두부두부 판타지 장편소설
판타지 세상에서
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Information

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

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

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

Chapter 201: 15th Book (3)

The information hastily relayed by the envoy returning from Animers can be summarized roughly as follows:

A rebellion or coup occurred, resulting in the death of the Great Chieftain. Then, the one who took the Chieftain's place ruled for a while and once again faced a sacred duel and lost their life. As a result, the position of the Great Chieftain is vacant, causing internal confusion.

When a nation is founded, it is natural for a power structure to emerge, along with people who are dissatisfied with that power structure. The caste system itself represents the pinnacle of irrationality and inequality. However, if the ruling class governs well and does not become corrupt, the likelihood of rebellion is significantly reduced. Even if someone blinded by power incites a rebellion, if it proceeds without legitimacy and justification, the nation will ultimately stop it.

As the most significant example, we can look at the Jayros Revolution that erupted in the Ters Kingdom. The Ters Kingdom is renowned as a cultural powerhouse and is considered a beautiful country not unlike Albenheim. However, prior to the Jayros Revolution, culture, which includes the arts, was the exclusive domain of the nobility. Culture was not permitted for the common people, and the reputation of being a nation of culture was limited to a tiny fraction.

If a commoner engaged in the arts? They were immediately suppressed and thrown into prison. In severe cases, they would have their hands cut off, inflicting horrendous suffering. Some conscientious high-ranking nobles protested against this in the upper echelons, but the response they received was demotion and loss of status. This became the catalyst for the Jayros Revolution.

Although the Jayros Revolution couldn't completely overturn the upper class, it did change the king, and, furthermore, art began to permeate among the common people. Thanks to that, the Ters Kingdom even gained the title of the 'Land of Culture.'

Of course, we couldn't possibly know how much blood and sweat it took to earn that title. Rebellions like this alone provide a fragmented glimpse into a nation's history.

[It shows what happens to a country that clings to tradition. If civilization is to be achieved, the traditions that hinder it must be discarded.]

[Even if not discarded, flexibility is necessary to avoid chaos.]

[Hick's goal was to unite the people through culture and tradition, but ironically, that same culture and tradition are once again dividing the Animers.]

The Animers' coup was a very natural phenomenon, but it's slightly different. According to what the envoy revealed, the position of the Great Chieftain has changed several times in the past ten years.

Due to a very unique culture called the 'Sacred Duel,' the throne of the ruler has been vacant, leading to a state of confusion in the country. It seems the original Great Chieftain was wise and skillful, governing the Animers well and actively engaging with neighboring nations, but that was no longer the case. Openly tyrannizing and indulging in debauchery, he lost his life within just two years.

Since then, the Animers have split into two factions over the position of the Great Chieftain. One faction emphasizes 'authenticity' and is centered around lion beastmen like Leona.

On the contrary, the other faction proposes discarding traditions that have shaken the foundation of the nation, suggesting that the country should be governed in a different way, not necessarily by a Great Chieftain. Although there isn't a clear leader for this faction, most of them lean toward abolishing traditions.

In other words, it can be seen as a confrontation between a king and his followers who are tightly bound by tradition and loyalty. The reason for the vacant position of the Great Chieftain is also because these two forces could not find a suitable point of agreement.

The excessive occurrence of sacred duels was ironically fulfilling their justifications. Since they cannot communicate with each other, sacred duels are happening countless times, and as a result, there are blemishes on tradition.

If this continues, it may become chaotic, and the foundation of Animers might be uprooted. Both sides are not fools, so they were trying to prevent this fact from leaking out.

Of course, after the release of Volume 15 of Xenon's Biography, things changed. Maybe they are also diligently searching for me over there.

It's a story from a distant land, but I can't help but feel tense since it has an indirect connection to me.

'Luminous-nim.'

[Speak.]

'I'm not really an amnesiac regressor or a prophet, right?'

[… …]

Now, with my batting average in who knows how many seasons, even I began to doubt myself and went to the Luminous's Temple personally.

Perhaps, as the journalists speculated, I can't remember due to constraints. Such an unbelievable suspicion that at first, I dismissed it as nonsense, but as more and more incidents occurred in succession, I began to nurture the seed of doubt.

Of course, I know it's an unbelievable story. Nevertheless, in this world, there is such a thing as "what if."

Due to the incident related to Animers, people's gazes around me became peculiar. Marie immediately asked me, "Are you really from the future?" so you can imagine to some extent how it is.

[Absolutely not. I can swear on my divinity. You're just a soul who crossed from Earth to here, simply an ordinary novelist.]

'But why do these things happen with every new release? Can this really be considered a coincidence?'

[…Honestly, even I find it unbelievable.]

'… …'

Even the deity showed a reaction of "this is a bit…". As absurd as it may be, it significantly boosted my credibility.

In fact, partly, I'm complaining to Luminous. The world won't leave me alone, and whenever something happens, they force-fit it to me. It's tear-inducing.

Luminous advised that things would gradually get better over time, but if I continue like this, there will be no solution. I need to come up with a solution somehow…

'...How can it be resolved?'

[How about reverting back a few days and starting over? With your current achievments, you can go back two weeks.]

'No, I'll pass. I don't want to redo the story, and it's not that urgent.'

Regressing was an act suitable for urgent situations, and it's not appropriate in the current situation. I'll just endure it.

Besides, even if I redo the story, people will surely view it in strange ways again. In the current situation, no matter what happens, something will explode.

Therefore, the only thing I need to do right now is one thing.

'...Instead, I'll ask for some Holy Power. I've been through a lot of exhausting things lately.'

[Are those kids bothering you a lot?]

'Well, that's one way to put it, but the situation is just tiring in its own right.'

I need to resolve the stress and fatigue that has been building up over the past few days with the holy power from Luminous. The current situation is one thing, but fundamentally, Marie and Cecily are both troubling me. It was a relief that we reached a compromise last time. We had a hard time because we argued about who would go first. And on top of that, Rina, who was sitting across from me, blushed.

I don't know what she's thinking, but every time our eyes meet, she blushes. Lately, she has been asking subtly where I'm going whenever I send signals to Marie or Cecily. She probably doesn't have such preferences, but for some reason, the mood has become subtle.

[There might be more than just those kids… If it's already this tough…]

'What? What did you say?'

[It's nothing. And you, too. I wouldn't recommend coming to get holy power just because you're finding it hard. You should increase your physical strength, using holy power to compensate won't make any difference.]

‘I’m working on it, but it’s hard to increase physical stamina in a short period. Right now, this is the only option I have.’

[Hmm…]

Luminous showed a thoughtful expression in response to my words and then spoke up about one possible solution.

[In a short period, there is a way to increase your stamina. Especially for someone like you, who has almost limitless divine power, it should be quite suitable.]

‘Oh? Can you tell me about it?’

[I have no problem telling you… but there will be some changes. Just as your hair has grown longer according to Morra’s taste, when you use this method, the scent of lilacs will emanate from your body.]

‘Ah, I’ve heard of that.’

Devotees favored by gods undergo various changes. One prominent change is the scent that emanates from their bodies.

According to the myth, Luminous enjoys the scent of lilacs, and the more favor he bestows upon a follower, the stronger the scent of lilacs emanates from them. This is why those who worship Luminous often have a culture of using lilac perfumes.

In addition, Mora priests emanate the scent of peaches, and Harts’, the mother of the siblings and the goddess of creation and nature, have a fundamentally different aura.

‘Surely Luminous-nim doesn’t engage in strange practices like Mora…’

[I’m different from that mischievous one. The lilac scent alone is enough for me.]

Indeed, siblings will treat each other like siblings. In this way, they truly are godlike beings with human-like traits.

‘Thank you. So, can you tell me what this method is?’

[Do you happen to know much about paladins?]

‘If you mean paladins…’

As you all know, Paladins are the personnel responsible for the military within the church. Instead of directly using their holy power, they primarily utilize their divine power for physical enhancement rather than healing. The Grand Inquisitor and Cardinal, Kate, is a Paladin.

Usually, Paladins hold a much higher rank than regular clergy. They are highly esteemed because they do not neglect personal training, even while praying. They are a combination of both martial and intellectual prowess, which is why their rank is so elevated.

Furthermore, Paladins are stronger than ordinary knights since they can wield both magical and holy powers. Rumor has it that Kate's abilities rival those of the Elven warriors, so you can roughly estimate how formidable she is.

[The reason why Paladins can be so strong is because of their divine power. Using divine power for physical enhancement leaves an imprint on their bodies. Training one's physical endurance by expending holy power is much more efficient than using regular magic power.]

'You didn't tell me about using holy power before?'

[Don't worry about that. Holy power and magic power have a similar nature, so you can think of magic power as a form of holy power.]

'Why didn't you tell me earlier?'

[Well… Anyway, are you willing to accept it?]

'Yes.'

Since I can practically receive an endless amount of holy power, it would be foolish to give it up. The strong scent of lilacs was not a problem either.

In fact, the scent changed pleasantly, becoming sweet like the fragrance of flowers. Originally, I didn't even use perfume.

[…It'll probably make it easier for that child to find you.]

'Huh?'

[It's nothing.]

After receiving divine power, I left the private chapel.

“Sniff, sniff. Sniff… Isn’t this a bit overwhelming?”

I vividly felt the intense lilac scent vibrating within my body.

*****

Creak

It wasn’t long after Isaac had left his private prayer room. The door to the private prayer room next to him opened, revealing a woman. She had impressive features, with golden hair woven into one and emerald eyes that shone like emeralds.

She possessed a pure beauty, like a country girl, with an aura that seemed infinitely compassionate. She was dressed in the white holy robes typically worn by the Luminous Order, which left little to the imagination, accentuating her voluptuous figure. From her ample chest to her slender waist, wide hips, and finally, the fair thighs revealed by the side slit.

Her name was none other than the Cardinal and High Inquisitor, Kate Louise Angelica, who despite her appearance as a Holy Knight was known for her cruelty towards heretics and demons.

“…Huh?”

Kate blinked her green eyes and wrinkled her nose as soon as she stepped outside. At first, she was unsure, but the intense lilac fragrance wafted into her nostrils.

While she continued to inhale the scent and look around, a female priestess approached her.

“Have you finished your prayers, Kate Reverend?”

“Sniff, sniff. Oh, yes. Sister Anna. But this scent…”

“Oh, this scent? I don’t know who it is, but someone must have sprayed lilac perfume.”

Perfume… The acolyte didn’t think much of it, but Kate thought differently. Because this was definitely not an artificial scent.

The reason she could distinguish between artificially made perfume and natural scent was simple. Just as her body received the favor of the deity, she also exuded a strong lilac fragrance. And the scent she smelled outside the sanctuary was astonishingly

identical to her own. In other words, someone who attended this temple was receiving the favor of Luminous.

With a smile as compassionate as any saint in the world, Kate asked the acolyte.

“The scent is still strong, so someone must have gone in just now. Who was it?”

“No, they didn’t come in, but someone came out from the adjacent prayer room. Their name… was it Isaac? He had red hair and impressive golden eyes.”

“Oh, right… Wait a minute. Red hair and golden eyes?”

“Yes.”

“Red hair and golden eyes…”

Kate sat there, deep in thought, touching her chin as if there was something bothering her. The combination of red hair and golden eyes was rare, even when you looked around the world. From the start, having red hair itself was quite unusual.

“In the oracle, it was clearly…”

Kate, who was meticulously reviewing the oracle Luminous had given her, snapped out of her reverie. The oracle was so vague that it was difficult to make a judgment. It only pointed to an inexperienced person, so it was best to confirm it directly.

“Did that saint’s name happen to be Isaac? Do you happen to know where he resides?”

“Judging by his school uniform, he seems to be a student at Halo Academy… Probably.”

“Halo Academy… I see.”

Then, Kate continued with a friendly smile,

“Thanks for your help. It’s been really helpful.”

With her hand gently resting on her lower abdomen.

Chapter 202: 15th Book (4)

It's common for a bachelor's home to have a distinct 'bachelor' smell, as they say. In fact, not only men but most places where adults live alone are like this.

So we use air fresheners, ventilate the room, or take a shower every day to get rid of that smell. I'm also someone who dislikes that smell, so I frequently ventilate the place.

However, now there's no need for that. A delightful lilac fragrance emanates from my body, and all I need to do is ventilate appropriately.

Even if I briefly go outside and return, my room is filled with the lingering scent of flowers, which is nice, but it's not without its problems.

"Hey, did you happen to spray perfume?"

"No."

"Then why does this smell emanate from you?"

Immediate reactions from those around me, especially as I am a teaching assistant who often has to visit the lab. The lab was filled with the fragrant scent of flowers.

"It's a nice smell… better than the musty smell of books…"

"It's not about whether it's nice. My nose feels bothered."

"Professor doesn't know about it… How fragrant can flowers be…"

While Cindy liked the lilac fragrance, Elena wrinkled her nose to block my smell. It seems that Elena, unlike Cindy, has a sensitive sense of smell.

Nevertheless, the sense of smell was the fastest to become accustomed among bodily senses, so it didn't take long for her to adapt. I had to open the window for ventilation, though.

These reactions were the same when I met with other people after class.

Sniff Sniff Sniff

“Isaac, did you put on perfume?”

“No?”

“But there’s a pleasant smell coming from you. Sniff Sniff.”

When I was on a date with Marie after a long time, she playfully nuzzled her nose into various parts of my body and sniffed. I chuckled at the subtle feeling but remained still because Marie’s actions were cute. Marie has always liked the scent that emanates from me, so this situation was familiar. It’s a bit of a problem that she doesn’t care even if people passing by give her strange looks though.

“You didn’t change your soap… Did you really put on perfume?”

“No, I didn’t. I just received holy power from Luminous.” “Holy power? Ah, that makes sense. So, is this the scent of lilac flowers then?”

Marie also knew about the myths well, so she noticed that the scent coming from my body was that of lilac flowers. However, she continued to press her face against my body to smell it.

With a warm smile, I carefully stroked her white hair, as if she were a puppy trying to recognize her owner’s scent. Coincidentally, as Marie, who had her face pressed against my chest, received my gentle touch on her head, she pulled her head away and met my gaze exactly. Her clear blue eyes were truly adorable.

“It’s not too strong, is it?”

“Yeah! I really like it. How long will this last?”

“Well, I’m not sure. Probably for a while. I plan to go to the temple every weekend.”

The method that Luminous told me is very simple. After receiving enough holy power for the lilac scent to emanate, all you have to do is exercise more vigorously than usual. Since holy power relieves the burden on the body, physical strength can be increased dramatically, and the amount of holy power consumed increased as the intensity did.

