

Of course, it was natural for Elena to question whether I’m Xenon. It would be strange not to ask after Cherry had called me Xenon in front of her.

As soon as I heard her question, I hesitated before pulling a book from the shelf. When I looked at Elena, I could see a curious expression on her face.

“Do you also think so, Professor?”

“No? I just asked out of curiosity. I can’t understand why that girl suddenly called you Xenon.”

Elena replied, pushing up her glasses. Upon hearing her words, I couldn’t help but chuckle.

I didn’t know what Cherry had in mind, but her hasty actions put my secret at risk. First, I needed to question her, but it was also important to understand what she was thinking.

“If I really am Xenon, what will you do, Professor?”

“I would ask if you are a prophet or someone from the future. Or perhaps, I would request to work together on research. Even I didn’t know about forbidden magic until now, but you may know more about history.”

“Is that all?”

“Hey, I’m just an ordinary scholar, not a noble ruling a territory or a soldier protecting the country. Isn’t uncovering knowledge that people don’t know about a delightful task?”

It's certainly the mindset of a born scholar. Thanks to that inquisitive nature, I can freely come and go to Alvenheim's Sanctuary. Plus, the unique characteristics of the elves play a role as well. As mentioned before, elves spend their entire lives dedicated to their chosen profession and don't show much interest in anything else.

So, I don't think it will be a big problem to reveal to Elena that I am Xenon. She'll probably be pleased that she got an assistant, not a high-level slave.

From what I've seen of Elena so far, she's at least a born scholar and not a cunning manipulator.

"So, are you really Xenon?"

"No, it's not."

Of course, that doesn't mean I plan to reveal the secret. We haven't built enough trust for me to disclose it just yet.

"That's a shame. How are you going to explain it to her then?"

"Um..."

I heard her question and sat down on the couch, pondering. Cherry will arrive around 5 o'clock at the latest, since usually the orientation ends early.

Moreover, Cherry saw me completely as Xenon. It's also complicated to talk about it in the lab because Elena is there as well.

Well, judging from our recent conversation, I don't suspect that she'll do anything drastic upon learning my secret. Even if she does, she's likely to stop at the Arwen line.

"Well, I think it's best to start by clearing up any misunderstandings. And we can apologize for dragging you into this mess as well."

"When she arrives, go to a cafe to talk. I'd prefer not to discuss personal matters in the lab if possible."

"So, the lab is strictly for research purposes, is that right?"

"Yes, exactly."

She really does have the mindset of a true scholar. In fact, I nodded silently because I had similar plans in mind. It was when I opened the book I had chosen in advance to

wait for Cherry.

Knock knock knock

Someone quietly knocked on the lab door. Since there was still plenty of time before Cherry arrived, it seemed like someone else.

“Yes, come in.”

I closed the book I had opened and swung the door wide open.

“Who...?”

“... ..”

The first thing I saw as I opened the door was pink hair that seemed to smell like cherry blossoms. If there was pink hair, there was only one person it could be.

“...Student Cherry?”

“Oh, hello...”

Cherry Blossom Roseberry, it was her. She greeted me with her peculiar expression and her characteristic lifeless voice.

I wondered if I had misread the time, so I looked at the clock in the lab. It was exactly 3 o'clock. It was time for the orientation since it was the first day.

I couldn't help but wonder if she had skipped class and come here. I looked at Cherry with disbelief. She had a face that was devoid of energy, unlike before.

“Did you skip class?”

“...Yes.”

“No... Even so...”

As I was about to mutter in disbelief, I noticed that she was holding something preciously. Although they looked like ordinary pieces of paper on the surface, they were severely torn and glued back together as if they had been shredded and then pieced together with adhesive.

Despite that, seeing her holding onto it made me guess that it was something valuable to Cherry.

“What is that?”

“Ah, this, um...”

When I pointed at the paper and asked, Cherry trembled noticeably. Her trembling resembled a frightened squirrel.

I decided to change the subject, thinking that I might just waste time if I continued like this.

“...Let’s go to the café for now. Professor?”

“Yes. Since there are no classes today, go to the café and take a break.”

“Thank you. Cherry, could you come with me for a moment?”

“Yes...”

After receiving permission from Elena, Cherry and I took steps together, just like ducks.

Grab

“...Red.”

“... ..”

But why has this one been holding onto my hair since earlier? According to Marie and Cecily, they said that they like my hair better than theirs and want to keep touching it, but maybe that’s the reason.

Normally, I’d say, “What are you doing?” and want to scold them, because it’s impolite to touch someone else’s hair. But since Cherry’s mental state was far from normal, I thought about saying it in the cafe.

In the end, Cherry followed me while holding onto my tied-up hair, and I let out a sigh as we moved to the cafe I favored.

Even though passersby were giving us strange looks, I ignored them neatly. I’ve received those kinds of looks often enough that it doesn’t bother me anymore.

Moreover, with bright red and pink hair, people were bound to look. So, I just went past it.

“Welcome.”

“Please give me a private room.”

“Of course.”

After arriving at the cafe, I ordered coffee and went into a private room. Cherry hesitated outside the cafe for a moment, then quickly followed inside.

Finally, in a situation where only the two of us were left, I continued to gaze at Cherry, who was holding a piece of paper to her chest. Even though she had just taken the plunge, she seemed to lack the courage to move one step further, hesitating and wavering. Occasionally lifting her head that had dropped down, I would meet her eyes briefly, but that was the extent of it.

“The drinks you ordered are ready.”

“Thank you.”

Without saying a word to each other, we sat in silence, and before we knew it, the coffee we had ordered arrived. I took a sip of the sweet cappuccino and smiled faintly as I glanced at Cherry.

She alternated her gaze between the coffee in front of her and me. When I finally extended her hand as if to say it was okay to drink, she did so slowly. Even as she reached out her hand, she held the paper tightly in her grasp.

“Is it good?”

“...Yes.”

Cherry nodded slightly in response to my question. It was fortunate that it tasted good, but we still hadn't entered into a proper conversation.

I briefly smiled, took another sip of my cappuccino, and carefully placed the coffee cup back down. The clinking sound echoed loudly in the otherwise silent private room.

Following that, I supported my chin with both hands, trying to ease Cherry's tension, and asked her the question.

“So, what is it you want to say to me? Are you going to show me that piece of paper?”

“...Are you Xenon, the writer?”

Setting aside the preamble, Cherry raised her head, and with curiosity in her eyes, she asked me.

The unique dead eyes were eerie, but her appearance itself was so glamorous that I barely managed to answer her question. It's unreasonable to completely trust someone on the first meeting.

“Well, if I were Xenon, what would you do? Are you planning to inform the Cherry Student's family?”

“Family...”

As soon as the keyword ‘family’ was mentioned, Cherry's gaze darkened even more. To top it off, she slowly lowered her head like a severed puppet.

I realized one thing as I watched her. The word ‘family’ was like a minefield to Cherry. Many nobles dislike their own families to some extent, but it's not an easy thing to exhibit such an extreme reaction as Cherry did.

I quickly noticed that there were family-related issues with her and hastened to change the subject.

“Well, it's just a possibility, so don't take it too seriously. So, if I really were Xenon, what would you do?”

“...Is it really true?”

Fortunately, Cherry, who had somewhat recovered, slowly raised her lowered head and asked. Evidence had appeared in various places, but she seemed unable to convince herself completely.

I sighed deeply inside and thought about what to do. Regardless of the backstory, Cherry intensely disliked her own family. I could easily deduce that from her reaction just now.

So, even if I reveal that I'm Xenon, there's very little chance she'll inform her family. Given her current mental state, it doesn't seem like she'll blurt it out recklessly either. But I can't openly admit it either. First, I need to ascertain whether she's someone I can trust.

“Cherry, you mentioned that red hair was mentioned in the letter, right? And that the handwriting in the letter matches mine.”

“...Yes.”

“Even though that alone could serve as evidence, it’s still not enough.”

“You’re not denying it...”

To Cherry’s quiet yet sharp observation, I could only muster a smile. I only meant for her to make her own judgment. Even if I’m partially exposed, I have reliable allies by my side. I’m engaged to Marie, the daughter of the Requilis family, and I even have a friendly relationship with Rina.

Cherry might not blurt things out recklessly, but her family could pressure her to do so. By observing her condition, I can roughly guess what kind of place the Roseberry family is.

“That’s just Cherry’s judgment, isn’t it? I haven’t said anything, have I?”

“Th-then...”

In response to my evasive answer, Cherry frantically rummaged through her belongings. She briefly fidgeted with the paper in her hands, then discreetly extended it towards me with a polite gesture.

The traces torn here and there were bad enough, but there were even footprints on it, quite literally like a mop. I stared at the crumpled bundle of paper that Cherry cautiously handed to me, as if asking, “What is this?” However, her head was bowed deeply, and her expression was unreadable.

Unable to do otherwise, I accepted the paper. It was not just any paper but a manuscript paper, heavily damaged. On the manuscript paper were writings, done in Cherry’s distinctive warm handwriting.

[Red Sunset Once Again.]

What is this? Such an emotional title. Although the writing was a bit damaged due to being glued together like a puzzle, the title was clear enough for me to see.

I blinked my eyes and stared at the title for a moment, then turned my gaze to Cherry across from me. She still had her head bowed and her hands were clasped between her

thighs.

“Could it be that Cherry wrote this?”

She nodded slowly in response to my question. For a moment, I couldn't help but make a surprised expression, then I shifted my gaze towards the manuscript paper.

It was torn and crudely patched up, making it a bit difficult to read, but not impossible. However, by looking at the clear shoeprints on the first page, I could guess the circumstances of how this came to be. It was undoubtedly a matter deeply related to her family.

The act of trampling on the manuscript of an aspiring novelist was not only an assault on their self-esteem but also a potential destruction of their dreams. Cherry's spirit could certainly collapse under such pressure.

'She comes from a philosophical family...'

Why did the Roseberry family press Cherry so hard, to the point of pushing her to the brink? With a heavy heart, I slowly read through the novel.

At first, it began with sentences filled with warm emotions, just as the title suggested. As I had seen in her letters, Cherry's distinctive, sweet, and warm writing style left a strong impression.

However, there was one standout element above all else...

'...What? A time travel story?'

Cherry's work, “Red Sunset,” surprisingly turned out to be a time-travel story. Despite being a cliché in my past life, there was no such genre in this world. The very concept alone showcased Cherry's uniqueness.

Furthermore, with a writing style that suited romance well, she made the female protagonist more multidimensional. Especially, the psychological descriptions were exceptionally well-crafted, drawing one in completely.

But that's not all. Being from a philosophical family, she included various such elements. The thought-provoking themes were clearly defined, making the characters' personalities even stronger.

Lastly, the highlight of the romance novel was the introduction and meeting of the male protagonist. Although the development was a bit rushed, there was one thing that was certain.

“Um... Cherry?”

“Yes, yes?”

Cherry’s work, Red Sunset Once Again.

“Is there no next volume?”

It was never a work that could be trampled on by anyone.

“... ..”

Cherry momentarily had a bewildered expression upon hearing my words. She seemed unable to discern whether what she had heard was true or false. In an effort to give her assurance, I pointed at the manuscript paper and sincerely said,.

“This is really interesting? Are you sure Cherry wrote it?”

“... ..”

“Um...”

“Eheuk...”

Just as I was about to call her name again, tears flowed down Cherry’s pink eyes like a faucet, without a single blink, making me feel a bit uneasy.

“Sniff... Sniff...”

“... ..”

I remained momentarily perplexed, waiting silently until Cherry’s tears stopped.

“I’m relieved... it’s...”

“... ..”

“It wasn’t trampled on... it wasn’t trampled.”

Although her face was a mess from shedding tears, Cherry's expression was much better than before.

Chapter 193: Dream (2)

I waited until Cherry stopped crying. Tears streamed down her cheeks as if a faucet had broken, and they formed droplets on her chin.

Yet, despite it all, she was smiling as if she had finally been acknowledged. She looked noticeably different from before, when she had no life in her.

“Do you feel better?”

“Hick... Yes...”

She hadn't cried enough yet. I smiled faintly as I wiped her tears away.

I tried to wipe the tears away, but they showed no signs of stopping.

As I fumbled through my pocket, considering giving her a handkerchief like I have Adelia, Cherry asked me in a choked voice.

“Did you really... hick! Did you really find it... fun?”

“Yeah. It was really fun. Coming back from the future to change the tragedies you've experienced to create a better future. How did you come about that idea?”

As mentioned earlier, time travel is a common cliché. It's a popular setting among writers, given its high demand. However, in this world, the cliché of time travel itself doesn't exist. Anyone would want to go back to the past to correct their mistakes, but the thought of writing a novel based on that premise wouldn't even cross their minds.

Cherry listened to my question, blinked a few times, and then lowered her hands. Tears welled up in her eyes, her nose turned as red as a strawberry.

Nevertheless, some vitality returned to her eyes, which had previously seemed to have rotted away, as if she had expelled all the suppressed feelings within her. Her cherry blossom-colored eyes appeared even clearer now.

“Sob... Because of Writer Xenon...”

“Me?”

“Yes... Sniff! They said that you came from the future...”

She hiccupped intermittently as if her insides were surprised. I looked at her response with an expression of wonder.

After the contamination of the World Tree roots, the world thought of me as a prophet or a regressor due to some of the truths that emerged. Later, due to a slip of Luminous’s tongue, I was on the verge of being canonized as a saint.