It’s a very simple principle, but are knights really just knights for nothing? Since sincerity and patience are important, it may seem simple but is a difficult task.

“Why a temple? Even if it’s bothersome?”

“… …”

I heard that question and stared at Marie. A woman who receives love is beautiful in itself, but Marie has become more and more beautiful as the days went by.

Her snow-white hair gleamed as if light were reflecting off it, and her skin, despite not receiving any special care, was incredibly elastic.

Perhaps it was because of her growth phase, or maybe there was another reason, but her figure was also improving rapidly.

She was completely transforming from the appearance of a young girl into a full-fledged adult.

“Huh?”

“Yeah, why am I so tired because of someone else?”

When I pinched her cheek, she made a cute sound for a moment, then blinked at the words that followed.

Afterward, she herself smiled, seemingly embarrassed by something.

“Anyway, it’s better than being a bachelor. I’ve been more careful lately.”

My cute girlfriend defended herself with pronunciation that was all wrinkled up due to the pinching of her cheek.

I indulged in stroking her cheek to my heart’s content, enjoying the taut and springy feeling, and it was worth seeing Marie’s face getting messed up here and there.

I pressed her cheeks like steamed buns and then let go as I opened my mouth.

“Yeah, thankfully, you’ve been more self-controlled lately. Just before the break, it seemed like there was no sign of the burning firewood going out.”

“That’s the old days. Besides, the fire goes out if there’s no fuel. I also felt like it suddenly went out at some point.”

“Are you saying that you like me less than before?”

“Oh, come on. I was just using a metaphor, my desire is the same, and I still like Isaac. Isn’t it enough that you’re right here?”

Marie grabbed my arm while speaking in an affectionate tone, even rubbing her cheek against me like a puppy. Until recently, Marie had been becoming more demanding, but nowadays, she was showing more affection. In contrast, Cecily, as before, was becoming more demanding, just as Marie used to be.

Though our bodies were tired, our hearts were at peace, radiating different charms. Honestly, compared to my previous life, I could say that I was living a blessed life.

Sniff-sniff sniff

“Can you please stop sniffing me?”

“Just a little longer. It’s quite addictive.”

“Didn’t you say the same thing before?”

“Did I? Well, maybe you’re just that appealing. Is it the scent coming from your body, or is it coming from somewhere else? I suddenly became curious.”

“…”

Today, it’s confirmed that I’m heading straight to the inn once again. There was no desire in Marie’s gaze, but on the contrary, it was filled with curiosity.

I think we might go to the inn to satisfy that curiosity. I forced a smile and changed the subject. There’s a question I wanted to ask Marie.

“By the way, Marie, do you happen to know anything about Leona?”

“Huh? Ah, that girl with the reddish-brown hair? Of course, I know her.”

The reason Marie knows Leona is simple. Leona has an exemplary image among students of the same grade. She’s always diligent in class and participates in almost every class. Her passion for knowledge was exceptional, earning her the favor of many professors. Moreover, her beauty was outstanding, and her lion-like mane of hair made her easily recognizable among her peers.

“That girl didn’t attend this class. I’m curious if she attended any other classes apart from history.”

“Well… no? She didn’t attend any other classes either. Maybe there’s some reason.”

“Hmm…”

The fact that Leona, who used to attend all classes, is absent from all of them… It’s undoubtedly related to the Animers. Perhaps she went outside the Halo Academy to avoid being noticed by others. I also feel concerned indirectly because I might have some responsibility in this.

From the very beginning, Leona had concealed his identity to gain knowledge and had entered the Halo Academy. Given her complex family background, it was highly likely that complicated circumstances were at play, much like Adelia.

“By the way, what about Leona?”

“The professor asked about her. Well, everyone has personal reasons, you know.”

“That’s true.”

Isaac thought deeply about how he could help Leona, but he couldn’t find any suitable way. During the similar incident with the Half-Blood Crisis, Arwen could have asked for his help, but the conditions were entirely different. Arwen knew that he was Xenon and, besides, she was an elf. She could request help anytime, anywhere.

On the other hand, Leona had no idea that he was Xenon. It was a very ambiguous situation for her to request help from his side.

“Isaac.”

“Yeah?”

“What do you think about the Animers situation? It’s been quite chaotic lately.”

I was momentarily lost in thought, but when Marie asked such a question, I couldn’t help but feel surprised. I hesitated for a moment and then regained my composure.

The current situation with Animer was so serious that it wouldn’t be surprising if a civil war broke out at any moment. Knowing that a major disaster could occur if they fought each other, they remained silent, like a powder keg. So, it was likely that the world was watching closely.

A king who adheres to tradition, and on the contrary, vassals who believe tradition should be discarded. From a distance, it may seem like a battle between the two, but

fundamentally, it's a fight over the identity of the beastmen.

Due to the sacred duel, doubts began to arise about the tradition and culture that had united the beastmen into one.

"Well… it's more complicated than I thought. Tradition is something that beastmen cannot easily let go of. Do you know about Hick?"

"No. I don't. Who is he?"

"You can think of him as the wealthiest of the beastmen and the founding king. He was the hero who gathered the scattered beastmen from all over the world after the tribal war 300 years ago. However, the problem is that when he united the beastmen tribes, he made clever use of tradition."

Hick was a beastmen who, like the Elven warriors, was incredibly strong among those who fought in the tribal war. Naturally, his fame was not only known among the beastmen but also among the humans who were once his enemies.

However, no matter how powerful an individual with strong military force might be, he could only witness beastmen indiscriminately being slaughtered by humans because they united.

If he were an ordinary beastman, he would have been enraged and would have been a great calamity to others. However, Hick suppressed his 'anger' and began by addressing the fundamental issues one by one. As a result, he realized that the beastmen could not unite as one and were scattered.

"Hick applied for the sacred duel to each tribe through an unbelievable show of force. But the interesting thing is that he didn't apply for the sacred duel recklessly. If you look at the records, 60% were persuaded, 30% passed through the sacred duel, and 10% were others. And even those who lost the sacred duel didn't lose their life."

"He didn't take their lives? If you forcibly bring in people who don't want to come under you, won't nine out of ten become rebellious?"

Marie asked with a puzzled expression. In fact, it's a downside of the sacred duel. The outcome is determined by victory or defeat regardless of the other person's intentions. In other words, it means you have to follow it no matter what complaints you may have. In the worst case, you could lose your life.

The tradition of the sacred duel is good for enforcing your will, but it comes with countless downsides.

“Yeah, that’s why if you didn’t want to go through with it, he would have to kill you. It’s a kind of choice he gave. He defeated them in the sacred duel, but then gave them the final choice.”

“Wouldn’t that be seen as an insult? In your book, you said that in the sacred duel, you must always follow the winner’s decision.”

“That’s also true. But Hcik never ‘forced’ anyone. He simply gave them a choice. Most of the time, it’s the other side that initiates the sacred duel. Hick respected the other person’s wishes and didn’t shed unnecessary blood.”

“Oh… there was a reason he could become the king. With that kind of inclusiveness, he had no choice but to become a king.”

“Yeah. That’s true, but…”

I looked up at the sky with a perplexed expression. Like Hick’s example, traditions and cultures tend to deteriorate as time goes by. This phenomenon was evident in the current Animers.

For the beastmen, tradition played a crucial role in uniting the community, but that was about it. To maintain it, flexibility was necessary, but tradition was hindering that.

You could say the situation in Alvenheim was similar to the Elder’s Council. Tradition united the race, but it was gradually decaying.

The dilemma Animers faced was similar to wanting to eliminate tradition, which is both the country’s asset and the foundation of its establishment, tarnishing Hick’s reputation. Yet, preserving it jeopardizes the nation’s existence.

Animers found themselves in a precarious situation.

“It’s ironic that this tradition, which is currently dividing the nation, has led to this situation.”

“Hmm… do you have any solutions in mind? We’ve faced similar situations before.”

Marie mentioned, referring to the mixed-blood issue, as she knew about Arwen’s relationship with me.

“The situation is quite different from what it was back then. This isn’t something that can be resolved with a speech. It involves tampering with a tradition that once united the tribes. Moreover, the sacred duel places more importance on pure force than politics or strategy, so they might encounter resistance.”

“It’s more complicated than I thought.”

“Indeed. If I were to suggest a solution… they’d have to adapt the sacred duel tradition to the current circumstances. It’s no longer about tribes; it’s about the nation now. For example…”

“For example?”

“The sacred duel as some kind of tournament… Wait a moment.”

This voice wasn’t Marie’s, and it didn’t come from beside me either. I blinked and turned around to see what was happening.

To my surprise, a copper-haired beastwoman named Leona, whom I couldn’t even tell had come close, was eavesdropping on our conversation from behind.

“Could you please tell me quickly?”

Desperation filled her golden eyes.

Translators note:

Chapter 203: Tradition (1)

Leona approached silently like a true beast, without making any noise from behind. Marie and I were taken aback as we saw Leona appear behind us without a sound.

I'm not sure if she came to listen to our conversation, but her golden eyes shone like a wild animal, showing a sense of urgency.

"Leona? Is that you, Leona?"

Marie asked with a trembling voice when the subtle tension settled. It seemed to be because of the different atmosphere and the golden eyes that had changed from her usual blue eyes.

Unlike her usual self with blue eyes as a model student, she now had somewhat rougher, beast-like, shining eyes. It was understandable that Marie, who didn't know her well, would be taken aback.

However, Leona remained silent, still fixed on me, demanding an answer. I glanced around cautiously.

There weren't many people passing by at the moment, but it wasn't an appropriate place to talk. It would be awkward for her to state her position openly as well.

But I couldn't just leave Marie behind. We had been enjoying our date, and Leona's sudden intrusion had caught us off guard.

I wanted to suggest meeting later if possible, but Leona's expression seemed too urgent for that.

"Is it really urgent? If it is, we could go somewhere else to talk. However, it's on the condition that Marie accompanies us."

"… …"

Leona shifted her gaze wordlessly to Marie in response to my proposal. Marie, unable to grasp the situation, wore a puzzled expression. Meanwhile, Leona's expression seemed somewhat complicated.

Since no one else but me knew her true identity, it was a situation I would have to eventually reveal to Marie. However, it seemed that she would reluctantly accept the situation, as she appeared to be in dire need of my assistance.

And my prediction was accurate.

Leona let out a sigh and nodded, as if accepting it.

"…Alright. It's your female, right? You can tell her."

"Uh, female?"

"Yeah. Sorry. I meant girlfriend."

Leona corrected herself, seemingly surprised by her own words.

In any case, it seemed she had accepted the conditions. I decided to change our location. Although it was regrettable not to fully enjoy our rare date, Leona's expression was far from ordinary. Given the significant events that had occurred at Animers and her transfer to the Halo Academy, it was likely that she had been affected as well.

Above all, the fact that she was making this request of me, someone who was essentially a third party, without even attending classes, indicated that it was quite an urgent matter.

"Did you have a meal by any chance?"

"No, not yet."

"In that case, let's go to that restaurant."

Mari and I had already eaten, but it was fine as long as Leona was okay with it. She could easily devour about three servings on her own.

As I started moving towards the restaurant, Marie, who still seemed unsure of the situation, whispered to me.

"Isaac, can you explain what's going on? Why is Leona suddenly asking you for a favor?"

“Well… You’ll find out when we get there. It’s a bit complicated to explain right now. Do you trust me?”

“Of course, I trust you. It just seemed a bit strange.”

Marie muttered as she gave a sidelong glance to Leona, who was walking ahead of us. Leona, with her keen hearing as a beastwoman, might be listening to our conversation.

I shrugged my shoulders at Marie, who appeared to be suspicious of Leona, and gently held her hand. It felt as soft and tender as a baby’s touch.

Marie initially flinched but then held my hand back, as if she was trying to comfort me.

“Could it be that our date is taking an unexpected turn?”

“Absolutely not. Besides, the night is still young.”

She smiled and playfully hugged my arm. I could distinctly feel the sensation of her developing chest.

Maybe she’ll grow as big as Cecily someday. I softly chuckled as I ruffled her snow-white hair.

As I petted her head, Marie snuggled against my arm like a puppy, her face nuzzling into my shoulder. She was truly adorable.

It wasn’t until we arrived at the restaurant, were seated in a soundproof private room, and closed the door behind us that the conversation continued.

“Now, is it okay to reveal everything?”

“Yes.”

“What exactly are you revealing?”

Pop

Around the time when everyone had taken their seats, Leona responded to Marie’s question by revealing what she had hidden – animal ears. Not human ears, but clearly those of an animal. Marie blinked her eyes twice when she saw the animal ears sprouting from Leona’s head, and then exclaimed loudly.

“Ears, ears? Oh, no. Wait a moment, Leona, are you…”

“Yeah, that’s right. I’m a beastwoman. Part of the brave lion’s pride.”

“Really, you’re a beastwoman…”

After a moment of surprise, when Leona confidently revealed her true identity, Marie looked at her with a mix of astonishment and curiosity. For Marie, who had always seen her as a model student, the fact that Leona was a beastwoman was a big shock because there was a deeply ingrained perception that beastmen were hostile and savage. No one would have thought that someone like Leona would enroll in an institution like Halo Academy.

Marie looked back and forth between Leona’s face and the ears that had emerged from her head for a while and then turned her gaze to me.

“Isaac, did you know?”

“Yeah, I knew.”

“Since when?”

“Since a few months ago. But back then, it was really by chance. There was no point in letting others know, and the situation would have only gotten more complicated, so I just kept quiet.”

I gained a lot of benefits from learning about the beastmen, their traditions, and various cultures. Of course, it also led to the revelation of a serious situation involving Animers, thanks to the release of Xenon’s Biography Volume 15 based on that information.

Leona, sitting across from me and Marie, looked around before letting out another sigh and spoke with a hesitant voice.

“Thanks to that, I was able to lead a normal life. But now, even that seems difficult. I might have to return to my homeland soon.”

“To Animers?”

“Yes.”

“You mentioned earlier that you were a member of the Lion’s Clan, right? The news said the Great Chieftain and his followers were lions. Does that mean…”

Although my words trailed off at the end, Leona and I both understood what Marie was getting at. As evident from the news reports, the original Great Chieftain was a Lion beastman, just like Leona. Furthermore, the current emphasis on preserving tradition was also associated with the Lion beastmen. It made me wonder if Leona had any connections to this.

After contemplating Marie's question for a while, Leona finally replied quietly.

"…I'll admit it for now. Even if you're not the chieftain, polygamy is tolerated among the beastmen. It's a situation where strong males lead multiple females. My mother is the third wife."

"Ah… I see. You're still the chieftain's daughter, after all."

I had already expected it, but it was as expected. She always took great pride in being a lion beastwoman, so it was no surprise. However, the situation seemed more complicated than I had thought. If she's the daughter of the third wife, she's still quite far from the throne. Yet Leona had said she might have to return to Animers. In other words, there could be a significant issue within her family. In the worst-case scenario, not just her but everyone might be in danger.

Knock knock knock

Just as a serious discussion was about to take place, someone knocked from outside. It seemed like the food had arrived. Marie and I had already eaten, so we didn't really need to eat more, but we ordered three dishes because of Leona. It wouldn't matter if we gave them all to her. Of course, we had some soup to fill our bored mouths.

"So why do you have to return to your hometown? Is there some problem?"

Leona, who was quietly eating her steak with a somber expression in response to my question, looked startled. She looked up at me after swallowing the steak in her mouth and said.

"The problem is just like in the news. It's not like all of my siblings have died, I just have an obligation to attend as a member of the family."

"Is that so? That's a bit of a relief then."

"However, the problem is that the expectations placed on me by the family are high. As you can see, I'm smart enough to get into the academy. Sigh…"

While exhaling deeply, she continued to eat her steak without pause. It was a strange sight, as if her body and mind were in different places, which was slightly unsettling.

Still, it's undoubtedly a serious situation. Otherwise, Leona, with her cynical personality, wouldn't make such a facial expression.

I asked her while looking at her, not sure if she's enjoying or not enjoying the steak.

"You asked me to answer earlier, right? It seemed like you cut off my explanation midway. But can you provide more details? Tell me what situation you're in and why you enrolled in the academy."

"Do I really have to tell you?"

"Well, if not, then you don't need to listen to me. If you valued tradition, you'd probably just keep doing what your family wanted, right? No?"

"… …"

Seemingly unable to counter my sharp observation, Leona focused on her steak. Complex emotions seemed to seep into her shining golden eyes, like a wild beast.

She must have liked the delicious bribe in the form of steak, as she nodded her head as if there was no other choice and then used her fork to pick up a piece of steak. She opened her mouth wide, finished the remaining portion, and then honestly revealed her thoughts.

"You're right. I hate that old-fashioned tradition."

"… …"

"Tradition sounds good, it's traditional, but sticking to tradition can lead to stagnation. The world is changing rapidly, and the way people live is evolving. If we stubbornly cling to tradition, we'll eventually find ourselves back in those times. However, like Hick did, it's also tradition that brings our people together. Whether we like it or not, we can't just discard it."

Leona expressed her frustration and heartfelt feelings, even though she felt awkward. In truth, not only Leona but also other beastmen likely shared similar sentiments.

The sacred duel was a barbaric tradition. It not only allows for taking someone's life but also the stripping of authority, a unique tradition among beastmen.

However, as the nation was established, this tradition gradually began to erode the country's foundations. The recent murder of the Great Chieftain was a clear example.

Looking at it from this perspective alone, the sacred duel is not a tradition but a harmful custom that should be abolished. However, this is a perspective from a third party. For Leona, it's a tradition that, no matter how disliked, can never be abandoned.

To put it nicely, it's an irony, but to put it bluntly, it's a form of shackles. As time goes on, this tradition will only become more rigid and sharp, causing harm to many people.

"My mother used to say that. She said that to lead the country forward, intelligence is more important than force. She said we can't rule through strength forever. The reason I enrolled in the academy is because of that."

"Did someone try to stop you? It's not like you're coming into the human world for anything else."

"They didn't just try to stop me, they mocked me. They made fun of me for wanting to study instead of training."

At that time, she must have received quite a bit of humiliation. However, their feelings can be understood as well, considering that only 300 years had passed since the founding of Animers, strictly speaking, the term 'nation' itself meant that the nation was established. Human nations existed even before the race war, and the first nation was established about 3,000 years ago, just before the Devil War broke out.

However, Animers are now in the process of building their own nation, and there are many shortcomings in various aspects. Among them, the most significant is tradition.

How many countries are willing to boldly discard the traditions that have contributed to the establishment of their nation? It could be concluded that there are none.

The best solution here is time. As time passes, people's ways of thinking will change, and there will be a higher probability that these traditions will gradually evolve. Right now, individuals like Leona are showing signs of such change.

Listening to her story, I pondered deeply and then glanced at Marie sitting next to me. She seemed to be seriously contemplating this profound topic as well.

"Marie, what do you think?"

"Huh? Me?"

“Yes, you. How would you handle this situation?”

“Well… there’s no easy solution to this problem. Honestly, even if I were an Animer, I don’t think I could just abandon the sacred duel. It’s practically a part of their identity, you know.”

“Identity…”

That’s a valid point. For Animers, the sacred duel is their very identity, a tradition they can’t easily discard.

It seemed like Leona was aware of this, as she lowered her eyes with a troubled expression. Judging by how her ears that had been standing straight up were now drooping, she must be feeling incredibly frustrated in this situation.

However, it was a bit funny to see her working so hard with the knife and fork while being sad.

“…So that’s why I asked you. I can’t think of anything right away.”

“Well…”

“Can you continue what you said earlier? You mentioned there was a way.”

“Well, there is… but talking alone is easy.”

I took a bite of soup and looked straight into Leona’s face. Her expression held a hint of hope, anxiety, and restlessness. It meant a lot to her. Leona, who still didn’t look like an adult, was carrying a heavy burden on her shoulders. We couldn’t exactly call ourselves close, but despite that, she had asked me for a helping hand, and it was a request I couldn’t ignore. It was a debt, something she can repay later.

“You said you dislike rigid traditions, right? It’s simple. Polish the tradition well to make it smooth.”

“Smooth?”

“Yeah. Let’s say there’s a problem with your heart. You have to fix that problem, you can’t just remove the heart. It’s a similar principle. You need to address the issues within the tradition. It doesn’t mean you have to abolish the tradition itself. For example…”

I paused for a moment and then explained a very simple idea.

“Change the sacred duel to an annual event?”

Translators note:

Chapter 204: Tradition (2)

Tradition, by its nature, tends to change as time passes. However, its 'origin' remains unchanged. For example, there's 'wrestling.' Originally, wrestling was a martial art designed against soldiers in thick iron armor in ancient times to somehow kill each other.

They would overthrow their opponents, stab them in the gaps of the iron armor, or even make use of deadly techniques like Muay Thai. Over time, it evolved into a sport. Martial arts designed to kill people transformed into sports as eras changed and civilization advanced, as long as they are not used by the military.

Of course, that's a story from my previous life, and this was a medieval era. In a place where war may break out anytime, it will take more time for martial arts to evolve into sports. However, traditions like the sacred duel must somehow evolve into sports. Otherwise, as in the recent Chieftain incident, the foundation of the nation could be shaken.

That's precisely the transformation of tradition into sports.

"…Do you really think that will work? Changing the sacred duel into an annual competition?"

Leona responded with a somewhat bewildered expression to my proposal. Her face clearly showed her disbelief.

In fact, her reaction wasn't entirely surprising. The sacred duel was not just a simple tradition, it was a sacred contest that brought the tribes together as one. The idea of changing such a tradition into a simple competition could appear to dilute its meaning.

"It might sound a bit strange, but honestly, it could be a good idea. Not holding it once a year but every 3 to 4 years wouldn't be a bad idea."

"Sorry, but what's the convincing part? Did I not explain about the sacred duel? It's not just a simple duel. It's a sacred duel watched directly by the Goddess of Nature, Lady Harte. It's a match where you stake everything on the line."

“Didn’t you say earlier that you didn’t like that aspect of the sacred duel? The previous chieftain also lost his life because of that.”

“Well, that’s true, but…”

Leona, still struggling with what she couldn’t quite grasp, narrowed her brows while contemplating. At the same time, she mumbled around the steak in her mouth.

In truth, her reaction was normal, as I was a reincarnator who had crossed over from Earth to this world. And Earth’s civilization was far more advanced and developed than this world.

Even what seemed simple to me would inevitably appear different to them. Changing people’s minds is difficult enough, let alone changing the traditions that form the foundation of a nation.

But the world is changing rapidly, and stagnant water must flow. Otherwise, it will rot.

“From the start, trying to change tradition itself will face a lot of resistance and clashes. If that’s the case, it might be better to go in a direction that spills less blood. The sacred duel is watched by the Goddess Harte herself, right? Make a new format of competition centered around the sacred duel. Recruit candidates who meet certain criteria, and the winner can spread their opinions widely. Do you get the rough idea?”

“Um… so that means we can take away all the opponent’s authority?”

“That’s definitely something we should exclude. You’re not just a bunch of tribes anymore, but a nation, a country. You can’t live barbarically forever, right?”

“Sigh… It’s too difficult…”

Leona groaned while clutching her head. It seems like she’s experiencing a headache from trying to absorb a lot of knowledge at once. Worried that I might have explained things too complicatedly, I turned my head to look at Marie.

To my surprise, she was staring at me with a curious expression. Her bright blue eyes were filled with amazement and curiosity. I opened my mouth with a slightly perplexed feeling.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

“It’s fascinating. Isaac knows so much.”

She didn't hide the look of wonder in her eyes. It almost seemed like there was a subtle hint of suspicion. Perhaps deep down, she actually believed that I might be a time traveler.

Considering the pranks she occasionally played on me, it wasn't such a strange thought. I gave Marie a wry smile in response to her gaze filled with suspicion and curiosity, then turned my attention back to Leona. She seemed to be lost in deep thought, her face contorted with contemplation.

Several minutes passed like this. Leona removed her hands from her head and looked at me before asking.

"…Holding the sacred duel in a tournament format is a good idea. And for an adequate preparation period, it's better to have a gap of 3 to 4 years as you suggested."

It seemed like she was truly determined because Leona echoed my words exactly. There was a sense of deep commitment gleaming within her golden eyes, like a fierce resolve had settled in.

Then she looked straight at me and said about one issue.

"But if that happens, the winner of the sacred duel will be predetermined. It would likely be one of the naturally strong clans, nobles, or elites, right? In that case, it seems meaningless, doesn't it?"

"Will it really be like that?"

"With what confidence?"

"Just by looking at my father, you can tell."

"Hehe."

As I replied absentmindedly, I heard Marie chuckling beside me. Leona was blinking her eyes with a perplexed expression. Well, that's because my father, despite being human, possesses unmatched strength in the world.

He was renowned as the Red Lion within the military and continues to be to this day. Even though humans are the weakest among all the races, he confidently stands among the strong. In this way, innate limitations can be overcome with talent and effort.

“You’re right, those three groups are likely strong contenders for victory. But there are no eternal champions in this world. Unexpected winners can always emerge.”

The reason people get excited about the Olympics or the World Cup is precisely because of unexpected variables. Countries perceived as strong are often defeated by smaller nations, especially when they become complacent.

“Even if you have to resort to unfair means, it’s fine. As long as Lady Hart is watching and is lenient, we can slip in the origin of the sacred duel subtly.”

“Is it okay to use poison or tricks?”

“Ah, we should exclude such things. At the beginning, even if there are many deficiencies, the essence of the tradition of the sacred duel can be maintained, and that’s where the significance lies.”

“It seems okay, but… I still don’t fully understand.”

Leona, still not grasping the situation, clenched her fist, showing a confused reaction. However, unlike before, it seems she doesn’t completely fail to understand.

Then, she closed her eyes, deep in thought, and spoke with a hesitant tone.

“Certainly, it would be great if things proceed as you say. But the sacred duel is requested when one has been insulted or accumulated grievances against someone else. The current chieftain also had a reason to receive a request for the sacred duel. It’s true that the Goddess Hart is watching over it, but if it happens that way, the voice that individuals can express to each other disappears. Is there a way to resolve this?”

“In such cases, it should be brought to a ‘trial’ rather than resolved individually. Resorting to violence is something that only savages do. Don’t you have chieftains with authority similar to a lord among you? In the future, you can request a trial from that chieftain. And if, even then, they fight? Send them straight to prison.”

“What if there’s dissatisfaction with politics?”

“That’s when you use the sacred duel. But instead of individual dissatisfaction, it’s about a group having grievances, and a representative from that group raising their voice. In other words, the representative of the group doesn’t necessarily have to be physically strong.”

An individual's voice is weak, but when individuals gather and form a group, their voice becomes much stronger.

There are no policies in the world that satisfy the entire population. If someone is happy, it means that someone else is working tirelessly in the background.

"Leona."

Leona and I made eye contact as I called her name in a serious tone. I gazed at her face for a moment before conveying an important point.

"Animers is not just a nation, it's the 'civilization' founded by Hick. If everything is resolved through force, that civilization is bound to fracture eventually."

"…"

"Just because it's a noble tradition passed down from the past, can you simply let it be? Fate is predetermined from that moment onward. You must make clear changes."

Suppressing one's instincts was challenging for a beastman, but if you've established a civilization, it's essential to do so. After all, Leona overcame the prejudice that beastmen are uneducated and confidently enrolled in the academy. By making one change at a time like this, things will eventually improve.

"And changing a civilization requires wisdom, not just strength. Throughout history, it was wise kings, not powerful ones, who led their nations to greatness. Conversely, kingdoms ruled by tyrants fared worse. Similarly, the representatives of the groups I mentioned earlier should be wiser rather than relying on force."

"It's not easy for a beastman to be wise, is it? Your advice is hard to come by."

Leona responded with a bitter smile upon hearing my words. Indeed, beastmen had relied on strength to solve problems until now, so there might be some resistance to change.

"Anyway, I understand your point. Let's start by changing the format of the sacred duel competition to a tournament, and prohibit individual challenges. However, if there are objections, they can form groups and participate together. Does that sound good? Since Goddess Hart is watching, it's better to consider the words of the winner, right?"

"That's the idea. But it might be best to refrain from using it for political purposes. The meaning of the sacred duel could become diluted."

“No, it’s better to use it politically instead. They attended to show their grievances, what else is this if not politics? It’s okay if it conveys the meaning of raising voices without distinction of age, gender, and nationality. Whether they will accept this is the question“

“…Ugh.”

Even with good intentions, it’s all in vain if they don’t accept it from above. Leona sighed in frustration, wondering if she knew about that part. But there’s a simpler way than you might think, a common trait among those in power regardless of their race.

Their pride was as strong as ever, especially in this era where honor is crucial. So, gently touching their pride should do the trick.

“What if we just delicately poke at their pride? ‘Are you scared or something’, wouldn’t they be offended and agree to your opinion?”

“Oh! That sounds reasonable. Even though I may seem reserved, I’m confident in speaking. I’ve never lost in a verbal battle before.”

Leona perked up and spoke with a bright expression, despite being a princess of a nation, she had a rather rough way of speaking. I felt like we were on the right track. After taking a bite of the almost cold soup, I began to speak.