When ordinary people heard the story, they came up with all sorts of conjectures and assumptions, but they didn’t use it as material like Cherry did. I’m not sure if I can call this a change of perspective.

“I see. That’s impressive.”

“Hic... Th-thank you...”

“Hmm...”

I lowered my head and watched Cherry, who expressed her gratitude, then shifted my gaze to the manuscript. Honestly, if I publish her book as it is, it will be a huge hit.

Especially compared to Xenon’s Biography, which is read by both men and women, Cherry’s book, Red Sunset Once Again, will likely be mainly read by women. Unlike Xenon’s Biography, Red Sunset was undoubtedly a regression story.

Typically, in regression stories, the focus naturally goes to the regressor, and the flow of the story revolves around the regressor. Naturally, the spotlight would be on the female protagonist.

Still, it should sell well because the target audience was certain. Romance novels have been a successful genre even before the release of Xenon’s Biography. Even if the context is a bit complicated, as long as they can understand the story, the demand would be certain.

Perhaps it will be popular among noblewomen. As for men... I don’t really know. Men in this world tend to have fixed stereotypes that suit the era.

Adventure stories overflowing with dreams and hope, like Xenon's Biography, may be enjoyable to read, but romance stories bordering on politics may seem boring. Of course, the novelty of being a regression novel might pique some interest, but that's about it. Instead, they'll pretend to read it just to fit into noblewomen's conversations. Trends can be a sensitive topic among the aristocracy.

I looked at the manuscript paper that had been barely salvaged after being completely messed up, then raised my head and glanced at Cherry. Even though some life had returned to her pink eyes, she still had a hunched posture and a somewhat sulky demeanor.

Judging from her reaction when I mentioned the family and the shoeprints clearly imprinted on the manuscript paper, I could roughly guess the situation.

"Student Cherry."

"...Cherry."

"Yes?"

"Please call me... Cherry..."

Encouraged by my compliment, she asked with her characteristic gloomy voice. I momentarily made a puzzled expression, but soon nodded my head.

I too find it easier to talk to each other casually. She already seems convinced that I'm Xenon, and there's no need for formality in a private setting.

"Got it. Cherry."

"Yes..."

"Do you want to publish this as a book by any chance?"

Cherry hesitated for a moment at my straightforward question before nodding slowly.

"But you were refused in your family, right?"

"...Yes."

Cherry started trembling again when I mentioned her family. I wondered how severe her trauma was to elicit such a reaction. I wanted to avoid mentioning it if possible, but this

manuscript was closely related to her family. Even if we published it secretly as a book, someone might still notice.

“Has anyone actually read this manuscript properly?”

“...No.”

“What?”

Cherry reluctantly opened her mouth with a trembling voice.

“Only you... have read it...”

“Only me? Even if they aren’t your parents, you can show it to someone close to you, right?”

“... ..”

When I asked in confusion, Cherry just clutched her school uniform skirt tightly with both hands and didn’t respond at all.

I could roughly guess that from looking at that. It seemed like the Roseberry family must have taken a strong stance.

In the worst case scenario, they might have even dragged away anyone who had read Cherry’s novel with some ridiculous excuse. I mentioned it before, but this place was a world where social class was clearly defined.

For those around me, they were all good people, but usually for nobles, things like human rights were practically non-existent.

“...yes.”

“Yeah?”

“Other people read my writing... they were all kicked out... and even tried to prevent me from writing...”

Do such families even exist? I listened to Cherry’s response, which she struggled to get out, and was more puzzled than shocked.

It’s amazing that a family like that hasn’t completely ruined her. It’s fortunate that she hasn’t committed suicide.

When people have a firm dream, they tend to hold bright beliefs and hopes in their hearts. Even if there are trials along the way, as long as a small flame remains, they don't give up and keep moving forward.

But the Roseberry family even trampled on that small flame. Like the footprints on a manuscript page.

'I'm really lucky to have been born like this.'

If I had been born into the Roseberry family, Xenon's Biography might not have been born. I once again express my gratitude to the gods who allowed me to be born into the Michelle family.

I decided that I needed to do something when I saw Cherry's eyes losing light once again.

If time continues to pass like this, she might end up taking her own life soon. Perhaps even grabbing my hair was born out of desperation.

If I had denied her, there was a high chance I would never have seen her again. Meeting her even now was practically luck, given the precariousness of the situation.

"...Cherry."

"Yes..."

"No one has read this manuscript, right?"

I asked to confirm, and Cherry nodded her head up and down. That meant, in other words, the people claiming to be Cherry's parents not only hadn't read her novel but had trampled on it and torn it to shreds just because.

Anyone who destroys their child's dreams instead of supporting them was not fit to be called a parent. At the very least, they were a presence that should not be called a parent.

I carefully placed the manuscript on the table and leaned forward slightly, asking Cherry.

"Can I help you?"

"... .."

“If you want, I can secretly submit the manuscript to a publisher for you. But you’ll have to rewrite it since it’s in such bad shape. Do you have anyone in the academy monitoring you?”

Shake shake

Cherry shook her head from side to side. Thankfully, it seemed that there were no academy monitors assigned.

Perhaps they shattered her hopes into an irreparable state, thinking that she wouldn’t indulge in pointless thoughts. Trash remains the same, whichever way you look at it.

“Can you rewrite it and show it to me again? In fact, the writing is good, but the development feels too rushed. I wish you could provide a clearer explanation of this world and, furthermore, delve into what the protagonist experienced in the past in more detail. While the overall events are fine, what happened between people might be crucial.”

“... ..”

As I offered various pieces of advice, Cherry’s expression changed. The gloomy atmosphere disappeared completely, replaced by curiosity and vitality.

It was a fresh experience for her to have someone offer advice on her novel. I, too, felt a bit excited, as our shared passion drew us closer.

“And there’s one thing you should pay special attention to here. The future the protagonist experienced and the future ahead might not be exactly the same. The actions the protagonist took to prepare for the future might actually lead to different outcomes. Or, on the contrary, they might expedite certain results.”

“I think I understand what you mean.”

“Is that so?”

As the conversation continued, hope began to shine in Cherry’s eyes. The darkness receded, and the somber atmosphere lightened slightly. It was a transition from being a “doll” to becoming a “person” once again.

It seems that the Roseberry family was truly a sinister place to ruthlessly trample on someone who shines so beautifully like this.

“Cherry.”

“...Yes.”

“I mentioned it earlier, but if you need help, tell me. I don’t know how much help I can offer, but I’ll help you as much as I can, as long as you reach out.”

“... ..”

Cherry listened to those words, then looked at me with a vacant expression. Her lips trembled for a moment, then her mouth curled up. It was a clearly visible smile to anyone. However, her eyes gradually welled up with tears, and tears began to flow down her cheeks once again.

Her lips were upturned, but there were tears streaming down her eyes. Crying and smiling wasn’t a pretty sight, but I quietly watched, understanding that it represented her emotions.

“Th... thank you...”

“Yeah. If you ever face difficult times in the future, talk to me. Don’t cry. Your pretty face will get all messed up.”

“Hic...”

Cherry, who hastily wiped away tears upon hearing my words, showed no signs of stopping. It seemed like the pent-up frustration still lingered within her. I checked the time while she shed tears. I had wasted a considerable amount of time reading the manuscript, and it was already almost 5 o’clock.

It’s about time to meet my acquaintances soon. But I can’t just leave Cherry like this, so I quietly sat down in my seat.

“There seems to be a lot on your mind.”

“...I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have shown myself like this.”

“No, no. It’s okay. Sometimes it’s not a bad thing to cry and let it all out. Cherry, are you going straight back to your accommodation?”

“What about Author Xenon?”

Cherry asked a question in return without answering my question. I should change the way I address him first.

“From now on, don’t call me Author Xenon, call me Assistant Isaac. And I have other plans as well.”

“Other plans?”

“Yeah, plans. I need to meet some friends. I also have a girlfriend.”

“Girlfriend...”

What’s with this reaction again? As soon as I mentioned having a girlfriend, Cherry’s eyes turned dark. It was clear that his vitality had returned just a moment ago, but it seemed like a switch had been turned off, making him dark again.

Slightly taken aback by this, Cherry mumbled something and then asked in a quiet voice.

“... You do?”

“Yeah?”

“Like in the newspapers... a promised future...”

“Oh... yeah. We’re even engaged.”

“I see...”

The familiar tense atmosphere returned. I felt uneasy and cautiously got up from my seat.

“I’ll take care of the bill, so you can go back to the dorm. You missed class, so you’ll be quite busy starting next week.”

“... Okay.”

“Then whenever you have a hard time, come to the lab. I’ll be in the lab most of the time, so you understand, right?”

“I...”

“Yes?”

What did she want to say? Cherry hesitated, as if trying to find the right words.

Finally, she lowered her head and whispered softly, as if ants were passing by.

“No, it’s nothing...”

“Cherry?”

Even when I asked, Cherry’s answer remained the same.

“...It’s nothing.”

Isaac left first for the appointment. However, Cherry remained in the private room even after he had gone. An employee who noticed something strange in the middle knocked and came in, but because the atmosphere was too serious, they turned back. The employee thought that Cherry had simply confessed to Isaac and been rejected, but the reality was slightly different.

‘He admitted it...’

She was secretly pleased. After reading his manuscript, Isaac asked when the next volume would be written and even gave the highest praise by saying it was really interesting. When she heard that praise, it felt like all the pent-up resentment inside her was melting away, replaced by a joy that soared to the sky.

The dreams and hopes that had been trampled upon and torn to pieces in the family had been acknowledged as interesting by Xenon (Isaac), who was now acclaimed as the best writer.

How could she describe this feeling? If she hadn’t met him or if she hadn’t been acknowledged, she would have hung herself in her room. It was the first time she had felt the feeling of living like this since she was born. She had fallen into the abyss of despair once but thanks to Isaac, she felt it even more keenly now.

‘But my parents...’

They would never acknowledge it. Rather than wasting time on such trash, they would tell her to read another philosophy book. They were people who envied the lack of interest in their philosophical books due to Xenon’s Biography.

She vividly realized how “jealousy” could make people so ugly. But Isaac was different. He not only acknowledged her but also gave various advice and suggested her

future path. He treated her as a person, not as a doll, and watered the growing tree of dreams with sweet water.

The sweet sensation that swept over her chest, like having a piece of sweet candy after eating nothing but bitterness, revitalized Cherry. However, it was not enough. Although the sweetness lingered in her mouth, candy wasn't meant to fill her stomach, so it was inevitably lacking.

'More... More...'

She wanted attention. She wanted recognition. She wanted praise. She wanted love.

His every word was as sweet as candy, providing new stimulation and pleasure. She had never felt this way before in her life.

Cherry gazed silently at the spot where Isaac had left. It was the place where he had departed to meet his acquaintances and his fiancée. Was there any way to keep him in that spot? If that were the case, they could have longer conversations and more time to look into each other's eyes.

Silently, she rose from her seat and slowly moved to the opposite side. She gently swept her hand over the seat where Isaac had just been. There was still warmth left behind from his recent departure. Cherry relished the warmth on her hand before bringing it to her face.

“Sigh... Ah...”

As she closed her eyes and inhaled the scent, a feeling of something filling her chest washed over her. For her, even such a simple act was akin to inhaling drugs, as her previously unstable mental state, battered by her family, synergized with her physical changes.

Due to rough excitement, her heart pounded as if it were about to burst, and her lower abdomen tingled as if it had been electrified. As a result of that stimulation, she even felt something dampening.

Cherry opened her eyes that she had closed while lowering her gaze. Isaac's scent still lingered on that leather.

Swallowing hard, she cleared her throat. Flames of passion flickered in her pinkish eyes.

Fortunately, no one was coming into the private room at the moment. Even if someone did enter, they would knock, so she didn't have to worry about being caught.

How much time had passed since then?

“Goodbye~”

“... ..”

It was only after a long time that Cherry finally emerged from the private room.

Her face was subtly flushed, and her school uniform was disheveled, but the staff didn't seem to notice.

However, when they entered the private room to clean it, they noticed something strange.

“...What's this smell?”

The private room was filled with the scent of cherry blossoms.

Translators note:

Isaac just can't get a girl with vanilla tastes now can he.

Chapter 194: Bad Luck (1)

Some people might wonder if I wasn't trying to hide my identity. Or that I easily admitted it with such evidence.

Honestly, I originally intended to persist until the end. I was tired of the situation getting complicated for no reason. But it seemed that Cherry's mental state was more serious than I thought, so I had no choice but to reveal it discreetly, considering it as saving one person. It wasn't an empty statement, if I had pretended not to know back then, she might have been discovered in our dorm as a lifeless body.

If that had happened, I would have carried guilt for the rest of my life. Trauma from my past life of losing parents in a single day was already enough.

'I should gradually tell others about it.'

After the counseling that was not counseling with Cherry ended, my daily routine remained the same.

After having a simple meal with acquaintances, I would go on a date with Marie or Cecily. After the date, depending on our circumstances, we would either return to our respective rooms or head to an inn. The lessons that followed the next day and the day after that continued just like the first day. This was true for the second year as well.

The repeating classes could have become slightly boring, but I was too busy to even notice. Instead, there were faces I hadn't seen in a long time.

“Isaac? Are you really Isaac?”

With dark brown hair, eyes, a sharp jawline, and overall a sharp and cold image, he was a cool handsome man.