“Does that work then? I explained it a bit complicatedly, but if we break it down slowly, it should be fine. Just be prepared for hardships and challenges. It won’t be easy.”

“Well, I’m grateful anyway. If things work out later, I’ll definitely reward you.”

“I’ll be looking forward to that. Can you give me a rough idea of what the reward might be?”

“Hmm…”

Leona seemed to think deeply, poking at her steak and looking up as if it were no big deal. Then, she opened her mouth.

“If it happens as you say, it means the entire Animus will change… I will become your wife?”

“Cough!”

“Cough! Cough!”

Me, and even Marie, couldn’t help but cough suddenly. The idea of suddenly becoming my wife was such an absurd statement.

However, Leona seemed unfazed by it and asked with a puzzled expression.

“Why are you so surprised? It’s just that there are no other men around, so it has to be me, right? If there were another woman, it would have been her, not me.”

“Cough. No. No. It’s not that… Can you really become someone’s wife so easily?”

This question wasn’t from me, but from Marie. I was still coughing due to Leona’s words.

Leona blinked her eyes, pondered Marie’s question, and then nodded, saying.

“Yeah, in the beastmen culture, when someone makes a ‘commitment,’ they often offer their own child. You humans do something similar, right? Throughout history, there have been many instances of offering one’s own child as a commitment, haven’t there?”

“… …”

“… No?”

It was a moment when I realized the cultural differences between our races.

Translators note:

Chapter 205: Tradition (3)

Leona confidently declared that she would become my wife, which instantly made the atmosphere awkward. It wouldn't have been a big deal if I were alone, but the presence of Marie added complexity to the situation.

Leona seemed to sense that something was wrong as she lowered her gaze and discreetly glanced around, but due to coughing, I couldn't provide a proper explanation.

Amidst this, Marie, who had been wearing a bewildered and slightly flustered expression, quietly called out to Leona.

"Leona."

"Yes? What is it?"

"I don't quite understand, but do you know that Isaac and I are in a relationship?"

"Of course, I know."

"But isn't it a bit strange to talk about it openly in front of me?"

Marie's words were hesitant, but her disbelief was evident. After all, from Marie's perspective, Leona could be seen as a threat to our relationship.

Leona blinked a few times in response to her question and then answered with a timid voice, quite unlike her usual self.

"… Is it strange for humans? Humans sometimes give their daughters away in marriage or have multiple wives. That's why I said it…"

"Cough! There's a… cough! difference in cultural norms among our species. Cough. I'll explain properly."

It seemed that I had misunderstood a lot of what I had learned so far. Once we had calmed down a bit, I began to teach her everything step by step.

As Leona mentioned, giving one's own child as an offering was a practice that was common in the distant past, as a part of their culture. It was common to offer one's child as a tribute to a warrior who had contributed greatly to a war effort. This concept still exists today, albeit somewhat obscured by the shadow of "strategic marriages." The idea remains similar but is now about ensuring one's own interests.

"Oh, so it's not necessary to offer one's own child as a tribute. You can offer something else as tribute?"

"Yes, and as you mentioned, while it can be a tribute, it is also strategically used in politics. Humans are known to value kinship relationships, so even through marriage, they consider those they marry into as family. The emergence of strategic marriages is a result of this."

"I see. I understand now."

Humans, being the most fragile species, have had a tendency to stick together since ancient times and have built civilizations through this unique kinship. This unique kinship has even given rise to the peculiar custom of strategic marriages.

On the other hand, beastmen have a strong sense of independence. So, if they decide to marry and establish a family, they are treated almost like outsiders.

Of course, it's not that beastmen lack familial bonds, and if anyone touches their family, they become extremely angry. This remains the same even after marriage. Treating them like outsiders means there is little interference, and they willingly help if asked for assistance.

The concept of "tribute" that Leona mentioned is purely about giving one's own child as a form of tribute, without any political reasons.

"So, what about polygamy? Humans also have cases where males have multiple females, right? Is this also due to political reasons?"

"Yes, and if a peaceful agreement is not reached in such cases, it can become quite troublesome. Mating disputes are common, and there are often headaches caused by one's own offspring. What about beastmen?"

"We naturally obey the males. The fact that a male can lead multiple females means that the male has strong and excellent genes. Even my father has five wives, you know?"

Leona, while enjoying the remaining steak, explained the ecology of beastmen to me. As expected, their customs were similar to animals since they were based on animals. After listening to her explanation and pondering for a while, a curious question came to mind, so I asked her.

“Then, do females ever lead multiple males?”

“It’s very rare. If a strong female appears, an even stronger male will usually defeat her and accept her as his wife. So, it’s extremely unlikely for a strong female to bring multiple males.”

“… …”

It’s truly a kingdom of animals in the truest sense. I think I now understand why they call beastmen savages.

“Well, then it doesn’t matter if you give a different reward, right?”

“No, it doesn’t matter. Do you have something in mind?”

“Um…”

Chew, chew…

Leona now chewed the T-bone steak bones meticulously. She raised her gaze as if deeply contemplating, then smiled brightly and answered energetically.

“No, I don’t!”

“… …”

“… …”

The silence settled into an uncomfortably self-assured stillness. The response had been too cheerful, almost to the point of making one wonder if they had misheard.

Leona, after gulping down a bone like it was a snack, glanced around at both of us with a bitter smile.

“…There really are no other options here. Even if I’m the chief’s daughter, all I have is my body as the third wife’s daughter.”

“… …”

“But still, if you use the wisdom you’ve shown me to change Animers, I’ll definitely give you a reward, even if it’s not me! So, don’t make that kind of face…”

The more she spoke, the more Leona’s voice seemed to waver. Judging by the way her ears were pinned back, it seemed she wasn’t entirely sure herself.

I hesitated whether to laugh or sigh at her reaction. It was quite a contrast from Leona’s usual cynical demeanor.

“You can take your time thinking about the reward. Are you planning to return to Animers for now?”

“Yeah, I’ll clean up first and then head back. I’m not sure if it’ll go well, but they’ll definitely listen to my voice.”

“Alright. Is there anything else you’re curious about?”

“Curious… well, has the scent on your body changed at all? Not like perfume, but more like a natural floral scent?”

“I received quite a bit of divine power, that’s why.”

After that, we had some rather trivial conversations. In between, Maríe asked questions about the beastmen, and Leona diligently answered while crunching on the bones.

“Leona. If it’s alright, can you show me your ears?”

“Huh? I’m already showing them.”

“Oh, not those ears. I mean the part where humans have ears. It’s covered by your hair, so it’s not very visible.”

“Well, there’s nothing there, but if you insist…”

In response to Marie’s question, Leona nonchalantly lifted her head to reveal her human-like ears. There was indeed nothing where there should have been ears on a human. It was empty.

Marie looked at it with fascination for a moment before quickly moving on to her next question.

“How about your tail? Can you show me your tail too?”

“Curiosity seems to run strong in you, just like a couple. Here you go.”

With a swish, Leona revealed her tail, which she had been hiding beneath her school uniform pants, rather than her skirt. Being a lioness beastwoman, her tail had a thick, bushy tip, reminiscent of a lion’s tail.

I, too, looked at Leona’s tail with amazement since it was my first time seeing it. The swaying motion of her tail stirred an impulse in me to reach out and touch it.

“Can your tail move on its own too?”

“Of course. Ta-da!”

“Wow.”

When Leona formed a heart shape with her tail, Marie gasped in excitement beside her. It was the expression of a child who had just discovered a new toy. At that moment, with a somewhat proud smile on her face, Leona heard Marie’s slightly excited voice as she made a request.

“Hey, can I touch it?”

“Absolutely not. The tail is a sensitive area for beastmen. Only spouses can touch each other’s tails.”

“Oh, really? I didn’t know that.”

Thanks to this, I learned one more thing about beastmen culture. After playing around for a while, Leona put her tail back into her pants, and that was the end of it. Marie was a bit disappointed, but she couldn’t keep insisting since it would be impolite.

“Time has passed so quickly. Let’s start getting up now. Leona, you’ve finished eating too…”

“…There’s no need to wash dishes.”

Leona’s steak plate, which she handled, was clean without a single drop of sauce. I wondered what the waiter would think if they saw it. Leona looked a bit embarrassed as she watched our reactions, but she chuckled and scratched her head.

“I’m sorry for always receiving like this. Although I’m just saying this, I’ll definitely compensate you.”

“Okay. Please don’t make remarks like you’ll become a wife like earlier.”

In response to my request, she made a slightly cautious expression and spoke quietly.

“…Before that, there’s something I want to tell you.”

“What is it?”

“We beastmen have a cultural tradition where if we receive something, we must reciprocate it. Even if you refuse, Animer’s side will find a way to reward you somehow. If you reject it, they’ll take it as a severe offense.”

“Just say that you came up with it. Say it’s the wisdom you gained from attending the Academy.”

“Absolutely not. Lying within a family is one of the greatest sins to beastmen. I must definitely confess that it’s the wisdom you’ve shared.”

“Hmm…”

If that’s the culture, there’s nothing we can do about it. I hesitated for a moment and then shrugged lightly.

“Even if it’s something strange, it’s okay. So don’t feel too burdened and just do what makes you comfortable.”

“…Thank you. I won’t forget this favor.”

“What favor? Anyway, I hope everything works out well.”

I mean it. Seeing her ask for a favor, despite not being close to me usually, I can tell how desperate she must be feeling. As we were about to part ways outside the restaurant, Leona called me.

“Isaac.”

She used my name instead of her usual ‘Hey, you.’ I looked at Leona with slight surprise.

“Yes?”

“I said to you that ‘apples sometimes fall far from the tree’ before, right? I want to apologize for that.”

Leona said, bowing her head politely as she spoke. I blinked as I watched her. Now that I think about it, I heard her say something like that regarding my father. It wasn't necessarily incorrect, so I didn't get angry, but it seemed to have bothered her in some way. She then lifted her bowed head, revealing a bright smile with her fangs slightly visible as she spoke.

"Indeed, under a lion, a lion is born. Just because one is powerful doesn't mean they are strong in every way. Isn't that right?"

"Well… that's one way to put it."

"You should remember that a king must be wise, even if you can't become one. Making that king wise is enough."

It seemed like she had her own realizations. Leona bowed politely once more, then smiled brightly and shouted,

"Then enjoy yourselves! I'll be going first!"

And she dashed away as if escaping. I watched Leona disappear into the darkness, then turned my head. As I turned my head, coincidentally, I met Marie's face head-on. We both stared at each other for a while, then chuckled simultaneously without saying a word.

"Shall we go too?"

"Yeah, let's."

My date with Marie was not over yet.

******

Leona returned to Animers and the next day.

"… So, who are you?"

"Kate Louise Angelica, a follower of Luminous."

The Head Inquisitor came to me. She looked at me with a deep gaze and suddenly asked.

"May I have your child for the sake of Luminous?"

“This is insane.”

Translators note:

They are popping out like damn rattatas now

Chapter 206: This guy… (1)

The storm doesn't come back once it passes once. And it usually takes a few days before another comes.

However, I was about to face a second storm that wasn't even on the schedule, and it was a much stronger one than before.

Knock knock

"Uh?"

I was taking a break in my dorm. Today, as a teaching assistant, all the classes I was observing had ended, and I was working on my writing while waiting for other people's classes.

I heard the sound of someone knocking on my dorm room door.

Very few people usually knock on my dorm room door. Except for the occasional visit from Marie and Cecily, it's usually academy personnel coming for academic matters.

"Who could it be? Marie or Cecily?"

I checked my watch. The current time was 2 o'clock. It was still during class hours.

As I mentioned before, student dorms are off-limits unless you're the owner. If you want to enter, you need prior permission from the academy.

Of course, Marie had visited my dorm room once before, but she wasn't caught, so there was no problem.

Is it an Academy personnel then? Just in case, I stored the manuscript I was writing in the desk drawer.

"Yes, I'm coming."

I said to the person waiting behind the door as he stood up from his seat. Then, without much thought, I walked towards the door and grabbed the doorknob, pulling it down.

Creak…

“Who… are you?”

I had expected it to be an Academy official, but a completely different person was standing in front of the door. The first thing I noticed was the atmosphere. It wasn’t as intense as when I had talked directly with Luminous or Mora, but it felt like I could feel the holy power with my skin. Just being near her made him feel at ease.

Secondly, her appearance. Pure beauty untouched by time, like a countryside maiden, along with emerald green eyes that shone like emeralds. If Rina had hair that seemed to be woven from gold, the woman in front of him had hair that reminded me of golden fields, all woven together.

In addition to that, the slightly drooping eyes and the gentle smile exuded compassion. Lastly, her figure, accentuated by the tight white nun’s habit. Her ample chest, the curve beneath it, and finally, her thigh revealed by a side slit, all stimulated a man’s desires.

“…Who are you?”

So, who was this beautiful lady? I blinked his eyes twice, focusing on her face, and asked again.

Judging by her attire, it’s clear that she’s a follower of the Luminous Church, but to me, she’s just a stranger. However, the beautiful woman in front of me smiled kindly and gazed at me intently.

“Ah…”

she suddenly took a deep breath and exhaled.

“This fragrance is so strong… a beautiful lilac scent…”

After that, she muttered something to herself. She was undeniably stunning, but her behavior was somewhat odd. As I was feeling uneasy, she looked at my face with her moist, green eyes and opened her mouth.

“Excuse me. Are you Isaac Ducker Michelle?”

“Yes, that’s me… but why have you come looking for me?”

The fact that she knew my name confirmed that she had come for me, but I still didn't know her intentions. She nodded when I confirmed my identity and then glanced around, as if checking if there were any other people around.

"It's not suitable to talk here. Can we go inside?"

"Well, we can… but did you ask for permission?"

If it were Marie or Cecily, I would have gladly let her in. However, the woman in front of me was clearly an outsider. I couldn't allow her in without knowing her purpose. Even if she's a follower of the Luminous Church, caution was necessary.

"Academy officials have already given their permission, so you don't need to worry. I even have the certificate here."

The woman said, as if she had expected my concern. She reached into her pocket and showed me the certificate. Seeing the clear stamp on it, it seemed like she had indeed received permission.

It felt a bit strange to let someone I had never met before into my dorm room, but there was no other option. I was curious about what she wanted to talk about. Plus, I had safely stored the manuscript in the drawer, so there was no fear of it being discovered.

"Well, please come in."

"Thank you for allowing me in."

She replied politely, bowing her head slightly before entering quietly. The atmosphere she brought with her exuded a sense of sanctity in every action she took.

I had seen many clergy members when visiting the Luminous Temple, but few seemed as solemn and deeply religious as this woman. She resembled Cecily in some ways, but there were clear differences in personality. The faint scent of lilacs I had noticed when we first met indicated that Luminous held her in high regard.

"The fragrance filling the room… it's distinct…"

"…"

Her mental state didn't seem to be in the best shape, but her faith appeared strong, so it should be alright.

I seated her on the bed, and I took the chair at the desk as we faced each other. However, the issue was her attire. It was already a snug material, revealing all the contours of her chest, and it was in a sleeveless style.

The glove that reached up to the elbow covered her hands, but in between, her pristine white skin was fully revealed. Moreover, the dress she was wearing had a side slit that exposed more than half of her thigh, creating an awkward atmosphere just by sitting still.

'Should I say it's sexy in its own way…'

In any case, I had to focus on her face as much as possible. I cleared my throat and quietly asked.

"…May I ask your name?"

The woman, who had been examining every corner of my room, turned to look at me after hearing my question. Her emerald green eyes shone with a sharp light like jewels. She looked at my face for a moment, then smiled with her characteristic kindness and placed her hand on her chest.

"I apologize for the delayed introduction. My name is Kate Louise Angelica. I am a follower of Luminous."

"…yes?"

Did I hear wrong? I could only stare in astonishment at the woman who had introduced herself as Kate. The name Kate Louise Angelica was something I had heard before. Not knowing would be strange.

She was the Grand Inquisitor, the ultimate rank of the Inquisition, and the head of the Luminous Church's Order. A position that even high-ranking nobles from other countries could not treat lightly. And a few months ago, she was famous for making a pilgrimage to find me herself. I had also heard that she recently arrived in the Minerva Empire…

"…Really?"

"Yes."

"You're the Cardinal and Grand Inquisitor I know of?"

"Undeservedly, but yes."

The woman in front of me right now. I've only heard about her in words, so I couldn't even guess what she looked like. I blinked for a while because I couldn't figure out how the situation was unfolding. But for now, it seemed better to know the purpose. But before that, I confirmed once again.

"…So, who really are you?"

"I am a follower of Luminous, Kate Louise Angelica."

"Why have you come to find me?"

To that question, Kate looked at me with a meaningful gaze and revealed her purpose.

"May I have your child for the sake of Luminous?"

"This is insane."

The curse words just came out naturally. She suddenly came and asked if we could have a child. I know she cut to the chase, leaving everything unspoken. But this was different. I don't know what's going on in her mind, but this Cardinal Kate was definitely not normal. I can guarantee that. I looked at her with curiosity and asked about the reason for this first.

Honestly, I had a rough idea why she was making such demands, but I just wanted to confirm it.

"Cardinal Kate? I don't understand, so why are you making such demands? Could you please provide a detailed explanation without cutting corners?"

"Well, it's because you're a Xenon."

I expected it but never thought I would actually hear that. So, how did Kate figure out that I'm a Xenon? Could it be because of the lilac scent emanating from my body? That alone was not enough evidence, as there could be many clergymen with the scent of lilac. I replied calmly, trying to maintain composure. For now, I had to buy some time.

"Why? On what grounds are you concluding that I'm a Xenon? It seems like you're making a serious accusation."

"I received a revelation."

"… …"

It seems like Luminous enjoys watching me suffer. Why did they choose to give such a revelation to a woman like her? I briefly entertained these thoughts before managing to suppress the fiery rage welling up inside me. I wondered why they had confirmed me as a Xenon based on a revelation. After all, revelations can be interpreted differently by each person.

"…Could you please tell me what kind of revelation it is?"

Kate nodded in response to my forced attempt to maintain composure and seemed to recall the revelation as she placed her hand on her chest. Then, she closed her eyes and, in a pleasant tone, spoke the trust out loud.

"Seek those who look at the world with a pure passion, like a clean sun."

"… …"

I blinked in confusion, not understanding any of it. The words that followed seemed like they might be referring to me, but they were incomprehensible. Just when I was feeling completely bewildered and unable to speak, Kate quietly opened her eyes and interpreted the content of the trust.

"Since ancient times, the sun has been associated with 'golden light.' People desire gold because it resembles sunlight. In other words, it means having golden eyes, just like you."

"… …"

"Next is pure passion. This one was the most puzzling. Passion can mean so many things. However, passion is a blazing fire. In essence, it's 'fire.' Fire is usually associated with the color red, so someone with red hair would be suitable. In other words, trust refers to someone with red hair and golden eyes."

"Isn't that a bit of a stretch? A clean sun could symbolize a gaze rather than eye color, and pure passion could refer to one's heart, right?"

Once again, trust tends to be interpreted differently by each person. Because of this, the followers make great offerings in an attempt to receive a clearer understanding of the revelation.

The trust above is similar to this one. Kate interpreted it based on appearance, but as I just mentioned, it could be interpreted differently.

“Above all, my father also has red hair and golden eyes like me. It seems too presumptuous to say it’s me, doesn’t it?”

“In the revelation, it said clean sun and pure passion. This can also be interpreted as not stained with dirty blood. It means you’re young.”

“What does that mean…”

“Even if you were a prophet or someone who came back from the future, it’s not a problem. For now, there’s no blood on your hands.”

Kate, who said this, smiled even more confidently than before and spoke with a firm voice.

“Finally, the scent of lilacs that emanates from you. Even the Pope can’t produce such a strong fragrance. Unless you’re a saint like from a novel. Oh, in your case, we should call you a saint, Xenon.”

“… …”

“It doesn’t matter if you deny it to the end. I’ll just confirm it through the revelation again.”

“Ugh…”

I sighed deeply in frustration as I swiped my face. There was nothing I could do now. For some reason, Cherry and others had been revealing my identity recently. And now, even God had granted her a revelation, so there was no escaping it. Even if I denied it, if she received it once again, it would be over. Since she was a cardinal, Luminous would reluctantly confirm it.

‘…But what’s this talk about whether we can have a child?’

Let’s get back to the point. Kate suddenly proposed having my child for Luminous. What could her true intention be? I glanced at her, who was waiting with a compassionate smile.

Superficially, she’s a beauty who can make heads turn effortlessly. Her body was excellent, even explosive. A figure that effortlessly arouses admiration, blending both holiness and sensual charm. It’s hard to believe that such a person would go around smashing the heads of devil worshippers, but seeing how rough her hands are, it’s certain.

“Cardinal Kate.”

“Please call me Kate, Mr. Xenon. Luminous acknowledges you as a saint.”

“Fu…”

I almost blurted out a curse.

Who acknowledged who as a saint… Ah, Luminous again. I gritted my teeth inwardly and struggled to ask the question.

“…Yes. Fine. For now, let’s call me Xenon. But what’s this sudden request to have my child?”

“Can I explain it slowly?”

“Yes.”

In my approval, Kate began to slowly bring out her past. She grew up in an unremarkable rural area, but at some point, she gained immense holy power.

Since having holy power without any apparent reason was nearly impossible, she believed it was thanks to the grace of Luminous. When she later asked Luminous, he said that he indeed bestowed his “grace” upon her.

Grace means that God personally chooses a believer, and it is often recorded as a great honor in this era. Currently, even the Pope of Xavier claimed to have received Luminous’ grace.

“Even though Lord Xenon did not receive grace, with his achievements, you must have possessed a holy power not inferior to grace. Therefore, it’s to repay Luminous.”

“… …”

“Surely, Luminous will be pleased as well. Perhaps the child born between you and me may also receive grace.”

One who has lived true faith and a fanatic are different by a mere sheet of paper. Kate seems similar to this.

She may sound like a faithful believer when you hear her, but in my eyes, she’s just a fanatic. A fanatic who even treats her own body as an offering to God.

I couldn't find the words to say in her absurd mindset, but I quietly spoke up.

"… Do you know that I have a fiancé?"

"Oh. You have a fiancé? I didn't expect that…"

Kate widened her eyes, genuinely surprised by the news. Seeing her pondering it was reassuring, as it seemed common sense was still intact.

"Nevertheless, it doesn't matter. It's all for Luminous."

"… …"

"If you find it burdensome here, we can go directly to the temple, Lord Xenon. I'm always ready."

I furrowed my brow, expressing my refusal right away. No matter how beautiful and well-endowed Kate may be, this is not right. Treating people like stallions was discomforting, and above all, the sudden request was uncomfortable for me, given my memories from my past life.

"It's fine. I won't ask for something like that."

"Why are you like this? It's embarrassing to say this, but I believe I have enough appeal as a woman."

"It's your mindset that's the problem. I don't think it's right to mix bodies without any reason."

Cecily was similar in the past. Due to her hasty actions, she had once offended me, leading to many awkward situations. However, we eventually developed a close relationship and even shared affection.

In this world that's closer to medieval rather than modern times, infidelity and adultery run rampant, but it's because of the unique tradition of strategic marriages. At least, with my remaining beliefs from my past life, I want to firmly reject such behavior. I believe it's both reasonable and obligatory to consult with women faithfully.

"Um… I see. Alright."

Kate nodded as if she understood my words. It's fortunate that she seems to understand me.

“So, am I supposed to seduce you?”

“Fuck.”

Looks like we’re not on the same page.

Chapter 207: This guy… (2)

Some people might know, but I usually don't curse easily. At most, I might say relatively mild words like nonsense or crazy. I don't use harsh language.

However, the situation was so frustrating, absurd, and maddening that I couldn't help but blurt out the word 'fuck.' That too, to someone I had just met.

You can vaguely imagine how flustered and angry I was.

"Surprisingly, you have a foul mouth."

Kate's green eyes widened in surprise as I let out the curse. From her perspective, it was indeed unexpected. I wanted to kick her out right now. It felt like I was talking to a wall rather than a person.

Frustrated, I sighed and placed my hand on my head.

"Whew… Cardinal, I mean, Miss Kate."

"Yes, please go on."

"In the Luminous Church, do they… encourage extramarital affairs?"

I wanted to avoid asking such a question, but I had no choice after hearing Kate's unconventional response.

I need to find out whether it's because of the doctrine taught by the Luminous Church or if it's Kate's personal belief. Of course, no sane religious group would endorse adultery, but I don't know much about this church. Kate seemed to ponder my question carefully before responding with a sly tone.

"It's ambiguous. If it's an affair, then it's a sin, but if it's true love, even Luminous approves."

"What?"

This doesn't make sense. Wasn't Luminous the god of light and hope? Despite my bewildered expression, Kate continued with her characteristic compassionate smile.

"Do you know why there are so many affairs among the nobility? It's simple. It's because they don't love each other. They might have loved someone else initially, but they end up separated due to differences in their family's position, and many times, their social status prevents them from being together."

"…"

"For this reason, even if they commit adultery, if they truly love each other, Luminous will support them. Luminous is the god of light and hope. There's nothing as hopeful as the truth."

As I listened, I couldn't help but feel convinced. Her words made sense, especially considering that the prevalence of adultery in noble society is often due to arranged marriages.

Because they got married out of a sense of duty, even though they're in a marital relationship, they often have a separate lover. Of course, if you get caught, it's over, but there are cases where it just continues steadily.

Moreover, as Kate mentioned, true love in extramarital affairs was rare. Most of it was closer to a fling, and it usually doesn't end well.

'But it's not always like that…'

Having a strategic marriage doesn't necessarily mean you'll engage in an affair. Although the numbers may be high, the percentage of such cases is surprisingly low.

Strategic marriage is a kind of contract. When one party breaches the contract, they incur significant losses. Because of this, they often treated each other well, and falling in love was common.

Marrying someone you don't know well can be quite uncomfortable, but there's nothing more interesting than getting to know each other bit by bit.

Adultery mostly occurs when high-ranking nobles are connected with low-ranking nobles. It seems that as power increases, morality becomes weaker, so it can be seen as a natural phenomenon.

"…Does Luminous have a way to discern that?"

“It’s not a common occurrence. They themselves are embarrassed about it. And even if they were to be recognized, they’ve still done wrong, so they will face consequences.”

“I see.”

Thanks to that, I gained a new piece of knowledge.

“But still, it’s not good. Instead of giving in to temptation or anything, just cleanly give up.”

However, what can’t be done can’t be done. My first impression was ruined, and there were beauties around me as attractive as her, if not more so.

Even if Kate tries to seduce me, there is no reason to fall for her, and there is no need to do so. It would feel unpleasant to be used for her own purposes.

“If you truly care for Luminous, you won’t be able to force me, right? Isn’t that so?”

“Yes, that’s correct. If I were to assault you, Luminous would be angry.”

…It feels strange when a woman talks about assaulting a man. But in this world, thanks to the existence of mana, it’s not uncommon for women to commit such acts.

Kate might be able to forcibly obtain something from me now, but she is a follower of the Luminous Church. Even though she has a twisted way of thinking, her faith is deep.

‘Right. I can mention Luminous.’

To have a conversation with someone deeply immersed in religion, it’s best to make use of that religion. I, too, have some favor with Luminous, so mentioning his name while persuading her should work.

I was momentarily pleased that I seemed to have found a way out, but I lost my words again at Kate’s next statement.

“But what if it’s the other way around?”

“…?”

“I’m always prepared, so it doesn’t matter if you assault me. It won’t be a sin, but a sacrifice. Luminous will surely forgive you.”

“hahaha.”

Hollow laughter escaped at the unexpected turn of thought. Her determination to obtain my seed by any means was clear.

If Luminous were to see this scene, wouldn't he be amazed and applaud? Later, I should go to the temple and ask for help on how to handle this person.

I lowered my head, feeling like I was losing my mind. Then, I took a deep breath and quietly opened my mouth.

"…Kate, right?"

"Yes. Saint."

"No. That title… No. No."

I should just give it up. Oh, of course, I'm not talking about my seed but that title, 'Saint.'

I hesitated on whether to curse and slowly lifted my head to face Kate. On the surface, she had a pretty face and an ideal body; she truly was a virtuous young lady. How did she end up like this?

She said she received grace from Luminous and herself used to be an ordinary country girl with no connections in the past. Maybe that's why she obsessively worships Luminous. She connected the act of giving birth to a child to repaying the favor somehow. I wonder if the gods, including Luminous, can really predict the future.

Anyway, after circling around once again, I firmly expressed my refusal.

"Anyway! I have absolutely no intention of sleeping with you. Whether you were trying to seduce me or not, it's meaningless, so please understand."

"Then…"

"It doesn't matter if you ask Luminous for a favor. I'll also ask Luminous for a favor."

"…"

When I firmly refused, Kate's expression became subtle. She raised her slightly pursed lips, wearing a face filled with discontent.

"I don't understand."

“What do you mean?”

“I’m embarrassed to say this, but I consider myself exceptionally attractive as a woman. I’ve been praised as a flower personally nurtured by God even in the church.”