I met Edin Mavi Signer, the eldest son of Count Signer, whom I had a connection with during the freshman event.

Naturally, we could only meet briefly after all the classes were over. Elena didn't say anything, knowing that today's classes had come to an end.

“Although I'm a bit different from the welcome party, it's still Isaac.”

“Yeah. You've changed a lot from back then. I've seen someone with red hair occasionally, but I never thought it was you.”

As I shrugged in response, Edin looked me up and down in amazement. Back during the freshman event, I was barely over 170 cm tall, but now I had easily surpassed 180 cm. My physique had developed nicely, and after consistent exercise, my muscles had become firm.

Unlike a year ago when I was extremely frail, my father's genes had manifested themselves rather late, which contributed to the change. Edin had grown taller and his shoulders had broadened slightly in the past year, but he hadn't undergone as dramatic a transformation as I had.

“What's with the hair? It's gotten really long since I last saw you. Were you always a fast grower?”

“Yeah, something like that. Anyway, nothing major happened to you?”

“Well, not really. But you're already performing your duties as an assistant?”

“The professor is giving me the opportunity. Have you been reading books lately?”

“Of course.”

Edin and I could engage in various conversations. We both knew that we were avid readers, so our conversations never ran dry. Occasionally, people who seemed to be Edin's friends would approach, but as soon as they realized the topic was related to books, they quickly moved away.

“What's your sister up to these days? Is she still performing her assistant duties?”

“No, she went to take the Navy Knight Order entrance test. It's about time for her to come back...”

Nicole said it would take about a month, so she should be back soon. She'll probably come back wearing the Navy Knights uniform that they provide. I'm really curious about

the Navy Knights' uniforms, I heard they're supposed to be quite stylish. Maybe she'll visit the mansion first to see our parents before coming to the academy.

"Navy Knights... Speaking of which, didn't your brother also join the Navy Knights?"

"Yeah, he did. I don't have the talent for it, though."

"From what I can see, it doesn't seem like you're completely untalented. With a physique like yours, you could certainly have potential with a bit of exercise."

"Enough about that. I'm just exercising, that's all."

In reality, I had been intensifying my physical training lately. It was not just for Marie but also for Cecily, it was more of a necessity than a choice. Moreover, since I couldn't receive divine power from Mora, I had no choice but to rely on my physical strength. I planned to increase my basic stamina as it seemed like I was depending too much on Luminous for divine power. I just had to hold out until then, and I planned to receive plenty of divine power this weekend.

"You make a good point. By the way, there have been rumors that you're dating Lady Marie. Is that true?"

"It is true, but did that rumor really spread to the department of martial arts? too?"

"Well, she's the heir to the only duke in the Minerva Empire, so I guess it's not surprising. But it turned out it's true."

Eddie looked at me with an amazed expression, then nodded to himself as if he understood.

"I guess with your looks, it's not impossible."

"Don't only talk about others. How about you? Do you have a girlfriend?"

"I don't have the luxury for that. How about you? I'm a little curious about how you started dating."

"Well..."

Instead of answering immediately, I glanced around. A few people seemed to be pretending not to listen but were actually eavesdropping as the story of Minerva Empire's only Duke heir and a common baron's son unfolded. It seemed that the

difference in our social status made it an interesting topic even for those who didn't want to hear about it.

“We just got together because we liked each other. I can't explain it any other way.”

“Oh, I see...”

“I'll stop here. I don't want to complicate things for no reason. Can you tell me your story, or do you have any interesting rumors from the department of martial arts?”

When I cut off the conversation abruptly, Edin looked disappointed for a moment but then brought up a topic that piqued my interest.

“Oh, by the way, have you heard about this? A transfer student has come from the Ters Kingdom's academy. But the interesting part is that this transfer student is a member of the royal family.”

“What? What are you talking about... Oh.”

Come to think of it, I vaguely remembered hearing about it. It was when I had revealed Michelle territory as Xenon's birthplace after the exhibition. There was a rumor that, upon hearing this, the Ters Kingdom had decided to send one of the royal family members to Halo Academy in response.

Since the Crown Prince, Leort, the Princess, and Rina were attending Halo Academy, their intentions were clearly visible. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the Kingdom of Ters, it was an inevitable choice.

“They came as a graduate student?”

“Yeah. I heard she graduated already and came here as a teaching assistant. Rumor has it she's the Second Princess.”

“The Second Princess...”

I met the Ters royal family during the exhibition. From what I heard, the First Princess had already married and moved to another country, leaving only one choice.

A cold beauty with sky-blue hair and sky-blue eyes like Adelia, Hiriya Dukeard von Kurchers.

Considering she wore a uniform instead of a dress at the exhibition, it was evident that she aspired to become a knight. She must be a student at the academy, given her age is

likely younger than Adelia's.

'Not too thrilled about it...'

At the time, her attitude and gaze toward Adelia were far from friendly, even if it was less hostile than towards the Crown Prince. The expression she showed Adelia could be described as openly hostile.

Furthermore, her younger sister, Lara, even tried to approach Adelia. As someone who witnessed the situation firsthand, I couldn't possibly view it in a positive light.

"...Is that so? That's quite an interesting rumor. Since she's a teaching assistant, she must be at the practical training by now, right?"

"Maybe? I don't really know much about practical training. Why, do you want to see her?"

"No."

I had no reason to go see that person, and I had no intention of doing so. I just hoped to avoid running into her.

On the weekend, I had plans to visit the training grounds to exercise and also watch some sparring. However, it seems better to postpone it for a while. If I were an assistant instructor, I'd be visiting the training grounds every weekend to teach the students.

Above all, I need to inform Adelia about this. She probably knows nothing about it, so if we happen to run into each other, she might panic like she did back then.

"For now, I'll go first. It was nice meeting you after a long time."

"Yeah, take care."

The current time is 3 PM. Fortunately, I have some time to spare, so meeting Adelia in the middle of it shouldn't be a problem. After exchanging greetings with Edin, I left the lecture hall. As soon as I stepped outside, I could feel numerous eyes on me. The reason, of course, is my conspicuous red hair.

While the Literary Arts building may be used to it, this is the first time for the Martial arts building, so students were looking at me with curious eyes.

'The Martial arts building definitely has more people.'

The place where I attended theory classes isn't much different from the Literary Arts building. The essence of the department of martial arts lies not in theory classes but in practical sessions, so it's relatively calm.

However, due to the fundamental difference in the number of people, it was bustling. Above all, almost everyone has a formidable physique. There are male students with muscles like my father, and even female students easily exceed 170 cm. My physique wasn't small either, but just looking at them made me feel small and inadequate.

I felt like I might get into an argument for no reason, so I quickly changed my direction. If I had to live in a place like this, I'd feel suffocated. I should consider myself extremely fortunate to be a Literary Arts student.

'How did Dave and Nicole perform their duties as assistants in a place like this?'

It's the moment when I suddenly feel that my older brother and sister are amazing. Adelia was the same. It's not any kind of animal kingdom, but the energy coming from the students felt a bit fierce. Given their vigorous age and the physical training they've been doing since they were young, there must have been many incidents.

Feeling a bit hurried, I quickened my steps. Before long, just as I was about to leave the building...

"Hey."

For some reason, a familiar deep and unique voice pierced my ears. It was mature but distinctly stiff.

With a sense of wonder, I turned around, and my gaze met a pair of indifferent sky-blue eyes. To top it off, the sky-blue hair tied up with a ponytail.

The person I had just talked to, Hiriya, called me with his characteristic stoic expression.

"...Me?"

Why did this person call me again? When I asked in surprise, Hiriya stared at my face without saying a word.

Then, he slightly tilted his head and mumbled while tapping his chin.

“Red hair, definitely... Could you possibly be his brother? You two look too similar for that...”

“...”

“Do you happen to have a twin brother? He’s shorter than you and has shorter hair.”

“No, I’m Isaac.”

It seems like it caught Hiriya’s attention because of the red hair that stands out all by itself. That damn red hair of mine.

But even though she was an assistant, I couldn’t figure out why she was in the building for theory classes. While I was pondering this, Hiriya spoke to me with an amazed expression.

“Is it really you? You’ve changed so much from the exhibition.”

“It’s just part of growing up.”

“Hmm... I see. It suits you in a way, despite looking like a girl with long hair.”

With that comment, Hiriya walked past me. I watched his back with a slightly puzzled expression.

Even if she’s a princess of the Ters kingdom, her personality... How should I put it? She seemed quite bossy. She only says what she wants to say and then leaves. Does she really need to add the term “like a girl” to it?

‘Is Adelia the only sane one among the Ters royal family?’

The king of Ters, Friedrich, was widely known as a great romanticist, but looking at Adelia, that doesn’t seem to be the case. In many ways, Hiriya has a lot of sharp edges. If we only consider this, then Leort and Rina, who only pressure others, might seem like the reasonable ones. In reality, the two siblings were a bit hasty, but they were quite decent people even now, maintaining a friendly relationship between themselves.

‘Someday, I should definitely write in the book.’

The story of an abandoned royal family’s illegitimate child seeking revenge and overthrowing the kingdom was really great. Really excellent.

However, I planned to write it in my next work rather than including it in Xenon's Biography. Not the one about World War II but the sequel to Xenon's Biography.

The problem is that I've been so busy lately that I had to force even my writing time into small bits of free time. As a result, I planned to send the new book to the publisher at the earliest a week from now.

'I never expected to be this busy.'

Who would have thought that there would be 150 literary freshmen? During this vacation, I didn't even have time to work on Xenon's Biography because I was having a good time with Cecily in Helium.

Moreover, Elena has been asking for my help more frequently lately for her research. This is probably because she suspects me of being Xenon.

'I need to meet Leona too... I'm busy, very busy.'

I learned a lot about the beastmen during the vacation from my father. To be more specific, I referred to the beastmen's combat techniques.

Leona knows much more about the beastmen's way of life, so she was playing the role of the only advisor. I planned to ask her for help again next time, probably using food as a condition.

'By the way, I wonder what kind of reaction the beastmen will show.'

I thought about Animers, the beastmen's nation that didn't react even though Xenon's Biography went up to volume 14. Even Alvenheim showed a reaction, but Animers remained silent.

I'm confident that there will be a reaction in the next volume, whether it's because Xenon's Biography is uninteresting from the beastmen's perspective or because there's some internal issue. Especially since I'm briefly revealing the beastmen's strengths and weaknesses and ending with "Satan" challenging the tribal chief to a duel. And that tribal chief's head goes flying.

Prick

"Hm?"

As I contemplated each step, heading towards Adelia's lodging, I suddenly felt a tingling sensation on the back of my head. It was as if someone was staring at me.

I turned around, but there was no suspicious corner to be found. Only pedestrians on the street. If my head was tingling like that, it meant someone was sending a strong gaze my way. I involuntarily tilted my head.

'...Is it my imagination?'

It must be. I continued confidently towards Adelia's lodging. Even as I walked, I occasionally felt a prickling sensation on the back of my head, but I ignored it. Every time I looked back, there was nothing to suspect.

Eventually, I arrived at the lodging reserved for the escort knights. Just to be sure, I looked back once more and confirmed that no one was there.

Knock knock knock

I lightly tapped on the door to Adelia's lodging and waited quietly. I could have pressed the summoning gem, but this was more courteous.

Soon, the door opened, and Adelia appeared. I was about to greet her warmly, but when I saw her attire, I had to stiffen my body.

Usually, Adelia rarely wore outfits that revealed her figure, but right now...

The top was a workout tank-top, revealing a well-defined abdomen without reservation. Not just an ordinary six-pack but the kind of abs that could only be achieved through extreme training.

In addition, her slightly protruding lower belly, a slender waistline, and the pelvis that followed below exuded a refreshing charm as a woman.

Lastly, her lower body. Even though I knew she looked great in leather pants, now, with her shorts, her strong thighs were prominently displayed.

Even the sweat caused her scent to permeate the air, and my heart raced a little.

"Cutie?"

"..."

When I was absentmindedly examining her body, Adelia called me again. I hurriedly snapped out of it and turned my head.

No matter what, it was a bit surprising to see her like this. If it were Marie or Cecily, I would have just chuckled a bit, but Adelia was different.

“Um... noona? Were you working out?”

“Yeah. So what?”

“Uhm... your clothes...”

“...Huh?”

As I cleared my throat and spoke, Adelia blinked her sky-blue eyes and then glanced downward. Subsequently, she realized her attire and her face turned rapidly redder.

“S-Sorry!”

Bang!

Adelia forcefully closed the door to the extent that the wind blew. I waited with a wry smile.

[You're crazy! Absolutely insane! Get a grip on yourself!]

I pretended not to hear Adelia's scream mixed with her cries coming from behind the door.

'Even so...'

Seeing Adelia in different clothes made me feel a bit different.

Translators note:

Chapter 195: Bad Luck (2)

I waited outside for about 5 minutes. As the awkward situation continued, the door slowly opened. On the side where the door opened, Adelia cautiously stuck only her face out. Her cheeks were slightly flushed, probably because of what had just happened.

“Do we really have to talk about it in my room?”

“It’s kind of important…”

“…Even though I’m all sweaty and probably stink?”

“It’s fine.”

When I replied that it was okay, Adelia hesitated for a moment, her lips twitching, and then she slowly opened the door. I took a look at Adelia’s changed appearance.

I wondered how she managed it, but she had wrapped herself tightly in a blanket, like a cocoon. It seemed like the best option since putting on clothes would make her feel sticky due to sweat, and taking a shower would take too long.