True to her words, Kate was indeed beautiful. There wasn’t a single flaw from her face to her figure. She exuded her unique charm, a blend of the innocence of a country girl, the sanctity of a clergywoman, and the sexiness emanating from her body.

If it weren’t for the protection of the Luminous, someone with ill intentions would have surely laid their hands on her. With her current position as the Grand Inquisitor, she possessed immense power, and no one dared to touch Kate.

“Yes, that’s right. Kate is beautiful. That’s an undeniable fact.”

“But then why are you rejecting me? Do you perhaps have issues with your sexual capabilities?”

“Kate…”

She probably asked without malice, but to me, it was a question that scratched at my self-esteem rather than a mere inquiry.

I mustered all my strength and answered again after barely suppressing the urge to explode.

“Absolutely not. I wish I could prove it, but I can’t.”

“I’m fine with that.”

“I’m not okay. If you insist on checking, I’ll kick you out right away, so keep that in mind.”

“… …”

Kate pursed her lips, as if really considering it. It seemed like her habit to express dissatisfaction. I let out a long sigh, feeling like I was going around in circles, then leaned back in my chair. I was starting to get tired.

“Miss Kate.”

“Yes, go ahead.”

“Please stop today and go back. I have no intention of giving in, no matter what the stakes are.”

When I asked with an exhausted tone, Kate hesitated for a moment. After all, pressuring someone like this was likely causing her some inner conflict. She must have realized her own wrongdoing. Then, she cautiously glanced at me and nodded her head.

“…Alright. I’ll stop for today.”

“That’s a good idea. And I hope you continue to give up in the future.”

“I’ll consider that gradually.”

I hope she considers it thoroughly and gives up cleanly. I struggled to hold onto my fading sanity. Even Cecily didn’t go to such lengths to share my affection, but Kate seemed to be on a different level. At this rate, I’m worried that I’ll soon start fighting with my lovers.

“…So, Miss Kate, do you plan to stay in the Minerva Empire for the time being?”

“Yes. Now that I’ve found the Saint, I intend to engage in relief activities.”

“When do you plan to leave the Minerva Empire?”

“I have no plans to return until I receive the Saint’s seed. It’s the ultimate goal of this pilgrimage.”

“… …”

If others were to hear this, they might find it absurd to embark on a pilgrimage for such a purpose. However, from a religious perspective, the story might be slightly different. There’s a similar story in mythology, where a man and a woman chosen by the gods come together to give birth to a hero.

It wasn’t driven by personal ambition but rather for true faith, so there’s a very high chance it will be tolerated within the religious institution.

‘I’m going crazy.’

From my perspective, it’s nothing more than another stalker targeting me, but it’s already unsettling enough with Cherry’s situation, and now one more person is getting involved.

"…I've said it many times, but there won't be any connection between you and me."

"No one knows what the future holds."

"Yes, yes, I understand. If you have nothing more to say, please leave."

"Oh, there is something I want to discuss."

"If you bring up the 'seed' again, I'll beg Luminous to restrict your access."

"That's not it."

Could it finally be a change of topic? I listened with relief.

Kate stared straight at me with sparkling emerald eyes. For some reason, the faint blush on her snow-white cheeks made me uneasy.

Eventually, she placed her hand on her lower belly and quietly opened her mouth as if she was eager to say something.

"If a child is born, how about naming a boy Xenon and a girl Lily?"

"Get out."

The answer was not in sight.

*****

A storm passed through, and the next day arrived.

"Hello, Saint. Can I have your seed today?"

"You're talking nonsense."

Kate didn't give up.

"I should visit the temple soon."

I should enforce a no-entry policy.

Translators note:

Chapter 208: This guy… (3)

Kate being here alone was already extremely dangerous. The reason she embarked on the pilgrimage was to find me, but suddenly settling in one place was suspicious. Even if she might not say it herself, the higher-ups of the church will surely have suspicions.

Why would someone who left on a pilgrimage stay in one area? Could it be that she found something?

In that case, there's a very high chance that they will send someone from above to keep an eye on Kate. So, her presence is more of a threat to me than anything helpful. Of course, if I agree to give Kate what she wants, she'll gladly leave, but I don't like that idea. Sleeping with someone I've just met was burdensome for me, and who willingly accepts being treated as a tool by someone else?

No matter how beautiful her face is or how desirable her body might be, it seems like she sees me as an instrument, and that repulses me. Above all, neither Marie nor Cecily have had my child, so it's against the law to create an extramarital child so soon.

For these reasons, I plan to visit the temple this weekend and politely request Luminous to prohibit Kate from approaching me. Even Luminous, who favors Kate, would reluctantly agree if I ask earnestly.

"Did you guys hear about that?"

"What?"

"Three days ago, Cardinal Kate visited the academy."

"… …"

One day before the approaching weekend, while on the way to the restaurant, I couldn't help but feel uneasy after hearing Rina's words. Kate visited the dormitory where I'm staying exactly two days ago. The next day, she came looking for the seed and the likelihood of her coming today is very high.

That's why I plan to stay out as long as possible while spending time with other acquaintances. She may be a person with a strange common sense, but I don't think she'll come late at night anyway. While I was silently holding such thoughts, including Rina, other girls began to engage in the conversation.

"Oh, I heard that story too. I heard she's going to stay here for a while. They say there might be devil worshippers in the capital."

"I heard she's extremely pretty. I kind of want to meet her, but Rina, won't you meet her?"

"Rather than me, my brother or Duke Requilis will meet her. According to the hierarchy, a dignitary higher than a duke should greet the cardinal."

The cardinal is the second highest rank after the pope, and Kate is the grand inquisitor of the heresy inquisition. If it's not a personal matter but a public matter, at least a duke or higher-ranking dignitary should greet them. That's how high their prestige is, and if you say a wrong word to the cardinal, you'll be embarrassed internationally. So only the prince or the duke can meet them.

'Anyway, she only looks like a pervert to me.'

A perverted priestess who tries to steal seed from me whenever there's an opportunity. I wonder how she'll ask me for seed today. I hope tomorrow comes quickly. Just the existence of Kate was enough to expose my true identity.

Did she notice my mood? Marie, who was talking properly with others, checked my face and asked in a puzzled voice.

"Isaac, what's with your expression?"

"Huh? What's wrong with my face?"

"It looks like a face that's chewed on poop."

"… …"

I wondered if there might be another way to express it aside from that. After hearing Marie's response, I chuckled. Actually, I did think about telling them about Kate's situation, especially its something that Marie and Cecily needed to know.

I sighed heavily out of frustration and then glanced to the side. They seemed to have noticed that my expression wasn't good, as they both wore concerned looks.

"… I'll tell you at the restaurant."

"Is it a big problem?"

"Whether it's big or small… you'll find out after hearing it."

The once cheerful atmosphere seemed to have dampened, and I felt strangely apologetic. However, it was a matter that they needed to know. After arriving at the restaurant, we reserved a private room as usual and placed our orders. Then, I explained what was on my mind.

"Two days ago, Cardinal Kate came to my dormitory."

"What?"

"She knew I was Xenon."

The fact that Kate had come was already surprising, but when I mentioned that she knew my true identity, they both reacted with similar expressions of shock. Their eyes widened even more, and their faces showed genuine astonishment. Frankly, it was quite shocking indeed.

I clarified one by one the points that made them curious while they were organizing their thoughts.

"It seems like Luminous has given a revelation about my identity. Fortunately, it seems to have been only given to Cardinal Kate, but… it doesn't matter now that it's been exposed."

"Revelation? What kind of revelation?"

"Seek those who look at the world with a pure passion, like a clean sun."

The verse itself was complicated, but it left an impression, so I remembered it clearly. When I spoke about the contents of the revelation, the women seemed even more puzzled. I probably made the same expression at first. So, I explained slowly.

"Looking at the world with a clean sun means golden eyes, and pure passion seems to refer to my red hair."

“Isn’t it the same for your father and brother?”

“That’s true, but it seems like the modifiers ‘clean’ and ‘pure’ imply that there’s no blood on their hands. Father is a knight, and Dave used to go hunting often in the past.”

Father, Dave, and Nicole were strong from a young age, unlike me. So, they sometimes hunted monsters and beasts in the territory. On the other hand, I had a frail body and even resented knight training, so my family cherished me.

Due to the significant age difference between me and my siblings, I received more attention and affection.

“And because of the lilac scent emanating from my body, even if I deny it, she won’t believe it, right? I heard it has a stronger fragrance than the Pope’s.”

“I see. So, what did Cardinal Kate say? Is that the end of it?”

“I wish it were the end here too. What did Cardinal Kate want? Well…”

Should I really say this or not? I felt embarrassed and sorry, so I couldn’t bring myself to say it. After hesitating for a moment, I let out a deep sigh and spilled the whole truth.

“…To receive my seed.”

“Seed? What kind of seed…”

“… …”

As expected, there were different reactions from each of them. Marie started to say something but seemed to realize halfway and closed her mouth. Cecily had a momentary pause in her thinking process, and lastly, Rina blinked her blue eyes and then her face rapidly turned red.

They were all old enough to know what my statement implied.

“…You guys must have heard about this kind of story, too. The tale of a man and a woman chosen by the gods who form a relationship and give birth to a hero. Kate asking me for my seed is somewhat similar to that. She’s been blessed, and I helped the world break free from the devil’s grasp through Xenon’s Biography. Do you get the idea?”

“Is that woman mentally unstable or something?”

Marie blurted out the doubt that was poking through her mind. After all, from her perspective as the one engaged to me, this situation was not only anger-inducing but also utterly baffling.

It wasn't just her, Cecily was in the same boat. She couldn't decide whether to get angry or just be dumbfounded.

On the other hand, Rina… Her face turned bright red, but she kept her mouth firmly shut. It seemed like she didn't want to say anything, probably because she didn't see a significant connection.

"Seems like she's a bit… out of it, but the focus seems to be entirely on Luminous. She says even the reason she wants my child is for Luminous."

"What is that…"

"Like a fanatic, isn't it? I think so too. She doesn't listen even when I say I don't like it. Anyway, I plan to go to the temple tomorrow and request a ban on approaching from Luminous."

"…It probably won't work."

Rina, who had been quiet, surprisingly expressed a negative opinion. The gaze of others, including me, turned towards Rina. She explained her reasons while fanning her flushed face to cool down.

"The Cardinal is the second-highest position after the Pope. To ascend to the position of Cardinal, you need to be chosen directly by Luminous. Moreover, Cardinal Kate has received direct favor from Luminous. No matter how much you try, Isaac, it's going to be tough to get a ban on approaching."

"Even if I use divine authority?"

"If that happens, Cardinal Kate will likely use her divine authority to nullify it. Of course, Luminous will reprimand her severely."

"Ah. If that's the case, it's okay."

If it's Luminous, warning her should be enough since she's a devoted clergywoman willing to sacrifice even her body. At least, when it comes to her faith, she's a genuine person. However, I'll still look for opportunities. She's more persistent than I thought, so if there's a gap in my defenses after I visit the temple, she might request it again.

“But it’s still unpleasant. Did you tell her about your engagement?”

Marie asked with a voice full of dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, Cecily seemed to be deeply contemplating something.

First, I decided to speak the truth, primarily because it was essential to separate Kate from the situation.

“Of course, I told her. But she also told me that she was ready anytime if I was okay with it. I said I’m not interested, so she asked if she should seduce me?”

“…I can’t believe it.”

Since it was unbelievable, Marie shook her head with a wry smile.

However, an unexpected positive opinion came from Cecily.

“I actually feel okay about it.”

“What?”

“Are you in your right head?”

I, of course, questioned Cecily in surprise, to the point where Marie could ask if she was right in her head.

Cecily, looking at our faces demanding an explanation, began to speak very realistically.

“Of course, I’m not thrilled about the idea of having a child forced upon you like that. But there’s nothing to lose. In fact, it could be very beneficial in many ways, as it would connect us with the Xavier Kingdom.”

“I haven’t ruled out that idea either. But, Noona.”

“Yes?”

“I didn’t connect with you while thinking about such a thing, did I?”

If Kate had approached slowly, like Cecily, I might have hesitated for a moment. Perhaps I would have sought permission from Marie and accepted her. I’m already in a situation where I’ve accepted Cecily and I’m contemplating Adelia, so adding one more won’t hurt. As long as I don’t secretly cheat on my partners with other women, it’s okay.

However, when a fastball comes straight at your neck, you can't just stand there and take it. Cecily blinked her red eyes after hearing my response and then raised the corner of her mouth, giving me a gentle smile.

She then subtly grabbed my hand under the table and spoke in a warm voice.

"I'm sorry. I just wanted to help Isaac. Can you forgive me?"

"You don't need forgiveness. Anyway, my experiences have led me to this point. Is there any other solution?"

"I think it would be better if Marie and I went to talk to her directly. Right, Marie?"

"Of course! Honestly, it would be nice if she accepted, I don't like her stubborn attitude."

Marie, who had said this, glanced under the table, but instead of lightly grabbing my hand, she softly stroked my thigh. As everyone knows, this is a kind of signal. It seems like Kate's situation has been stressful for her.

I paused for a moment, stopping Marie's strange touch on my thigh, and then returned to the main point.

"So, I'll go to the temple tomorrow and come back. Can you wait until then?"

"Of course."

"Have a good talk."

Now, I released Cecily's hand and it now clung to my thigh. On the surface, it might look like two beautiful ladies on either side were being cute to me, but I was actually fearful of the future that lay ahead. Perhaps because we had talked about my seed, it seemed like they also wanted to take seeds from me. I guess that can't be helped.

"Well… it seems like this matter is settled for now. By the way…"

Knock knock knock

Just as Rina was about to speak, someone knocked, either because food had arrived or someone else was at the door. Marie and Cecily immediately stopped their actions.

Knock knock knock

“What’s this?”

“Is it someone else?”

If it were a waiter, they would knock and then enter after a brief pause. But knocking more than once meant that someone else had come. I got up from my seat and immediately opened the door, putting my questions aside for a moment. And at the door…

“Hello. Sa… No, Isaac.”

Kate was standing at the door, wondering how I had ended up here. It seemed like the tiger really followed my words.

When I was too flustered to say anything, Kate opened her mouth with her characteristic compassionate smile.

“It’s not what you think this time…”

It was a moment when I was about to close the door before I could even listen.

Thunk!

When she noticed that I was trying to close the door, Kate quickly wedged her foot between the door. I tried to push it somehow, but it didn’t budge an inch. Strangely, no matter how much strength I used, I couldn’t feel it moving at all. Instead, it felt like I was the one being pushed back from the other side. Whether I liked it or not, Kate spoke to me with her previous compassionate smile.

“Please listen to what I have to say until the end. I didn’t come here to talk about seed this time.”

“Well, in the end, it’s going to be about seed, isn’t it?”

“… …”

“See!”

Since there was no response, it was certain. And when I tried to push somehow…

“It’s good timing. Come in.”

Marie’s voice came from behind.

Translators note:

Chapter 209: This guy… (4)

Before I knew it, Kate ended up sitting at the dinner table. With Marie and Cecily each occupying a seat next to me, she naturally sat across from them, which means she took a seat next to Rina.

When I asked if she had eaten, she said she had eaten beforehand. Because of that, we quietly waited until we all finished eating.

It's not like I did nothing while waiting. I checked from time to time, and I could see her with her eyes closed, hands neatly folded, praying.

Thanks to that, the meal was quiet until it was over, and after ordering dessert, the real conversation began.

"First, how did you know I was here?"

"I followed the scent of lilacs. And the destination was here."

"… …"

From the first response, it was truly ridiculous. She hadn't even been professionally trained at tracking, and she claimed to have followed a scent.

The lilac scent emanating from my body was indeed strong, but in Kate's case, it can be considered somewhat unique.

Kate, after facing all the stares directed at her one by one, cautiously opened her mouth with a slightly wary voice.

"But Isaac, is it okay to have a conversation here?"

"Oh. These people all know who I am, so you can relax."

"I see. But…"

She hesitated for a moment and glanced alternately at Marie and Cecily sitting on either side of me. In response to her puzzled look, Marie wrapped her arms around mine with a sulky expression, and Cecily smiled and leaned in. Anyone could tell we were lovers.

Kate seemed to have noticed something from their odd behavior and nodded her head.

“I didn’t expect you to have two fiancées.”

“The official fiancée is still just me. Cecily is unofficial.”

Marie subtly emphasized that she was the first. Cecily didn’t seem to have any objections as she remained silent. I chuckled at the playful territoriality of the two women and then looked across the table again. Rina, sitting next to Kate, seemed to be just observing, sipping her tea.

“So, why did you come here? If you’re going to talk about the seed again, I’ll kick you out, so you should know that.”

“I will formally apologize for that part. My unnecessary obsession made Isaac uncomfortable, so if you wish, I will accept any punishment you deem necessary.”

“Huh?”

What’s going on? It’s like the character suddenly changed.

Kate lowered her head and politely asked for forgiveness, which was rather surprising. Not just me, but even Marie, who had been firm until now, seemed taken aback.

Kate had been demanding the seed from me at every opportunity for the past two days, so why was she suddenly apologizing today? Unless something had happened in between, it didn’t add up. And there was only one expected reason for that. I recalled Kate’s fanatical side and decided to probe a bit.

“Were you scolded by Luminous by any chance?”

“…Yes.”

Kate responded to my question with a gloomy expression, confirming my suspicions.

Luminous is a merciful god who may inflict punishment upon the wicked, but to devoted followers like Kate or me, he is a compassionate deity. He rarely loses his temper and seldom raises his voice.

However, it seems he must have been quite upset if Kate was feeling so down.

“It seems he scolded you quite a bit.”

“…He even raised his voice for the first time. He asked what I was doing, and even though he understood why, it was still quite impolite. He told me to apologize immediately.”

If he raised his voice to that extent, it appears Luminous was very angry. After all, she had nearly caused harm to others for her own sake.

Although Luminous was merciful, he also had strict principles, so this matter couldn’t be overlooked. If a child did something like stealing to please their parents, even normal parents would scold them sternly.

‘I guess she won’t be talking about seed for a while.’

I gazed at the gloomy Kate and had a feeling that the talk about seed would be put on hold for some time.

If Luminous had scolded Kate to that extent, there was a high chance that she had given up.

“Alright. Since Luminous has scolded you, I’ll let this matter go. So, what’s the real reason you came to see me?”

“It’s related to Xenon’s…”

“Just call me Isaac for now. You might make a mistake later.”

“Understood. Isaac, it’s related to your safety.”

“My safety?”

I opened my eyes wide at the mention of a close connection to my safety. Curiosity also flickered in Rina’s eyes, who was sitting next to Kate.

I wondered what could be happening to me during this peaceful time. Kate is a person who has been on a pilgrimage. She must have a clearer understanding of the situation around the Academy than we do. Unlike before, she looked at me with determination in her green eyes and spoke.

“Yes. As you all know, I’ve been on a pilgrimage, hunting down devil worshipers who have spread throughout the world. Even just before arriving in the Minerva Empire, I was busy eliminating devil worshipers.”

“Devil worshipers…”

Originally, devil worshipers operated in secret, unbeknownst to anyone. Especially in regions where many disappearances occurred, devil worshipers were deeply involved.

The reason we didn’t notice until now, before these incidents began occurring consecutively, was simple: dulled judgment and complacency due to long-lasting peace, and indifference. The devil war had erupted a whopping 3,000 years ago, and even the elves had vague memories of it. Naturally, there was little interest.

“Devil worshipers were unknown until the events surrounding Xenon. But now their presence is rising to the surface, and their influence is gradually waning with each passing day. Do you understand what this means?”

“Are you saying Isaac might be targeted by devil worshipers?”

Cecily immediately answered Kate’s question, and Kate nodded in agreement.

In fact, I had only a rough idea until the talk about devil worshippers came up, but it feels quite different when I hear it directly from Kate.

“Yes. Xenon’s Biography was a coincidence, but it directly revealed the existence of devil worshippers, so of course, they are actively working to eliminate Isaac. It’s already a widely spread testimony among devil worshippers.”

“Testimony… you say? Are devil worshippers forming organizations among themselves?”

“I’m not certain, but it’s highly likely. There are traces of their activities for at least a hundred years, after all.”

It’s more serious than I thought. Another reason not to reveal my identity has arisen. I have a dependable knight with me, but until the devil worshippers are completely eradicated, there’s a very high chance that my acquaintances will be in danger.

I don’t know how powerful the devil worshippers are, so I need to be more cautious in my actions.

“Furthermore, most things related to the underworld are influenced by devil worshippers, from drugs to smuggling, and even the black market. It will take quite some time for a complete eradication.”

“So, are you telling me to hide and not publish books until then?”

“You can publish books, that’s not an issue. Just be careful not to reveal your true identity. I also plan to stay here for about a month before leaving for somewhere else. If I stay here longer, it will raise suspicions.”

Did Luminous give her a hard time about this? Kate calmly explained in her polite voice. She was different from the way she used to be, always asking for seed. It felt a bit odd, but it was satisfying enough.

“Do you think there are devil worshippers in the Minerva Empire, Cardinal?”

Rina, who had been quiet, spoke up. It was only natural for her to be concerned since it was her own country.

“Of course. Devil worshippers are like cockroaches, multiplying unless you crush their heads. The Minerva Empire is no different just because it’s called an empire. Perhaps we can find evidence of that organization here.”

“If the Cardinal wishes, I can provide military support.”

“I appreciate the offer, but I’ll decline. Devil worshippers go into hiding as soon as their cockroach-like presence is exposed, so secrecy is crucial.”

As I heard, things related to devils seem to be treated worse than insects.

And to think she would talk about crushing the head of devil worshipers or request my seed with such an innocent face. Honestly, it’s hard to believe.

She’s said to have blue magic that flickers like flames and even carries the title “Blue Flame,” but just looking at her, I can’t really tell.

“Alright. Do you have anything else to say?”

“One more thing. Isaac.”

“Yes?”

“It might be uncomfortable, but it’s related to the seed.”

I wondered why she hadn't mentioned it earlier. When Kate brought up the topic of seed more seriously(?), the atmosphere changed in an instant.

From Marie, who had been cautious since Kate's arrival, to Cecily, who had shown a softer attitude.

Finally, Rina elegantly sipped her tea and looked even more focused.

I opened my mouth as if feeling a strange atmosphere and said somewhat awkwardly.

"Didn't you get scolded by Luminous a little while ago?"

"Yes. But I haven't given up. Since you two are here, I'll formally request it."

She said confidently with her sparkling emerald eyes.

"If it's not too much trouble, may I receive Isaac's seed?"

At the same time, a sharp response came back, not from me but from Marie. Marie tightened her grip on my arm and said to Kate with even more strength.

"Cardinal Kate, do you love Isaac?"

"… …"

"There you have it. You don't even love him, but you're willing to have a child for Luminous. Will Luminous be pleased? No, he'll definitely be sad. He'll be sad that the child he loves is giving up their body for his sake."

Right. Our girlfriend speaks well. As Marie spoke each word meticulously, Kate had nothing to say and was keeping her mouth shut.

She seemed to want to say something, but it was impossible.

The problem is that it's not just Marie who thinks like this.

"Marie is right. Marie and I promised Isaac a future because we love him. What about you, Cardinal? You just covet the holy power that Isaac possesses. If a man with even stronger sacred power than Isaac appears, wouldn't you go to him?."

"Luminous would never forgive that."

Cecily delivered a heavy blow of factual violence right to Kate's weakness. Kate immediately tried to defend herself, but the words pierced through her essence, and that was the end of it.

I just watched because my girls took care of saying the things I wanted to say. So, it was just a spectacle for me. Kate, perhaps chastened by Luminous's scolding, did not put up a fight like she did last time.

When Kate chose to remain silent, Marie seemed to take it as a victory and continued with her triumphant words.

"Even if you manage to win Isaac's heart, I won't acknowledge you. There's nothing as despicable as using love as a means."

"…I see."

"Above all! I find you detestable. Even I, who am engaged, don't suddenly rush to have a child. Even if it works out, you'll have to wait at least four years."

Academy graduation is roughly around that time, so a formal wedding will also be around then.

Under Marie's continuous criticism, Kate had no more energy to respond and could only nod her head. Just when it seemed like it was coming to an end.

"Well then…"

"Yes?"

"If I genuinely love Isaac, is it okay for me to accept his seed?"

A question filled with a determination to receive my seed in any way possible hung in the air. Not just me, but everyone else was left bewildered by that question.

In the meantime, Kate wore a warm smile and placed her hand over her heart before quietly opening her mouth.

"Luminous has indeed scolded me, but after that, he said something like this. Not to give everything to him, but to seek the true happiness I desire. He said that a devotee's happiness is also his own happiness…"

"…"

“After hearing those words, I changed my thinking. Love someone sincerely and find happiness. Love someone, and not only will I find my happiness, but I will also bring happiness to Luminous. And the person I will come to love…”

She then looked straight at me, blushing, and shyly confessed.

“The author of Xenon’s Biography, who is favored by Luminous. Isaac.”

“…”

“Thinking like that makes my heart race, and I feel my face turning red. The scent of lilacs emanating from Isaac feels like a drug to me, and I feel the sanctity seeping into me.”

Oh my…

“Is this… love?”

I wonder what her thought process is like to lead to this development.

Translators note:

Chapter 210: This guy… (5)

Due to Kate's confession that she didn't give a damn about setbacks, we felt more bewildered than angry. No one else dared to speak up, and a deep silence settled in the room.

While Kate was known for her impulsive nature, this was beyond accelerating with the pedal to the floor. I wonder what kind of thought process she had.

As the heavy silence hung in the air, Rina, who had managed to maintain her composure, finally spoke up quietly.

"Cardinal Kate."

"Yes, please speak."

"I hesitate to say this, but…"

Rina paused briefly, her face showing signs of deep contemplation before she blurted out.

"Do you have any friends?"

"What?"

Initially, Kate looked puzzled, raising her eyebrows. Rina clarified her question.

"I asked if you have anyone you'd consider friends."

"Everyone under the protection of the Luminous is both my friend and sibling."

"… …"

In response to Kate's devoted answer, Rina nodded and looked at her with a mixture of compassion and pity in her azure eyes.

According to Marie's words, Rina had exceptional observational skills. Could it be that he was trying to analyze Kate's psychology by asking her if she had any friends?

Rina almost emptied her teacup, then, after taking a deep breath, she spoke in her characteristic gentle tone.

"My question isn't about that. When I mentioned a friend, I meant someone who can be treated without prejudice regardless of their profession, gender, or status. It's about distinguishing between work and personal life, someone with whom you can be yourself on an equal footing in private spaces. Lastly, I meant someone of a similar age to Isaac, Marie, and Cecily, like Cardinal Kate."

"… …"

"Are there such friends in Cardinal's life?"

"Um…"

Kate, upon hearing Rina's explanation, lowered her head with a flicker of emerald in her eyes. She seemed to be contemplating for a moment, then raised her head to look at me.

I was slightly apprehensive about what might come out of her mouth next, but fortunately, her next words were surprisingly normal.

"… There is someone I confide in."

"Who is it?"

"His Holiness."

His Holiness is a title used to address the Pope. It seems that even the people Kate interacts with are exceptional.

Upon hearing this answer, Rina immediately asked her next question.

"May I ask how old His Holiness is?"

"He is currently eighty years old."

"Then what about Cardinal Kate?"

"I have lived 20 years."

At that age, they were not friends, but rather a grandfather and granddaughter. In other words, it meant that there was no one else besides the Pope with whom she could confide her inner worries.

No one else but Luminous personally granted her his grace, so there must have been a great deal of attention directed towards her within the church as well. Regardless of the direction of that attention, many aspects of her life would have been limited. Even fellow clergy would not have dared to approach her recklessly, so she probably had very few "friends" who got along with her without any issues.

Furthermore, she possessed such strong power that she rose to the position of Grand Inquisitor at a young age. She was a true powerhouse, so approaching her was out of the question. Her peculiar thought process, solely focused on God, could likely be attributed to this reason. Regardless of her education, she was bound to have significant shortcomings in human relationships.

"I'm not talking about the kind of friend Cardinal Kate has in mind. I can't put it into words, but I mean it in a broader sense."

"A broader sense… I don't quite understand."

"You'll come to understand as time goes on. Perhaps the reason why she's drawn to Isaac is because she may have met someone who could be her first real friend. Isaac is someone who receives favor from Luminous like Cardinal Kate."

Rina offered a very plausible explanation befitting her position as a princess. Kate, on the other hand, listened to the story and looked at me with a pensive expression. She still didn't seem to have a clear grasp of it, but this was a problem that time would resolve. I looked into Kate's emerald eyes and began to speak.

"I also agree with Rina's words. Currently, Kate is happy to find someone she can have a normal conversation with on an equal footing, so it can be concluded that it's not love."

"Friendship is a relationship that can't be explained in words. You can play pranks on each other, but you shouldn't be rude. It's not something that happens all at once, but gradually seeps into that person's life and can occupy a significant part of it."