I felt somewhat awkward seeing her like that, but I went inside anyway. Adelia followed me inside with a careful step.

Her personality, which had always been lively, was now overshadowed by shyness, making her appear refreshingly different.

“Do you smell something strange? I did open the window for now…”

Adelia asked cautiously as I stepped inside. I heard her question and immediately sniffed the air.

Honestly, I couldn’t detect any specific odor, it was just the typical fragrance associated with women. Given her personality, she probably wouldn’t be the type to wear perfume, so I assumed it might be a scent of sweat.

Rose scent. Yes, it was a rose scent. Sometimes when she teased me, I would catch a whiff of rose scent from her, so it seemed like it was her natural scent.

“I don’t smell it? I mean, you didn’t just spray any perfume right after I came, did you?”

“You know I don’t use perfume.”

“Really? That’s strange. I can only smell something nice.”

“... ..”

In response to my compliment, Adelia’s ears turned bright red, and she buried her face in the blanket that was wrapped around her. Her reaction was a mixture of embarrassment and shame.

Though a momentary amusing incident had occurred, my purpose for coming here was deeply related to her. Adelia, perhaps realizing this fact belatedly, mumbled something before lifting her face from the blanket.

Her face was still quite red, like she had caught a cold.

“So, um... why did you come? I don’t know what’s going on, but why did you want to talk in my room?”

“Um...”

Before answering directly, I looked around Adelia’s lodging. Although I briefly saw it when we came to the academy together, I have never entered her room before.

Compared to the rooms where academy students stay, it’s not very spacious, and the facilities are not that great, but it seems she has managed to make it work in her own way.

Especially, various exercise equipment was scattered here and there. She must have used them just a moment ago.

According to what my father said, Adelia was not only talented but also incredibly hardworking. It’s probably because of the influence of her difficult family background when she was younger.

I briefly considered whether to talk about Hiriya at this moment, but it’s something I must tell her, for her sake.

“...Adelia noona.”

“Yeah.”

“I have something to tell you that’s very related to you, especially concerning your family.”

“... ..”

As I mentioned the family, the word seemed to startle Adelia. Fear took hold of her large, sky-blue eyes.

“What? My family?”

“Yeah.”

“Why all of a sudden? Did someone... someone come here?”

As if to prove that trauma had deeply rooted itself in her heart, Adelia’s voice trembled. When they met at the exhibition, she couldn’t say a word and stiffened completely, so it’s a natural reaction.

Always confident and full of vitality, Adelia, who had a unique energy, seemed like a small, restless animal in my eyes. Her delicate voice, dilated pupils, and the cold sweat that flowed. I looked at her with a sympathetic look and mentioned Hiriya, whom I had just met.

“Hiriya, the princess... you know? I heard she transferred here as a teaching assistant. I just met her by chance on the way here.”

“Hiriya? Why...?”

“Rumors say it’s for the sake of relations with the Minerva Empire. Our territory, where the exhibition was held, is known to be Xenon’s birthplace, so there must have been a lot of pressure.”

In hindsight, it was my fault. I had teased Hiriya to some extent that I intend to develop the Michelle Territory into a cultural city.

So, I had to help Adelia in any way possible to lead a normal life. If Hiriya found out that Adelia was here from my side, the situation would become extremely complicated. The best way here was to send Adelia back to the mansion.

As seen at the exhibition, just meeting her family would stop all her actions and she would show severe anxiety symptoms. Moreover, she had been unjustly denied her family right in front of her, so the psychological shock would be tremendous. In my judgment, she would never be able to lead a normal life.

“Adelia noona.”

“...”

“I know how scared you are of your family. So, if possible, to the mansion...”

“Oh, no. I, I’m fine.”

Adelia noticed that I was trying to send her back to the mansion and urgently spoke, her voice already trembling uncontrollably.

It was evident to anyone that anxiety symptoms had already set in. With a sheepish expression I quietly said.

“Even your voice is shaking. Are you sure you’re okay?”

“Uh, yeah. I’m fine... ah.”

Now, she couldn’t even meet my gaze, and her sky-blue irises were vibrating intensely. Her lips were trembling, too.

I knew the reason why she didn’t want to go to the mansion, even though she was displaying such behavior. It was undoubtedly because of me. She had become a knight to be with me at the academy, after all. A woman in love could be so fragile.

“Noona...”

“I’m, I’m fine, you don’t have to worry.”

“Sigh...”

I sighed as Adelia repeated the same words over and over. It seemed like she had no intention of returning to the mansion at all. Persuasion only works when the other person is willing to listen, and stubbornly insisting like this was pointless.

In that case, there was only one thing left to do. To alleviate her trauma even slightly and make it possible for her to lead a normal life.

'But that's not as easy as it sounds...'

I'm not a psychologist, and trauma is extremely difficult to resolve. Trauma often elicits physical reactions before you even consciously think about it. Just like a person who has been through a major explosion might startle at the sound of fireworks, Adelia reacts similarly. She's sensitive to the keyword 'family.'

If I were a clergyman who used miracles, I might be able to help a little, but it's tough. I know how to receive divine grace, but I don't know how to use it.

'There's not exactly no way...'

That way requires a significant improvement in Adelia's and my relationship and the consent of those around us. It's a very unconventional method, and I'm embarrassed to even mention it.

In the end, all that's left is to provide enough stability to cover the trauma. For Adelia, that stability is either her close friend Nicole or her unrequited love, which is me.

I decided to take one step at a time, like climbing a staircase. Starting with Hiriya.

"...Alright, but instead of 'Hiriya,' call her 'sister.'"

"uh, sure..."

"Can you tell me about Princess Hiriya?"

"When you ask about Hiriya?"

Adelia's sky-blue eyes widened at the request. Her hidden thoughts seemed to be asking why I would make such a question.

I need to understand something about Adelia and Hiriya's relationship if I'm going to help in any way. If she sees commoners as completely worthless, there's a high chance she'll unilaterally dislike Adelia.

In addition, just by seeing Adelia's recent signs of anxiety, one can roughly sense how rudely Hiriya acted.

"Yeah. I'm curious about who she is. If she's not a good person, I won't be polite either. She's an assistant, so I won't go to the training hall then."

"...She's not that bad."

Oh my. Such gullible words were already coming out. I almost burst into laughter at Adelia's timid response.

Adelia is the type of person who can laugh it off even when she's being harassed because of her personality. Furthermore, she was family, so she must have forced herself to laugh it off.

She must have treated her family well to that extent. Hiriya's little sister, Lara, even approached Adelia with a bright smile as soon as she saw her.

Of course, Hiriya immediately stopped her. I looked at Adelia with mixed feelings and spoke quietly.

"We can put good and bad aside for now. What's important is what that princess did to you as your sister."

With a firm statement, Adelia raised her head, as if she felt something. Wrapped tightly in a blanket, she looked cute.

After looking at my face for a while, she lowered her eyes and cautiously brought up the past. Her distinctive husky voice resonated in my ears.

"...She used to listen to me well. When I was training in swordsmanship, she trained alongside me, saying she would become like me someday."

Huh. Surprisingly, the past doesn't seem so bad, does it?

As soon as I had that thought, her true colors were revealed.

"However, was it from the age of 14? She began to envy and feel jealous of me. She even shouted, 'Why do you have such skills as a mere illegitimate child?'..."

"... .."

"I was surprised, but when I tried to console her, she pushed me away and insulted me. Eventually, we naturally grew apart. Later on, her skills improved, and I kept losing to her."

Listening to Adelia's lament, I could be sure. Princess Hiriya was simply a spoiled brat from the beginning. Moreover, she probably concealed the truth and made it sound more bearable. In reality, it must have been even more dreadful. Such severe trauma doesn't develop easily.

I glanced at the now saddened Adelia with a heavy heart, and suddenly, one thought crossed my mind. Just earlier, she mentioned that she had sparred with Hiriya and consistently lost. As a legitimate royal, Hiriya would have received more attention and support than Adelia.

Especially in martial arts, you can't learn without the guidance of a mentor. It's natural for there to be a difference in skill. However, what if she used this difference in skill to physically harm Adelia under the guise of sparring? And what if she said words that should never be said as a human being? It's not an entirely implausible story, and it's actually quite common in a world like this.

“Adelia noona.”

“Yeah?”

“Could you uncover the blanket for a moment?”

“What, why?”

“I need to check something. It'll only take a moment.”

Adelia's face turned rapidly red at my sudden request. However, upon seeing my serious expression, she hesitated for a moment before taking action.

Slowly, like shedding a cocoon, she lowered the blanket, revealing Adelia's healthy and well-proportioned figure in all its glory. Her body was adorned with firm muscles, a testament to her hard work over time.

I briefly lost my gaze to her figure, but soon refocused my attention on her body, taking my time to examine it thoroughly. Previously, I hadn't had the opportunity to study it closely due to the circumstances, but now I had a clear objective in mind.

First, I examined her arms and abdomen. Her skin was not exceptionally pale but had a sun-kissed tone, likely from training outdoors as a knight. However, there were noticeable marks that caught my eye, particularly bruises that had healed but left scars. These were more prominent not only on her arms but also on her abdomen and thighs.

These were the scars of injuries. Especially in the case of bruises resembling beatings, they could have healed cleanly with proper treatment, but seeing them turn into scars...

‘...These are clearly the result of violence.’

It could be one of two things. Either Hirya had subjected Adelia to brutal beatings during their sparring sessions, or she hadn't received proper treatment. Perhaps, it could even be a combination of both.

With such significant scars on her body, it was inevitable that trauma would build up. If you've seen how much suffering school violence victims endured in my past life, you'd understand.

Furthermore, Adelia has probably heard hurtful words her whole life because she's a child born out of wedlock. It's fortunate that she has a kind heart, but if she didn't, she might have taken her own life or even harmed her family long ago.

I raised my head, looking at the faint scars scattered here and there with a sympathetic gaze.

Did Adelia notice what I saw? She smiled widely, showing her gums, trying to express indifference.

"Yes, I used to be wounded, so what? I'm fine now."

"...Really?"

"Yes, really."

Seeing Adelia forcing a smile to reassure me made my heart ache even more. I reached out slowly as I watched her discreetly cover herself with a blanket to hide the scars. And I gently held her hand that held the blanket. Adelia's eyes widened in surprise when I held her hand.

"Noona, do you remember what I said at the exhibition?"

"Uh, uh? W-what did you say?"

"I said, your confident smile is the most beautiful. You don't have to force it."

Adelia made a confused expression at my words. I gave her a gentle smile and held her hand. As if symbolizing all the suffering and hardships she had endured, Adelia's hand was covered with calluses and hardness.

"I won't send you to the mansion as Noona requested. Instead, if you ever really can't stand it, just let me know. Okay?"

"..."

“And I hope you understand this much. I’m always on your side. If things get tough, just tell me. I’ll do whatever I can to help.”

What can I not do for the girl who likes me? Even though I might not accept her feelings, I need to do at least this much to ease my mind. You might call it self-satisfaction, and I might be criticized for it, but so what? It’s what I want to do.

Above all, the Ters royal family will never know. They mocked and looked down on Adelia, calling her a bastard and assaulting her, but in reality, she is Xenon’s bodyguard. That alone was enough to make them eat their words. And Adelia will have to make a choice then.

I will prevent her from choosing to return to her family, no, not a ‘family’, but to the Ters royal family. More precisely, I will make her heart lean in this direction.

“I’m planning to work out this weekend. Would you like to join me, sis? I hope you can help me a bit.”

With a kindness that her family had never heard before, Adelia blinked her clear eyes like a clear sky in response to my request.

Then, with the confident smile I mentioned earlier, she replied energetically.

“Sure. But I won’t go easy on you, even if it’s tough, okay?”

“That’d be just fine.”

I hope that this will help Adelia heal even a little from her trauma.

Time passed quickly, and the weekend approached.

“You...”

“... ..”

“Why is this bitch here?”

Fate came faster than I expected.

Translators note:

Chapter 196: Bad Luck (3)

It was an ordinary day, just like any other. The weekend had come, and as planned, I started my physical training with Adelia. Since Nicole was not around, there was no need to go to the training field, and the likelihood of Hiriya being there was very high. There was no need for intense exercise, and there were plenty of places to work out even if it wasn't the training field. So, it was while I was roaming around the academy, warming up and increasing my stamina.

“Why are you here, Bitch?”

Coincidentally, I ran into Hiriya while we were both jogging for basic stamina training. Surprisingly, she was dressed in ordinary workout clothes, but they were all in a sky-blue color that oddly suited her. It was a situation where I had just left the tiger's den to avoid the tiger, and I happened to run into the tiger outside. It was a situation that could be described as extremely unlucky.

As I looked at Hiriya's face, filled with a mixture of discomfort and disgust, I observed Adelia's reaction. She was the most important one in this situation. And as if on cue, despite my previous attempts to comfort her, Adelia's sky-blue eyes were shaking vigorously. She, who hadn't even broken a sweat while jogging, was now dripping with cold sweat.

I'll say it again, the trauma deeply ingrained in one's heart cannot be fixed, no matter how much you want to.

“Sister.”

“Ah.”

Nevertheless, it seemed she had improved from before as she regained her composure when I patted her arm. At the exhibition, there were three of them, but now it was just Hiriya.

Adelia, who had regained her composure, looked at Hiriya, who was lost in thought, and swallowed hard. Then, with an expression that was hard to tell whether she was

smiling or crying, she quietly spoke up.

“Ah, hello. It’s been a while since the exhibition...?”

“... ..”

Even when Adelia extended her hand for a handshake and greeted her, Hiriya remained silent. Instead, she turned her gaze toward me, as if demanding an explanation of what was going on.

I had a strong feeling that the situation was about to get complicated, but she was a foreign princess, and I was Lord Yeongsik. There was a clear class difference, so I had no choice but to explain.

“Dame Cross is currently assigned as a knight of the Michelle family. Right now, she’s my personal bodyguard and attending the academy.”

“...A personal bodyguard?”

Upon hearing the answer of “personal bodyguard,” Hiriya made a surprised expression and then glanced between me and Adelia alternately. Adelia tensed up every time their gazes met.

Then, Hiriya scratched her chin, deep in thought, and soon, the corners of her mouth turned up slightly. I wasn’t sure what she was thinking, but I had a gut feeling that it wasn’t a very favorable situation.

“Well, this works out nicely. Come with me to the practice grounds.”

“What?”

“I said come to the practice grounds. We have some catching up to do as long-lost acquaintances.”

While saying that, Hiriya spun her body around. I watched her retreating figure as she walked towards the training grounds, but my gaze soon shifted to Adelia.

Adelia, holding her left arm with her right hand, seemed to have understood the meaning of “sparring” that Hiriya mentioned, as she trembled visibly. It appeared that past memories were resurfacing.

‘Is she suggesting a sparring match, perhaps?’

There was no reason for her to ask Adelia to come to the training grounds for anything else. The problem was that Adelia had a history of severe beatings, which she had suffered under the guise of sparring.

No matter how much stronger she has become since then, the deep-rooted feelings of powerlessness and fear remained an issue. Like an elephant with a thin rope tied around its ankle since childhood, past horrific memories haunted her.

“Why aren’t you coming?”

“Oh, yes. We will follow you soon. Adelia Noona?”

“... ..”

Adelia didn’t seem to have any intention of moving from her spot, as if she were unable to respond to my call. She didn’t just hesitate, she swayed as if she might run away at any moment.

The confidence she had displayed earlier had completely disappeared, replaced only by a fearful creature. I looked at her with a sympathetic gaze and gently took her hand.

When I held her hand, she flinched and looked at me with a surprised expression. At the same time, her trembling body gradually calmed down.

“It’s okay. I’ve told you before, I’m on your side, noona.”

“... ..”

“Don’t be scared because you will regret it later. You can’t just run away like this, right?”

Adelia gradually felt reassured by the words that were delivered with a kind smile. Her body’s trembling had completely subsided, and her contracted pupils were gradually returning to normal.

Before long, even her panting breath, which had been hurried, returned to its usual rhythm, and even the corners of her mouth lifted. With that, she even added some strength to the hand I was holding.

She smiled at my face and quietly expressed her gratitude.

“... Thank you.”

“What’s there to be thankful for? Let’s get going.”

“Yeah.”

Adelia must have calmed down too. I held her hand affectionately and followed behind Hiriya. Adelia, whose footsteps had been reluctant to part, now walked ahead with ease.

If a stranger were to see us, it would look like lovers holding hands affectionately and going somewhere. Adelia even seemed to want to subtly express her desire as she playfully squeezed my hand.

Originally, we had simply held hands, but she started placing her fingers one by one between mine. However, she hesitated to cross a certain line and only inserted her index and middle fingers between mine.

“Hmm...”

Hiriya, who was leading the way, looked at us with a subtle expression, then soon flashed a wicked smile. Adelia and I were both taken aback.

“You seem to be getting along well. To the point where one wouldn’t think of you as a bodyguard and a master.”

“Uh, this is...”

“No, there’s no need for an explanation. Such entertainment is quite common among the nobility. I can understand it.”

At the moment I was about to explain, Hiriya raised her hand, as if indicating her understanding. I’m not sure what exactly she understood, but it’s definitely not a favorable interpretation.

Then, she shifted her gaze to Adelia and spoke in a mocking tone.

“It surprisingly suits her quite well. In the end, she’ll just keep begging and get rejected, though.”

“... ..”

Crack!

Hiriya's words were like a blow to the gut. I could vividly feel the strength in Adelia's grip on my hand. It was practically an insult. If it weren't for our social class difference, I would have had every reason to punch her in the face for such a severe insult.

Moreover, Adelia was a bastard child, so those words must have felt like a dagger stabbing deep into her chest.

'Wow... quite impressive.'

How can someone have such a vulgar personality? I knew she was uncouth, but I never expected her to say something like that so brazenly in front of us.

In my heart, I wanted to immediately reveal my identity as Xenon, and have her kneel, and beg for forgiveness. But it's not the right time yet. To strike back magnificently, I need to build up my advantages step by step.

Above all...

"...You."

Adelia's mood was unsettling. Just a moment ago, she seemed to be trembling with fear, but now she was trembling in a different way.

Anger. Yes, it was anger.

She, who had always shown signs of anxiety whenever she faced her family, was now clearly displaying anger. It was the first time Adelia had shown such anger, and it felt unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, without saying anything, Hiriya gave a sinister smile that could make her beauty fade and started to taunt.

"That expression, it's been a long time, hasn't it? Well, in the end, you'll cry and beg, won't you?"

"... .."

"Did you say Isaac? I recommend not getting too close to that woman. It's before you get disappointed."

Was she so eager to receive a punch in the face? Hiriya left with only those words, turning around and taking her steps again.

I watched her go with an astonished expression, then shifted my gaze to Adelia.

Her face was still filled with anger, but also somewhat uneasy. She was watching me cautiously, and traces of her struggling with herself were evident, even the grip on our clasped hands loosened. Perhaps she had realized once again after hearing Hiriya's words. That she was just a bastard with someone else's blood or something like that.

Moreover, she was being scorned by her family, and she could even cause harm to those around her. There was a high probability that she was thinking like this.

'Some people are really something...'

Even though she was kind, she was too kind. Her family environment was beyond terrible, reaching the level of absolute chaos. The fact that such a person had emerged itself spoke volumes about her nature.

If she had been born as an ordinary noble's daughter, she would have grown up to be a mischievous and innocent young lady. Her only misfortune was meeting the wrong family.

However, where there's misfortune, there must also be luck. As Hiriya moved away from her, I made her an offer she couldn't refuse.

"Noona, can I make a proposal?"

"What... proposal?"

"If you defeat that woman..."

When I referred to her as "that woman" instead of Hiriya the princess, Adelia widened her eyes in surprise. But the words that followed were enough to startle her even more.

"I'll do whatever you want."

"W-What? Whatever I want?"

"Exactly."

I grinned and then whispered softly into her ear.

"Do you think I don't know what you desire?"

"...!!"

At the same time as those words, Adelia's body jolted. Her grip on my hand grew stronger.

I slowly pulled my face away from her ear and faced her. Adelia, with her face completely flushed and looking utterly bewildered, caught my eye.

In front of me, she used to be confident and self-assured, but seeing her act so nervously like this... I don't know how to describe it, but she looked really cute. I guess all girls in one-sided love are like this, but Adelia is especially different.

"If you're going to hide, hide properly. It's so obvious."

"Well, but you... with Lady Marie and Princess Cecily..."

"I know. I can't immediately accept Noona's feelings. Instead..."

I hesitated for a moment, then gently brushed her cheek with my hand. When my hand touched her cheek, Adelia shivered again.

To fully accept her, as I said, it will take time. I need to reveal my identity, and most importantly, I need Marie's permission.

The possibility is very high since Cecily was accepted, but Cecily is the princess of Helium. So Marie willingly accepted for many reasons.

However, Adelia's situation is quite different. She may have great martial skills, but she has a major flaw in being a bastard child.

Whether she becomes a member of the Ters royal family to eliminate that flaw or remains my personal knight will depend on her choice.

"I'll decide after seeing Noona's choice later. So, please bear with it until then. Okay?"

"... .."

"You must win no matter what if you want to receive what Noona desires."

People need a clear sense of purpose to develop passion and determination. Adelia was no different in that regard.

Adelia responded enthusiastically with a gentle voice and a soft smile as I encouraged her while brushing her cheek.

“I’ll definitely win!”

“Yes, you will.”

I wonder what favor she will ask of me.

Translators note:

Ehew... New semester started so I quit my internship... It sure feels like shit, exchanging one busy for another.

Chapter 197: Bad Luck (4)

When Isaac comforted Adelia and then headed straight to the common training grounds, the training grounds were already in chaos due to Hiriya's appearance.

Naturally, it was because Hiriya was a princess of the Ters Kingdom, often referred to as the rival of the Minerva Empire. They had heard that she worked as a martial arts assistant, but this was the first time she had come to the training grounds.

Her status, skills, and, on top of that, the delicate beauty she had, reminiscent of a winter season – everything about her was captivating. Nothing was lacking, and she exuded an aura that was not easily approachable.

“Oh? Isn't that Miss Adelia, the instructor?”

“Yeah, didn't she graduate and become a knight?”

“Why did she come here?”

A little while later, when Adelia revealed herself alongside Isaac, the commotion doubled. Like Nicole, she had a dazzling appearance that was far from common, an unbiased mindset, and, in addition, great martial prowess, making her popular among the students.

Above all, her personality, which made everyone feel naturally close to her, was impossible to dislike. Especially the notorious incidents of occasionally playing mischievous pranks on Nicole, which earned her repeated scoldings, was widely known.

Because of that, many students felt regretful, thinking they couldn't see them anymore. However, her suddenly appearing at the academy, in the training ground no less, left everyone astonished.

But there was something even more surprising.

“They're going to have a duel?”

“That’s what I heard. Let’s watch.”

On top of that Hiriya and Adelia were having a duel. From the perspective of a third party who didn’t know the circumstances, it was impossible to tell why they had arranged a duel.

Except for one person, Isaac, who was sitting in the audience.

He couldn’t help but feel a slight unease as he fixed his gaze on the training ground where the duel between the two began. To borrow his father’s, Hawk’s words, Adelia’s talent could be considered genius, but what was even more frightening was her effort. It was a relentless determination that went beyond just effort.

Considering that that genius could stand out among numerous talented students and become an assistant instructor, one could imagine how much effort she put in.

But this was Adelia’s story, he had no idea how strong Hiriya was. There were even instances of her physically abusing Adelia when they were younger.

Of course, this was possible because the royal family provided substantial support to Hiriya, but considering the age difference between the two, it was certain that she possessed an extraordinary talent.

‘Is it going to be alright...’

Above all, Adelia had a deep-seated trauma that she carried in her heart. Her body could react before she even had a chance to think.

In order to alleviate that trauma in any way possible, Isaac had made an irresistible proposal to her. However, he couldn’t help but feel uneasy.

If Adelia wins, it will be the best outcome, but if the opposite happens, things will get a bit complicated.

Her trauma will worsen as time goes, and it might even leave a lasting scar on Adelia’s heart. Hopefully, she will emerge victorious.

“As expected, you were here.”

“Huh? Oh, Lord Leort.”

While waiting for the duel to begin, a young man with golden hair approached Isaac. He was Leort, the Crown Prince of the Minerva Empire and one of the regular visitors to

the training grounds on weekends.

Isaac extended his hand to greet Leort as he stood up, but he motioned to stop him. With a bitter smile and a voice filled with complexity, Leort spoke.

“Isn’t it unnecessary now? It seems I’ve been quite a burden.”

“It’s different when it’s just the two of us. There are spectators now.”

“Your personality remains consistent.”

Leort said so and took a seat beside Isaac. Afterward, they both shifted their gazes towards Hiriya and Adelia, who were facing each other with training swords.

Observing the two for a while, Leort nudged Isaac. Isaac, too, kept his eyes on the training grounds where the duel was about to take place.

With a slightly cautious tone, Leort asked Isaac a question. It was a suitable question since there were hardly any spectators in the stands nearby.

“Do you know what kind of relationship those two have?”

“Yes, I know well.”

“Then, by any chance...”

“Hiriya, the princess, doesn’t know who I am. She just knows me as Adele-noon’s master.”

“That’s fortunate.”

I wondered for a moment but was reassured. After all, if Hiriya had known Xenon’s true identity, she wouldn’t have challenged Adelia to a duel. Moreover, from the perspective of Leort and the Minerva Empire, it was an ideal situation. They may not have known, but Isaac’s reputation regarding the Ters Kingdom was deteriorating in real-time.

Sometimes, doing nothing was the top priority. This is a lesson I learned a few months ago, after experiencing a protest that would go down in history. Thanks to that, we’re still maintaining a reasonably good relationship. It was an uncomfortable situation after the protest, but Isaac’s leniency allowed them to recover.

“...Lord Leort, I have one question. Is it okay to ask?”

“What is it? I’ll gladly answer any question you have.” “

The Ters royals are originally... well, how should I put it...”

Isaac hesitated to speak and looked around. After confirming that there was no one nearby, he cautiously continued.

“Aren’t they a bit... arrogant?”

“What?”

“That... even if Adelia is a bastard child, don’t you think what they do is too much? No matter how much one says otherwise, denying family in front of her seems a bit harsh.”

“Hmm...”

Hearing that question, Leort shifted his gaze to Hiriya. The Minerva Empire and the Ters Kingdom had a growling relationship with each other, but paradoxically, their exchanges were quite active.

To take the right actions, one needed to understand the other side, and to grasp the situation properly, you needed to find weaknesses. So, active exchanges between the two sides and even royal family members meeting were natural occurrences.

In Leort’s view, the Ters royals were certainly strong personalities individually. The first princess married into the Belua Republic before they could meet, but he knew well about the crown prince and the other two princesses.

“Individual differences might exist, but I don’t think of them so negatively. The issue of a bastard child is their problem, not mine.”

“Well then, what do you think about bastards? Do you also consider them as worthless, Lord Leort?”

“If you want to curse, then curse their father who roamed around as he pleased. What sin has the child committed? If the Luminous who governs life were to see that, they would lament.”

“If you want to curse someone, you should curse the father who wandered around as he pleased. What crime can a child have? If Luminous, who governs life, were to see that sight, she would surely lament.”

Leort's indifferent yet straightforward answer made an unexpected expression on Isaac's face. Leort was a noble, and moreover, the Crown Prince who should be looked up to after the Emperor. Nevertheless, his attitude toward bastards didn't seem too bad. In fact, it was close to having no interest at all, but it was something, nonetheless.

Leort smiled inwardly as he looked at Isaac's expression. Although he didn't have much interest because there were no bastards in the imperial family he belonged to, it was good to score points like this.

The Kingdom of Ters would take care of its self-destruction. All he had to do was just fume the flames a little.

“Come to think of it, didn't Nicole say she was going to take the entrance test for the Navy Knights?”

“Yes. She should be coming back soon...”

Bang!

Before Isaac could finish his sentence, a loud noise came from the training grounds. His gaze shifted from Leort to the direction of the training grounds.

First, he noticed Hiriya lying on the ground. And next...

“What's going on?”

As if she had washed away all her traumas, Adelia was confidently pointing her sword at the fallen Hiriya.

About three minutes before this incident occurred, while Hiriya had a smile on her face, Adelia was standing with a stern expression. They both held training swords in their hands.

Although the training swords had no sharp edges, they were made of metal and had a weight similar to real swords. Moreover, they were still intimidating weapons, lacking only the lethality.

Normally, a spar would begin with a bow or a ceremonial sword clash as a sign of mutual respect, but for these two, there was no such formality. Only a chilling atmosphere surrounded them.

Adelia looked at the relaxed Hiriya for a moment and then turned her head slightly to the left. Isaac, sitting in the spectator seats, was watching her.

“What are you looking at? Are you watching your prince again?”

She noticed Adelia’s gaze fixed on Isaac, and taunted her with her distinctive low and sultry voice.

“Seems like Adelia has already developed feelings for Isaac.”

She had already sensed that Adelia had some affection for Isaac, so it wasn’t a big surprise to her.

This made it even more amusing for Hiriya. A half-blood, neither nobility nor commoner, having feelings for someone like Isaac, who was practically a noble. It reminded her of her own mother, who had come to the royal family’s doorstep in desperation to live a more dignified life. Eventually, she would be cast aside just like her mother.

“Why don’t you just give up? You know better than anyone else how hanging onto something useless ends up. It’s like trying to grasp a rotten rope.”

“... ..”

As Hiriya continued to insult her, Adelia’s expression gradually grew more hostile. Her forehead furrowed, and her usually lively demeanor turned fierce, like a tiger.

They say when a good person gets angry, it’s even scarier, and Adelia was currently in that exact situation. Even Hiriya couldn’t help but be slightly taken aback by a facial expression she had never seen before.

But soon, memories from the past flashed in Hiriya’s mind, and her smile returned. The memory of receiving support from the royal family and abusing Adelia under a pretext of their rivalry.

Was there any difference between then and now? She had become much stronger since then, and Adelia had run away to the academy with hardly any proper education.

This duel was assuredly her victory.

“I see you know how to make that expression. So...”

“Hiriya.”

Adelia, who had been silent all this time, called out to Hiriya quietly. Hiriya stopped speaking and looked at her, her expression now softer.

A mere bastard dares to interrupt my words. She wanted to smack her immediately, but he remained silent as Adelia continued speaking.

“I’ve been thinking about it for a while now. Why did someone who used to follow me so well suddenly start disliking me...?”

“Why are you bringing it up now...”

“You were jealous of me. I could replicate anything I saw once, but you couldn’t. Isn’t that right?”

It was clearly a provocation, and not just any provocation, but words that forcibly brought out the deep-seated emotions hidden within Hiriya.

To explain those emotions... it was inferiority. Inferiority complex.

Hiriya wasn’t particularly talented in martial arts, including swordsmanship, if it weren’t for the secrets and support coming from the royal family, she would have been just an ordinary knight.

But Adelia was entirely the opposite. Due to her status as a bastard, she couldn’t even receive proper support, but what she learned on her own was more than enough.

Thanks to that, some of the knights who valued her talent taught her skills one by one, and Hiriya could only hide behind Adelia.

Initially, it was envy, then jealousy, and finally, inferiority.

There were various reasons why Hiriya disliked Adelia, but it all came down to his inferiority complex. That was the sole reason.

“What... what? Me? Jealous of someone like you?”

Adelia’s statement left Hiriya feeling bewildered at first. Jealous of someone like her? It was almost laughable.

However, before she could realize it, her heart was pounding wildly, and her hands holding the sword were trembling. Adelia checked Hiriya’s reaction and then turned her head to look at Isaac once again. Meanwhile, Leort sat next to them and engaged in conversation.

She used to experience severe anxiety every time she faced Hiriya, but not anymore. Whenever Isaac was nearby, her heart would calm down, and in a different sense, it would flutter.

'It shouldn't be like this, but...'

How could she resist when he was so kind? Just one of his gentle smiles could make all her worries and anxieties melt away. To the point where her family now felt insignificant, just being together could bring happiness.

Adelia smiled sincerely and met Hiriya's gaze. Would she really be happy in the current situation? She suddenly became curious.

"Hiriya. I have one question."

"Noisy!"

Perhaps because of the recent altercation, Hiriya charged fiercely. She had strengthened her body with mana to the point where the wind was whipping around her.

However, Adelia remained calm and predicted her attacks until the end. In the past, her body would have stiffened, allowing the attack to go through, but not today.

With her loved one watching, and the chance to reveal her intentions if she won this duel, she couldn't afford to lose.

Swoosh!

Adelia, as Hiriya swung her sword forcefully from top to bottom, quickly blocked with one hand gripping the hilt and the other holding the blade's edge. Without hesitation, she swiftly kicked Hiriya's leg as seething with anger, unable to maintain her composure.

Thud!

Eventually, her balance wavered as her leg was swept away, and Adelia took advantage of the opportunity, maintaining her defensive stance, and pushed her back.

Immediately after releasing her defensive posture, she struck at her throat with the tip of her sword. It was a perfect offense and defense, and all these movements flowed smoothly in just one second.

Hawk, the knight known for his reputation as the "Crimson Lion," had perfectly imprinted onto her the "smoothness" he had emphasized so much.

“Grrr!”

Thud!

Hiriya fell heavily, writhing in pain as she spat out saliva due to the excruciating pain in her throat. The throat was one of the human body’s vital spots, and if properly attacked, it would make it difficult to even breathe.

Thus, defending the throat was one of the most critical basic skills, but Hiriya couldn’t manage it. It’s not that she thought Adelia was foolish and wouldn’t target her throat. But due to the overwhelming difference in skill, this was the result. Thanks to the various basic skills and techniques she had learned from Hawk.

Gasp

“Ugh... You...”

Hiriya looked at Adelia with a mixture of surprise and anger in her eyes. Her expression indicated that she had no idea what was going on.

In response, Adelia slowly pointed the tip of her sword at her and spoke, a question she had just failed to ask earlier.

“Hiriya, are you happy?”

“Huh... What on earth...”

“You have status, family, wealth, and honor, unlike me. So I asked if you’re happy.”

“What kind of nonsense is that... Ugh.”

Hiriya, unable to finish her sentence due to the pain in her back, stared at Adelia in silence. Adelia slowly moved her head.

Isaac’s face, which was now looking at this side with a bewildered expression because he couldn’t grasp what was happening, could be seen. His face, which brought a smile just by looking at it.

Her true happiness was not far away. No, it could be said that she found it by chance.

Becoming “family” because of shared blood was not always the case. Family was not something that could be connected solely through blood.

“I’ll tell you now, Hiriya.”

With that thought, Adelia declared with a genuinely happy smile.

“I’m much happier now.”

Especially when she was with that man.

Chapter 198: Liquidation (1)

The situation that was too embarrassing to even call it a duel ended shortly thereafter. Hiriya, who had fallen to the ground, got up from her seat and left immediately.

I'm not sure if she couldn't do anything and felt embarrassed or if there was some other reason, but her footsteps seemed a bit hasty. What's more, as she left, she gave me a lingering look.

In any case, as the duel ended too easily, the onlookers started going about their own business. A few people applied for a duel with Adelia, but she rejected them all and came back to me.

"It's been a while, Your Highness. Have you been well?"

"Yeah, it seems like you've improved your skills in the meantime"

"You're too kind."

After returning, she greeted Leort first, who was sitting next to me. Leort responded with a friendly gesture.

Adelia politely bowed and then met my gaze directly. At first, she hesitated, then blushed and spoke shyly.

"So, what did you think? Did you like it?"

"Yeah, it was really impressive."

To be honest, I didn't know how Adelia had defeated Hiriya while I was talking to Leort. Since there was quite a commotion, I guess Adelia didn't even realize my lie. She only smiled brighter than before. I could feel the innocence of a young girl when she lowered her head slightly.

I guess we're done with the duel. I don't think there's any need to stay here any longer. I decided, getting up from my seat.

“We’ll be leaving now.”

“Okay. Have a nice day.”

“Thank you. Let’s go, noona.”

“Yeah.”

I didn’t seem to sweat at all, and it didn’t look like she needed to shower. I planned to finish the exercise I hadn’t done in the remaining time.

I didn’t know what Hiriya was going to do next, but for the time being, she wouldn’t harm Adelia. Even if she did, I had confidence that I could repay her several times over.

“Noona, if Hiriya comes to see you separately and says something, please let me know right away. Okay?”

“Don’t worry. Hiriya won’t be that reckless.”

Adelia cut in, showing that she knew Hiriya well. It would be great if it turned out that way, but you never knew how people’s hearts might change. Especially since she had suffered such a humiliating defeat, there was a high chance that she would harbor resentment internally.

I was worrying about the future for a moment, but then a question popped into my head, and I glanced at Adelia. It might be a sensitive topic for her, but I felt like I needed to ask.

“Um... noona.”

“Yeah?”

“Was the power gap between you and Princess Hiriya always this big?”

“... Originally, it was.”

Adelia smiled bitterly at that question, as if thinking about something from the past. She maintained the bitter smile for a moment before speaking quietly.

“That child may seem calm on the surface, but she’s secretly quite hot-tempered. She has a hard time controlling her emotions when provoked even a little. Even if you exclude that, I’m still more skilled than her...”

“Didn’t you keep losing to Princess Hiriya back then?”

“I thought it would get better if I kept losing. I thought that if I gave in, we could return to the time when we were close, and she would follow me around again, calling me ‘sister’ and all. I realized it was all in vain not long after... but it wasn’t easy to let go.”

The more she spoke, the more a sense of nostalgia crept into Adelia’s sky-blue eyes. Hope is something that feels within reach and elusive at the same time.

Adelia, too, had struggled to hold onto that hope, but it shattered into pieces during the exhibition. If I hadn’t been there to support her at that time, she would have surely crumbled beyond recovery.

I thought I could be her hope. To comfort Adelia, who was feeling down, I called out to her.

“Adelia noona.”

“Yes?”

“So, what do you want to ask me for?”

“...Huh?”

At my question, Adelia blinked her sky-blue eyes and stared at me blankly. At first, her expression seemed to convey that she didn’t quite understand the situation.

“Have you already forgotten? I told you that if I win, I’ll give you what you want.”

“Uh... well, that...”

“It doesn’t matter what it is, so don’t feel pressured and just tell me. Of course, it shouldn’t be something inappropriate. Marie has to approve of it first.”

“Um...”

Adelia’s face rapidly turned red as she made a pained sound. Even though I indirectly mentioned it, Adelia would know what I meant. I inwardly chuckled as I watched her blush like a persimmon. Adelia blushing out of embarrassment was always refreshing to see.

She had a lively and open-hearted personality, always hiding her wounds with laughter, but deep down, she was an incredibly gentle woman. Like a flower blossoming from

nourishment and love, she became more beautiful as she received more love.

I'll say it again, Adelia was by no means a person who wouldn't receive love. If she had been born into an ordinary family, she would have received more love and grown up with it than anyone else.

“Don't be embarrassed. I told you about it, didn't I?”

“Well, then...”

As I reiterated, Adelia hesitated, showing signs of wanting to say something. She looked around, lowered her head, and then quietly made her request.

“...Um, my head... could you?”

“Huh? What did you say?”

She had her head down, and her mumbling made it difficult to hear. I leaned in closer to her face and asked again.

Adelia, when I brought my ear closer, she twitched and soon whispered so that I could hear her.

“Hug me... and stroke my head...”

“... ..”

“Is this... okay?”

Adelia, who had lowered her head and timidly made the request as her sky-blue eyes met mine head-on, became moist and shiny.

Adelia is a person who exercises, so she's quite tall like Nicole. However, right now, because of my sudden growth spurt, she was looking up at me.

I momentarily froze, facing Adelia's expectant expression. How can she be so lovely? Compared to her usual behavior, I wondered if she was the same person.

Maybe it's her charming twist, or perhaps this is the true Adelia.

Gently, I held her slender body with both arms without saying a word, and Adelia let out a soft sigh. There's no need to worry about anyone seeing us since there's no one around.

Next, I tenderly pet her brown hair like I was handling a precious work of art. Every time I stroked her head, her body trembled.

“How is it? Is this okay?”

“Ah...”

As I deliberately lowered my voice and whispered, she let out a sweet sigh. I’ve felt it before, but she has some subtle cuteness.

It was when I had been holding Adelia like that for a while, stroking her hair. She buried her face in my neck and spoke in a small voice.

“...Isaac.”

“Yeah.”

“Thank you. Really.”

Swoosh

Adelia, who had just been clinging to me, seemed to gather her courage and hugged me. Unlike before, her actions seemed to be crossing a line little by little.

Still, it wasn’t a completely inappropriate gesture, so I let her be. Adelia seemed to realize that I had allowed it, and she put strength into her arms that held me.

“I’m not sure if I should say this, but I feel like I have to.”

Her husky yet charming voice pierced my ears.

“I’m so happy right now. I’ve never felt this kind of happiness in my life.”

A redemption from a troubled past.

“I’ll definitely protect you.”

A firm resolution. And...

“I love you, Isaac.”

A sincere confession. But one that I couldn’t accept immediately.

Instead, as if asking me to wait just a little, I gently stroked her head and quietly opened my mouth.

“Then that’s enough.”

If she has moved from the dark shadow of the past.

“If my sister is like that, that’s fine.”

All she has to do is envision a bright future ahead.

“Darn it! Darn it! Darn it! To someone like that...!!”

Meanwhile, in a girls’ dormitory around the same time.

After a humiliating defeat to Adelia, Hiriya was expressing her intense anger in the dormitory. The previously clean interior of the dormitory had become messy, with evidence of her frustration vividly marked on the walls, perhaps from her throwing things around haphazardly.

If she were to damage the facilities, it could potentially lead to eviction, but she was a princess. This level of damage could be overlooked with some leniency.

“Whew... Whew...”

Hiriya, panting heavily as if she had let out all the built-up anger, had her once tidy hair now disheveled, and her cold beauty was tainted by her anger. Nevertheless, even in her enraged state, her beauty resembled a work of art, despite the chaos of broken objects around her.

After a while, she took a deep breath, trying to calm her heated emotions, and sat down on the bed.

“When... did she acquire such skills...”

She recalled the events from a little while ago, particularly the moment when she had swung her sword and Adelia had defended herself.

However, the actions that followed, like the flow of water, were enough to shock Hiriya greatly and still lingered. She could somehow block the next attack by anticipating it and kicking her leg, and she seized the opportunity to strike the throat.

Even she knows that she couldn't control her emotions at the time of Adelia's provocation. She had always tried to maintain her composure as much as possible to hide her choleric nature, but it wasn't easy.

Furthermore, she had never expected Adelia, who she had easily overwhelmed in the past, to have grown this much. In reality, Adelia had intentionally lowered herself to improve their relationship, but Hiriya had no way of knowing that.

'When did she start growing stronger?'

As she ground her teeth, Hiriya predicted the catalyst for Adelia's growth. The most likely scenario was that she had unexpectedly developed her talents at the academy.

If not, there was no way the gap in their abilities would have become this wide. However, there was one thing that bothered her the most.

'You're happiest now?'

Adelia confidently stated, pointing her sword at Hiriya, who had fallen to the ground. She claimed that she was happier now than before. She asked if Hiriya was happy.

She had become a knight to avoid becoming a 'thing,' and she had gained the corresponding skills. However, she couldn't easily answer the question of whether she was truly happy.

The reason she had become a knight was to surpass Adelia. At first, she had followed her, calling her "big sister," but at some point, she had come to despise Adelia, who had exceptional talent despite being an illegitimate child.

So, she had tried to defeat Adelia and emphasize the difference between real royalty and half-breeds. Thanks to the support of the royal family in her youth, she had been able to easily overshadow her.

But now? She had been easily subdued without even doing anything. The gap in their abilities had become insurmountable.

More than that, the question of whether she was happy with herself had turned her insides upside down. It was akin to denying her entire life.

'Come to think of it...'

Before anger consumed her thoughts, Hiriya thought of Isaac, the object of Adelia's affection.

A distinctive combination of long red hair and golden eyes. His beauty was exceptional, enough to captivate many women. According to rumors circulating at the Martial arts department, he was already in a relationship with the beloved daughter of the Duke of Requilis. Yet, even Adelia had fallen for him, indicating how great his charm must be.

'Every time she looked at that red hair, Adelia's gaze changes.'

In other words, the source of her happiness lay in Isaac. As these thoughts crossed her mind, Hiriya raised the corners of her mouth.

If the source of her happiness were to disappear, would Adelia crumble once again? Hiriya knew all too well how deeply a woman who lost love could fall into despair.

Of course, it wasn't about getting rid of Isaac. If that were to happen, it would not only result in severe diplomatic losses but also, as he was soon to be the son-in-law of the Duke of Requilis, it could potentially lead to war.

The best solution was one: finding a way to bring Isaac into the Ters royal family in any manner possible. In other words, a strategic marriage.

The novels were filled with lovely stories, but reality was always a cruel law. Even if Isaac was in a relationship with Lady Requilis, the situation changed when they officially pursued marriage from the Kingdom of Ters. The son-in-law of the Ters royal family and the son-in-law of the Duke of Requilis, the decision of which side to choose has already been made.

Even if the Minerva Empire and the Kingdom of Ters clash with each other, they won't hesitate to go through with the marriage.

'The Michelle family is a baron rank, so there shouldn't be any problem sending him as a son-in-law. He's also good-looking.'

Upon closer examination, it's not as bad of a choice as one might think. Hiriya can still maintain her knighthood, and Isaac is handsome enough that just looking at his face was enough to make a decision.

Most importantly, they can take away the man Adelia loves. If the marriage is finalized, the anticipation of how desperate she will be is something to look forward to.

“First... I should find out who that child is. It should be interesting.”

As Hiriya was secretly making sinister plans in her mind.

“Achoo!”

Isaac sneezed loudly, from some unknown chill while trying to write.

“Ugh. Fuck.”

The Ink had smeared because of the spittle.

Chapter 199: 15th Book (1)

The content of Volume 15 of Xenon's Biography was primarily related to the relationship between the various races and devils. It marks the starting point where Alvenheim falls under the occupation of devils, and humanity, feeling the impending crisis, begins planning to form a united alliance.

The elves, whose homeland has already been occupied, are on a vengeful path against the devils, much like the other races, as the devils have drastically altered their way of life. Humans and dwarves have also suffered greatly from the devils and are aware of the impending catastrophe, which is why they are contributing to the formation of the united alliance.

However, there is a variable in this situation, and that is the presence of the "beastmen" or "races of the wild." Beastmen are perceived as hostile and barbaric, but this perception was outdated. Since the establishment of their own nation, they have engaged in diplomatic relations with many other countries. However, in the world of the novel, the beastmen, much like in reality, have a strained relationship with humans, and the two races were not on good terms. While some human nations have diplomatic relations with the beastmen, there was still a lot of mistrust, especially due to political manipulations by humans.

Above all, a political plot by humans has led to "Satan" becoming "Wrath" and defecting to the devil's side. Naturally, this has made the beastmen even more distrustful of humans, believing that humans resorted to underhanded tricks.

In this situation, Xenon and his party request the support of the beastmen nation, Hikton, to aid in the formation of the united alliance. The beastmen are known for their formidable strength, comparable to elven warriors, and were considered essential for the alliance.

The result?

The chieftain of the beastmen makes it clear that they will not be part of the alliance, declaring that Xenon's party, despite being representatives of the alliance, will never be

associated with them. Despite their efforts to persuade the chieftain, Xenon's party is outright ignored. Due to events related to Satan, the chieftain remains deeply distrustful of humans to the end.

The beastmen were indispensable to the alliance due to their exceptional warriors. However, at that moment the chieftain was particularly stubborn, and as Xenon and his group were about to give up.

Cain, the chieftain's son and Satan's half-brother, came to their aid.

Cain was inherently physically weak but could cleverly navigate through various crises using his extraordinary intellect. However, despite establishing a nation, the beastmen, who still had a strong survival-of-the-fittest culture, couldn't help but look down on someone like Cain.

It was only because he was a prince that they left him alone, otherwise, they would have targeted him openly and aggressively.

Even in the face of such disdain, Cain persevered, using his 'intelligence,' which could be stronger than physical strength. His presence had a significant impact due to the beastmen's aversion to politics.

With eloquent persuasion, he managed to sway the chieftain and presented a proposal that made Xenon's group ponder deeply on the issue of founding the alliance. Ultimately, the hesitant Xenon and his group ended up staying in Hikton for a few days.

During those days, Satan led his army to attack and challenged the chieftain to a sacred duel. Through it, the chieftain suffered a humiliating defeat, and Satan decisively severed the head of his father and traitor chieftain before confidently returning to his base.

The story ends here, depicting the chaos that ensued in Hikton due to the leader's absence.

[The chieftain, who disliked politics, was assassinated by his own son when he became a threat. The pinnacle of irony.]

[In the context of a nation, politics are absolutely necessary. However, it's often talked about by those who only avoid it.]

[Who will Hikton choose as the leader? Someone with strong military power as tradition dictates? Or someone with exceptional political skills, like Cain?]

After the 15th volume of the story had concluded, the overall response was lukewarm. The story was generally interesting but because it was about beings who didn't usually interact with humans, it was received as "just that" by many.

Elves had been actively engaging with humans since Arwen's reign, so they knew a lot about each other, and the demons had left a strong impression just through Sakran's story alone.

On the other hand, it wasn't the same for the beastmen. Internally, there was no way to know exactly what was happening, so it was taken as a simple "Oh well."

It wasn't a complete failure in terms of popularity and reviews, but compared to before, it could be seen as a somewhat uneventful response.

[Is the reason Animers are quiet because the tribal chief suddenly received the sacred duel application like in the novel?]

[Animers are going through political turmoil. It's possible that's why they're silent.]

Of course, it would be disappointing if speculations were left out of this. People were speculating that something similar had happened to Animers as the events in the novel unfolded.

It was all just speculation, but Animers had been so quiet until now that suspicion couldn't be avoided.

Amidst these speculations, Animers remained silent until the end.

"So, how do you feel? It's a completely different reaction than before."

"I'm really happy, can't you tell?"

I really liked these reactions. Whenever I released a new book, all sorts of unbelievable news used to erupt, giving me a headache. But this time, it was surprisingly peaceful.

People say that once you've tasted stimulation, you can't quit, but that's not true for me. Instead, every time I experienced stimulation, stress accumulated to the point of driving me crazy.

However, the speculation that I might be a prophet or a regressor still lingered, but it had definitely improved compared to before. Thanks to that, I was able to find some peace.

“It’s strange. Most people would be disappointed if the reactions were not great.”

Rina, who was sitting across from me, said with a surprised expression. From her perspective, she might think that way.

But just as when you crave water or milk when the spiciness is strong, I also felt a similar sentiment.

Lately, I had been seeking a milder taste, amidst all the stimulation. The reactions to the 15th volume were precisely that.

Sometimes, you need a stress-free and uneventful rest period.

“That could be true. But it was the same from the 11th to the 14th volume. I just want some peace of mind now.”

“And that’s why you killed Kyer?”

“... ..”

Marie, sitting on my right, subtly applied the “fact-violence,” leaving me speechless. Honestly, that was an unavoidable part for the sake of the story development. Kyer had to die for Elisha to emotionally collapse, and then Mary, who witnessed it all, would confess to Xenon.

Thanks to that, an unprecedented social turmoil known as the mixed-race incident occurred, but it was managed well, so there’s no problem.

“Yeah, right. I can’t really believe it when the person who made the Sakran story says that.”

This time, Cecily, sitting on the left, said to me in her characteristic playful tone. Come to think of it, it has been spicy since the fifth volume. Back then, demons were so obscure that it was hard to even mention them, so it must have been provocative to the point of making one’s tongue tingle. Maybe I’m a specialist in spiciness.

Although it looked ordinary in my eyes, I must have appeared provocative in the eyes of the people in this world.

“... Well, let’s move on from that anyway. I want to enjoy the situation now. By the way, why hasn’t Animers said anything?”

“This is just my guess, but as it appeared in your book, they might be going through a political turmoil. It’s a bit strange that there hasn’t been any reaction until now.”

Rina expressed her opinion gracefully as she sipped her coffee. It was a story similar to what I had seen in the newspaper. After the end of the racial war, Hick personally founded the country. It began as a small village, but word spread, people gathered, formed a city, and eventually established a nation.

Now, 300 years have passed, and unlike Helium, which was forcibly isolated, Animers was thoroughly isolationist. Occasionally, they engaged in trade with neighboring countries, but it’s a small-scale operation. However, it’s not like they were telling humans not to go abroad. You can see beastmen on the streets of the Academy working as security guards.

Instead, most of them were second-generation, which means they were born in the human world. Unlike the demons, the humans born and raised in Animers didn’t often venture outside.

“So, we’re feeling something unusual on our end too, and we’re sending reinforcements. Politically, it could create chaos, which might be an opportunity for us. Alvenheim didn’t give us a chance because the queen handled things well, but Animers is a bit different.”

“What do you plan to do if there’s a situation?”

“Of course, we should exploit that opening. In the future, the enemy might not be elves or demons, but beastmen. We need to weaken them in advance.”

Rina spoke with a calm voice, but I couldn’t help but be impressed. I also had the same idea that if we considered beastmen as enemies, they might as well be humans with special abilities.

There is a historical record of beastmen massacring other races 300 years ago, and each individual among them consumes an insane amount of food. Even someone as agile as Leona could easily devour three T-bone steaks.

So, even if it’s due to food shortages, it won’t be long before beastmen come into conflict with the races. Coincidentally, they also have a birth rate similar to humans, so their population will increase to saturation levels soon.

‘I wonder what Leona is doing right now?’

I thought about Leona while listening to Rina's words. I expected her to be reading Xenon's Biography, and I'm curious about what she's thinking after reading this volume.

I should probably meet her separately soon, perhaps using steak as an excuse, and ask all the questions that have been piling up.

"Well, I'll stop the boring political talk here. By the way, Isaac, have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"News has it that Cardinal Kate is coming to the Minerva Empire."

"Oh, if that's the case, I'm aware of it too. Didn't she mention visiting the Academy as well?"

When Mari heard the news for the first time and tilted her head, the person next to her spoke in a cheerful voice. It seemed she had also heard the rumors. I'm familiar with Kate as well.

She ascended to the position of cardinal at a young age and became a high inquisitor. She also made a pilgrimage to find me. I don't know what she wants to do by finding me, but for now, I think she won't do anything unnecessary since she's a high inquisitor. Besides, she probably won't find me anyway.

"Yeah, it's better to be careful. If the Luminous Order discovers you, the situation could get really troublesome."

"It's fine. They probably won't recognize me anyway."

Instead, I planned to visit the temple this weekend. The reason was thanks to the two women sitting on either side of me. Marie, well, she's been trying to restrain herself lately, but she's still lively, and Cecily gives me a sense of exhaustion every time she does it.

I was improving her physical fitness day by day through exercise with Adelia, but even for me, it's tough to go up against the two of them. The divine power of the Luminous was desperately needed in this situation.

"Still, be cautious. Luminous might have issued a divine order. Especially since your hair color is quite noticeable, it could be risky."

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

“But Isaac.”

“Yeah?”

I turned my head in response to Cecily’s call and faced her. Then, with a tone that hinted at something bothering her, she said to me.

“Have you felt like someone has been following or watching you recently?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Well, it happened earlier, and I’ve been feeling like someone’s been following me for a while. Any idea who it might be?”

“Hmm...”

I pondered her question carefully. Recently, I had also felt like someone was trailing behind me. It wasn’t just a simple mistake, and if Cecily was mentioning it, someone was definitely stalking us. The gaze was probably...

‘...Cherry. It has to be her.’

There was no one else but Cherry with her pink hair and prominent chest. She had been coming to Elena’s lab whenever she found the opportunity, even though she wasn’t even taking the same classes. She remained unswayed even when I scolded her.

‘But she’s a good kid in her own way...’

She had a difficult home environment, much like Adelia, and it had messed her up, but her core personality was decent. She seemed mentally fragile, to the point where she couldn’t even express herself properly, which is why I was gently trying to comfort her now.

Of course, stalking was still wrong. I planned to talk to her separately and tell her that such behavior was unacceptable.

“No, I don’t know.”

For now, I decided to pretend not to know.

Two days later.

[Animers. Finally, they make their stance clear! Currently, Animers have no issues at all.]

Animers, who had been keeping their mouths shut until now, have made their stance clear. At first glance, it seemed fine, but...

‘These guys really have a problem, don’t they.’

In reality, there was a clear political issue. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have hurriedly released a statement.

‘Not again, please.’

Please don’t do this again. Let me rest for a bit.

Chapter 200: 15th Book (2)

There are no problems at all. If you look at it casually, it might really be nothing. However, for people with questionable intentions, especially politicians, making such statements undermines your credibility to nearly zero.

If someone has remained silent all this time and suddenly said something like that out of the blue, anyone would be suspicious. Furthermore, it's not just a few individuals who are being quiet, it's happening at a national level, and that alone is cause for concern.

Animers was founded 300 years ago through the heroic efforts of Hick, but since then, there hasn't been any significant movement.

It may be to strengthen their foundation, but it's been not just decades, but centuries. Now it was time to turn our gaze outward. If they were preparing for war while avoiding the eyes of others, from the perspective of other countries, it would be like lightning striking a clear sky. We would have no choice but to quickly dispatch our forces.

[Is it really nothing at all? The Minerva Empire, the Kingdom of Ters, and many other countries are sending envoys to Animers...]

[Historically, when civilizations are established, culture naturally develops. Politics are no different, and Animers is likely experiencing this phenomenon.]

[The extension of politics is war. We must prevent their gaze from turning outward.]

With Animers saying 'there are no problems,' the world once again stirred. If there is indeed political turmoil within Animers, other countries should be cautious.

Especially since during the race war, humans slaughtered the beastmen by tribes, they have to be careful. It was a time when wars were waged on what were originally unbelievable pretexts. Therefore, it means that we need to find out about the internal situation in any way we can to prepare.

We can consider it a somewhat tense situation. Volume 15 of Xenon's Biography was released, but there was no response, and for this reason, concerns started to snowball.

[Was the tribal chief assassinated due to political problems as in Xenon's Biography?]

[Our concerns are gradually becoming reality. Could Xenon have anticipated even this?]

[Animers, which had no significant movements since its founding. The characteristics of the aggressive beastmen are something we can never ignore.]

When each person was pouring out various predictions, naturally, attention turned to my side as well. In general, the opinions were as follows:

As in Xenon's Biography, a person who had once been embroiled in political issues and had fallen out of favor with the tribe returned and challenged the chieftain to a sacred duel. As a result, the chieftain's position became vacant, and there is internal turmoil as a consequence of this issue.

In reality, tradition and culture served as important means of uniting a tribe, but the beastmen people could be considered somewhat savage. "Sacred duel" was a culture where everything of the opponent, including their life, can be taken depending on the outcome. While this may not be a problem when scattered in tribal units, in a situation where a nation has been established, it could lead to numerous issues.

If, as in Xenon's Biography, someone challenged the chieftain, in other words, the king, to a sacred duel and wins, the subsequent consequences couldn't be ignored. The pillar of the nation was removed, and it won't be long before everything fell apart.

[Should we abandon tradition and culture for the sake of the nation? Or should we persist and eventually return to the way things were?]

[The beastmen people consider the duel sacred, believing that it is watched over by the goddesses of creation and nature, Harte.]

[It's good to maintain culture and tradition, but as seen with the Elders of Alvenheim, stubbornly adhering to tradition eventually leads to decline.]

As a result, people began to deeply contemplate tradition and culture once again. Should they continue their stable lives by maintaining tradition and culture? Or should they appropriately address the irrationality and inequality embedded in those traditions and culture and move forward?

Conveniently, there were good examples in Alvenheim and the Elves, so numerous scholars presented their opinions based on this. It caused another social phenomenon, much like the half-blood crisis.

“What’s this again?”

I couldn’t help but feel puzzled as I read the articles in the newspaper. They had been unusually quiet lately, but it seemed like they were now causing a commotion among themselves.

Even though the diplomatic envoy dispatched to Animers had not returned yet, it was confirmed that there was already a problem. This conclusion was based on the information from the Xenon incident.

If it had been earlier, I would have been frantic, but now I could just laugh it off. In reality, it was close to a state of resignation.

‘Why don’t I ask Leona?’

I wanted to ask Leona, who was closely related to the situation, if there really was a problem with Animers. She had always taken pride in being a noble, but she had suppressed that pride and enrolled at the Halo Academy.

I pondered about Leona for a moment and then closed the newspaper, standing up from my seat. It was best to remain quiet for now since any interference might lead to suspicion.

‘For now...’

Should I go grab a meal? I was currently in the laboratory. Elena had mentioned that she needed to discuss something with other professors, and Cyndi was dozing off on the couch across from me.

Even with a degree, Cyndi still seemed tired, and the dark circles under her eyes seemed even darker than before.

I felt sorry about waking her up, so it might be better to go and have a meal on my own for now.

Carefully, making sure not to wake Cindy, I opened the door and stepped out of the laboratory. And then...

“Huh? Cherry?”

“Oh, hello...”

I came face to face with Cherry, who had been waiting outside the door. I immediately recognized her by her pink hair reminiscent of cherry blossoms and her eyes that seemed to lack any vitality.

I blinked as if I couldn't understand when I saw her waiting in front of the laboratory. I checked my watch, and it was indeed the time when classes ended. However, it was a bit strange for her to be waiting right in front of the door as I came out.

“Do you have some business with me?”

“No, I... I mean, I wanted to have lunch with Assistant Isaac...”

“With me?”

“Yes. Assistant Isaac usually goes to eat around 12:30, right after the class ends, so I waited for you.”

“... ..”

What's going on? This is creepy. I hesitated as Cherry spoke. In fact, it wasn't the first time Cherry had waited for me in front of the laboratory. However, this was the first time she had mentioned my daily routine like this. Could she be turning into a stalker? Considering Cherry's unstable mental state, it wasn't an entirely impossible scenario.

“...Huh?”

I felt a brief shiver on my arm, and then I noticed the papers she was holding so carefully. I had only been focused on her face and her eyes, so I realized it belatedly.

It wasn't the torn and footmarked paper from before but a new, very clean manuscript paper. It seemed like she had gone through the editing process, just as I had suggested.

I pointed to the paper and asked.

“Cherry, did you rewrite this?”

“Yes... I wanted to show it to Assistant Isaac today... Hehe.”

She blushed and smiled as if embarrassed, but her eyes remained lifeless, creating a tense atmosphere.

Nevertheless, compared to when she moved like a lifeless doll back then, she had clearly improved. At that time, she was practically at the level of a moving corpse.

Seeing Cherry gradually come to life, I smiled and decided to have a meal together with her.

I could check the manuscript later so there shouldn't be any problems.

“Alright then. Since things have turned out this way, let's go have a meal. We can check it after we eat.”

“Sure... Thank you.”

“If you're thankful, you can treat me to a meal later.”

I said it as a joke, but I intended to pay for the meal.

I had to do at least this much for the dream sapling that had been trampled to the point of being impossible to revive, but had managed to sprout again.

Cherry blinked her eyes slowly at my joke and then whispered quietly with a slight smile.

“...I can give you something better than a meal.”

“What?”

“I can give you something better than a meal.”

“Oh? What is it?”

She answered my question with a smile and her distinctive melancholic voice.

“Someday, I'll give it to you. It'll be really delicious.”

“Hmm... Alright.”

As soon as I heard her answer, my gaze shifted towards Cherry's chest. Even though it was covered by her school uniform, it was a substantial bust that could rival Cecily's.

Surely, she wasn't comparing herself to dessert like Cecily did. I couldn't help but think in that direction, wondering if there was some kind of lewd intention behind it.

Of course, Cherry wasn't as provocative as Marie or Cecily, so the likelihood of that was very low. She probably genuinely meant that she would give me something tastier than a meal.

'...My mind is playing tricks on me.'

I shook my head left and right. What had I been thinking, entertaining such thoughts about someone whose mental state was already unstable? Cherry, like Adelia, had her dreams and hopes torn apart due to an unfortunate family background, only managing to piece them back together with great effort. Thinking strange things about a child like her was something I shouldn't be doing as both her colleague and senior.

"I'll look forward to it. Will you make it yourself?"

"...Yes."

"Can you tell me what it is a little?"

"It's hard to explain, but..."

Cherry, her words somewhat blurry, chuckled bashfully before speaking.

"It definitely smells like cherry blossoms."

"Cherry blossom scent... that's unique."

Seeing that she's referring to it as cherry blossom scent, she probably intends to give me a food item that reminds her of herself. It was charming and, above all, cute. I walked alongside Cherry, looking forward to the day she would give me the food she had in mind. First, we had to figure out what to eat...

"...Cherry?"

"Yes?"

"Hmm... never mind."

Cherry grabbed my long, dyed hair as we continued walking. Naturally, with her holding onto me like this, we would attract attention from people around us. In truth, this wasn't the first time Cherry had grabbed my hair. She did it when we first met, and she

continued to do so every time she looked at me. Because of this, I had scolded her once, but she just giggled and showed no signs of changing this habit. I had ultimately given up halfway.

“My hair is that great, huh?”

“Yes... it’s soft... red... it smells nice... and it’s delicious.”

“What?”

“What’s this nonsense again?”

I exclaimed in surprise and turned to Cherry. But Cherry, as if asking why I was staring, tilted her head and blinked slowly.

“Why?”

“...Never mind.”

Maybe I misheard “delicate.” I held the awkwardness in my heart and continued walking to the restaurant.

“Hmm...”

I heard a strange noise from behind as I walked away.

Exactly three days later.

[The chief of the Animers has been assassinated! A clan dissatisfied with the policies, as described in the book, applied for the sacred duel...]

[Since then, the Animers have become a cauldron of chaos. They indiscriminately applied for the sacred duel to each other...]

[The foundation of the nation is shaking violently.]

“Ah, damn it. Again?”

It seems like there’s never a calm day.

Translators note:

Chapter 200! Woohoo!