When it comes to important human relationships, you can list three: family, lover, and finally, friends. Family is undoubtedly a precious presence, a lover can fill in your missing parts, and they can also create another life. And friends, even though their

bodies are apart, can be considered as one. That's how important a friend's presence is in a person's life.

But Kate hasn't had anyone she could call a friend until now. If you don't have friends from the beginning, there's a good chance you don't even know what loneliness is.

"So, I'll accept it if it's just friendship, not love. By the way, I'm not giving my seed to friends."

"Friends… I don't really understand. With Luminous's protection, aren't we all friends and brothers?"

"That's doctrine, it's different when it comes to human relationships."

I think I vaguely understand. Kate is in a situation akin to a frog in a well. I understand why Luminous scolded her and told her to find her own happiness. Even in Luminous's eyes, Kate's limited human relationships are heartbreaking to the point of tears.

In my past life, I lived as if I had disconnected from the world ever since I lost my parents in an accident, but Kate was in a completely wrong state right from the first button.

She faithfully follows the doctrine, but personally, she's a woman who can't even form any proper relationships. Perhaps even loneliness couldn't comfort her.

As I thought of this, I felt a warm feeling and comforted her with a gentle voice.

"Miss Kate, God can play a significant role in a person's life, but it cannot take over everything, can it? Luminous loves you, but he doesn't envelop you entirely? He scolded you a bit this time too…"

"Yes."

"So, it's not too late even now. Slowly turn your gaze to other places. You're still worshiping Luminous, but it's your life, Miss Kate. Oh, by the way, you mentioned you lived in the countryside, right? When did you receive Luminous's grace?"

"I was five years old. The village was in chaos because it was attacked by bandits. That's when Luminous bestowed his light upon me."

"… …"

I must have stepped on a mine. She was speaking with a calm tone, but there was clearly sadness in her words. I had originally planned to continue the conversation as if recalling a friend from the countryside, but I couldn't have imagined such a hidden past.

In my confusion about what to say next, I managed to open my mouth and apologize.

"… I'm sorry. I had no idea such an event had occurred."

"It's okay. If you feel really sorry, you can give me your seed."

"… …"

Is that a joke? It must be a joke. It has to be a joke.

When she made a silly joke (?), I couldn't help but chuckle bitterly.

"… Anyway, Kate. I can say that the feeling you have for me is not love. It's the joy of meeting someone who could become a friend. It's probably a feeling you're experiencing for the first time, so it might be confusing."

"I see. So what does it mean that my heart races when I see Mr. Isaac's face?"

"Arrhy… Well, it's anticipation."

I almost called it arrhythmia. Kate nodded as she listened to my answer and then looked alternately at Marie and Cecily on either side of me. Then, she put her hand on her chest and tilted her head as if something was strange.

"Unlike with Mr. Isaac, my heart isn't racing. Does that mean we're not friends yet?"

"You'll know when you keep looking at their faces. It's a bit strange to become friends in just one day."

It's not really feasible to become close to people who just insulted me moments ago, especially since the first impression was still fresh in their mind. Besides, their gaze towards Kate wasn't too favorable.

Kate blinked her eyes a couple of times and then nodded her head. She seemed to have convinced herself of something.

"I understand. This unfamiliar feeling I'm experiencing… it's not love, but friendship, right?"

“Rather than friendship, it’s more like anticipation. It’s the anticipation that you can have a friend as a person, not as someone united by the doctrine.”

“I see. I’ll understand. What about the seed…”

“That’s when you truly feel love, not right now.”

It somehow felt like brainwashing ,implanting knowledge one by one. However, Kate’s mind was already filled with what she learned in the church, so I feel I had to do it this way. If Luminous were to check Kate’s condition, they might be astonished. While God can provide guidance, they cannot offer education, which led to this outcome.

Tomorrow, I want to go to the temple and ask how they educated the child, but the issue seems to lie within the church rather than with Luminous.

“Anyway, let’s end this conversation here. Do you have anything else you’d like to discuss?”

“I don’t have anything specific.”

“I do have a question I’d like to ask if that’s okay?”

Cecily, who had been silently listening to the conversation, asked her question. Kate’s gaze turned towards her.

Cecily brought up the questions she had been curious about while looking directly at Kate.

“As I was listening to Lady Kate’s words, it seemed a bit strange. Does the Luminous Church refer to a man’s… semen as ‘seed’?”

“A man’s… semen?”

“Yes.”

“Do they describe it as something other than a seed?”

But the reaction was strange. Normally, one would understand, but Kate had a perplexed expression as if she didn’t understand what Cecily was saying.

At this, not only Cecily but also others made subtle expressions, indicating that they felt uncomfortable. Then, Cecily asked in a hesitant voice.

“…Cardinal Kate.”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

“Do you know how children are born?”

“Of course. I learned that when a man’s seed enters a woman, a child is conceived.”

“No, I mean in more detail. Please explain in detail.”

Kate made a face as if to ask why she was asking such a question and then explained as if she were teaching from the pulpit. It seemed like some awkward words might come out, but it was not at all.

“I heard that white seeds grow in a man’s body and can be artificially expelled. If a woman consumes that seed, does a child not develop?”

“…She consumes it? Where?”

“Naturally, through the mouth. Where else would she consume it?”

What did I just hear? While I couldn’t even open my mouth, Marie asked urgently this time.

“Um, then what about men and women sleeping in the same bed? You haven’t heard of that kind of story?”

“Oh. I heard about that too. But I heard that it doesn’t result in a child. The most important thing is the seed.”

This was beyond absurd. Even Rina, who was sitting across from me, had her mouth wide open in shock.

If even Rina makes that kind of expression, we can guess how serious Kate’s sexual knowledge is. Originally, Rina used to blush in such conversations.

I gazed at Kate, who was making an innocent expression, and recalled something that had happened in the dormitory before.

“Wait a moment, Miss Kate. Didn’t you say something like this to me before? That you have confidence in your face and figure.”

“Yes.”

“Why did you say that?”

“I learned that if a woman has a beautiful face and body, it means a man’s seed will come out better, especially if they are naked. It enhances the effect.”

“Then, what about rape? Do you know what that means?”

“Of course. It’s a criminal act where a man forcibly feeds his seed to a woman.”

“… …”

She left out the most important part. But is it even possible? People naturally go through puberty, and especially for women, they also experience menstruation. It’s natural to develop an interest in these things, so why would they leave out the most crucial part?

As I sighed with both hands on my face, Cecily, who seemed to have similar thoughts, asked quietly.

“Well then… Do you know where a man’s seed comes from?”

“No, I learned that when a man gives his seed to a woman, I would naturally find out.”

“… …”

This is so frustrating.

Translators note:

Chapter 211: 16th Book (1)

After learning about Kate's selective education she received from the church, I headed straight to the Temple of Luminous the next day. I questioned how her education led to this point, even though the god had guided her in so many ways. It didn't make sense to me.

Not only was there a danger of my perception towards Kate being severely affected, but it was also problematic that her sexual education was at this level despite her adulthood. I had never encountered such a situation before, but if someone with malicious intentions and dangerous plans approached Kate, it could lead to a major disaster.

Moreover, Luminous's response left me speechless.

[This is a part I cannot control. Education is not something I can provide, you know? Even as a god, I am not all-powerful.]

'Does that mean all of this is purely coincidental? It seems like she has been left mostly on her own despite the grace you bestowed…'

[Left on her own? You're exaggerating. I have invested a lot of interest in that child. Of course, I entrusted her sexual education, among others, to the clergy…]

Luminous replied with a somewhat timid attitude, acknowledging their own responsibility to some extent.

I had noticed this before, but Luminous was a god with distinct human traits. Not just Luminous, but Mora as well.

Having received the response that they would slowly resolve the matter regarding Kate, I could finally conclude the happening.

[If it's too difficult, will you teach her yourself?]

'Don't say something like that.'

I did hear a shocking remark at the end, but I wasn't completely refusing. Although I could still hear about my seed, so I planned to leave it to someone else. Other people also tried to take action after learning about Kate's frustrating lack of knowledge about sexual matters.

We didn't become close friends right away, and we all had our own tasks, so we postponed it for now.

'I didn't know there was such a person in the world.'

After returning to the dormitory, I paused in my writing and thought about Kate.

Originally, nothing came to mind except for her being a pervert or fetishist, but now that I knew the truth, I felt a little sorry for her. It's worse not to learn at all than to learn something wrong, and even though I didn't know how they taught her in the church, her knowledge of sexual things was at a dismal level.

'It's not a completely impossible story…'

There was a similar incident in my past life as well. A Chinese couple once consulted a doctor because they couldn't have a child, and surprisingly, they didn't even have a concept of sexual intercourse.

Even in my past life with advanced civilization and education, such things occasionally occurred, so there was no guarantee that this world would be any different. Of course, the Church of Luminous was largely to blame for this. Kate had received his grace, but they didn't properly educate her.

To maintain her purity, or perhaps because there was no suitable mentor, I couldn't be sure, but it probably was a combination of various things.

'Not having friends must have played a part too.'

Would someone have the courage to call Kate, who received grace from god, a friend? If there were friends, they would have noticed Kate's peculiarities and taught her proper common sense. I noticed my perception of Kate gradually changing and then cleared my mind to focus on writing.

The number of literature students had increased threefold, and I also had to counsel Cherry, so my writing time had decreased, but I had already filled about two-thirds of it. The problem is…

'...Did I write too much?'

I scratched my nose as I looked at the thick manuscript piled up. It's almost the equivalent of writing a whole book, even though it's only two-thirds. I originally thought about dividing it into two books, but I just wrote as I pleased, and before I knew it, the manuscript was piled up without a clear division.

'Having more is better.'

I shrugged my shoulders and resumed writing with the magic pen I received from my father.

The contents of the 16th volume are roughly as follows: Since Satan beheaded the great chieftain in the 15th volume, Hikton, a country of beastmen, has fallen into chaos. In it, two factions have clashed. Those who believe that the strongest should become the chieftain, and those who now think that someone with political skill should become the chieftain.

The problem with becoming one is the prevailing sentiment that one must defeat Satan to be recognized as the true great chieftain. It's a situation where you naturally have to challenge him to a sacred duel. However, Satan's power was so great that he could even dominate the former great chieftain. There was no one who could convincingly claim the throne.

'To have legitimacy as a great chieftain, one must…'

Satan must be defeated. However, it would take a year to issue a challenge for a sacred duel. During that year, Cain trained tirelessly to somehow bring down Satan, but his inherent fragile body made it an impossible task.

To the point where Xenon, who had been watching over him, suggested giving up. After all, Satan could be defeated by him, so he just told Cain to rest comfortably. However, Cain couldn't accept that and resolved once again that he must defeat Satan.

'He'll even tell me the detailed history of Satan here.'

In Volume 15, it was mentioned that Satan was banished from Hikton for purely political reasons. In Volume 16, it is revealed more precisely through Cain's words.

Originally, he was an ideal husband and leader who treasured his family and clan deeply, but he lost everything due to external attacks. A man with a tragic past to the point of being pitiful.

Satan did not become a devil by his own accord, it was the circumstances and the people around him who turned him into one. The result was revenge against the great chieftain.

'But he can't bring himself to kill his brother.'

Satan and Cain were step brothers, but they held each other in special regard. From a young age, when Cain, who was weaker, was in trouble, Satan stepped in to resolve the issue. If there was something Satan didn't know, Cain would teach him. If the former great chieftain hadn't become so blinded by greed, Satan would have handled the military, and Cain would have managed politics. That's how strong their bond was.

Although circumstances led the brothers to face off against each other, Satan, aware of his own transformation into a devil, declared surrender in the fierce battle with Cain. After declaring surrender, he immediately betrayed the devils and charged into battle, ultimately dying heroically. Despite the grim process, he ended up as a hero among the beastmen.

'The original purpose has changed…'

As I wrote, I found myself in doubt. The original message was supposed to convey that beastmen needed wisdom, not just strength. But as I continued to write, tears of brotherly love and some philosophical aspects were added. Of course, the story itself wasn't bad, and it's quite captivating. It's just that the message I wanted to convey isn't quite there.

'Let's just focus on the essence. The present is changing rapidly.'

There was still no news about Leona returning from Animers. The same goes for news about the Animers itself. Most importantly, I wasn't a philosopher, but I have grateful critics who interpret my book whenever I publish one. I should trust them once.

'But anyway…'

After briefly setting aside my magic pen, I opened the drawer and retrieved a bundle of paper. It was the manuscript that Cherry had handed to me after going through the editing process the last time.

As it was a freshly written manuscript, it was neatly preserved without any damage. However, the content inside remained the same as before.

I planned to send it to the publisher along with the other 16th volume to support her dream, but I had doubts if it was really okay.

'At least it's undeniably entertaining.'

Cherry's romance fantasy, 'Once Again, Under the Crimson Sunset,' was truly enjoyable. At least in my eyes.

The plot seems quite common – a heroine from the future returns to the past to overcome adversity. But in this world, the concept of 'regression' was scarce enough to capture people's interest. The problem lies in the fact that the context and grammar are eerily similar to mine.

From what I've heard, she somehow copied Xenon's Biography to write it similarly to mine, which was unavoidable. I, too, used to write stories based on what I enjoyed in my past life, and as time passed, I developed my own style.

There's a chance this novel may face criticism in the same way. Generally, even just one or two negative comments can be deeply hurtful.

Above all, Cherry's current mental health was not in a good state, to the point where criticism could be fatal. She might even show anxiety symptoms upon seeing criticism in the newspaper.

'Even if she receives criticism, I still want her to continue…'

Cherry has been ruthlessly trampled upon even before her talent sprouted. This time, I need to protect her somehow until it fully blossoms.

She'll use a pen name to avoid being recognized by her family, so it's better not to leave any traces.

'It's hard to call her my disciple…'

If Cherry says she's my disciple, I can immediately become her shield. However, it could get complicated once I reveal my true identity.

And to say that the person who wrote the regression story is Xenon's disciple? I may as well call myself a regressor.But, for the sake of the future, it's better to keep her as my disciple.

'First, I should ask for her opinion.'

I thought so and checked the time. It's the weekend, so there are no classes, and I haven't made any separate plans to meet Cherry, so we'll meet next week. For now, it seems like a good idea to complete the remaining parts of 16th volume and start planning the next story.

'Since the 17th volume concludes the beastmen part, I should shift the focus more toward Jin and Lily. Maybe meeting with Gluttony and learning about the secret of their birth.'

Thus, after finishing all of the 16th volume after writing for a while, I had one thought.

'Should I introduce Cherry to others next week?'

It's not a bad choice. It was strange to meet her secretly like this, so it's wiser to let them know about Cherry's existence. When Cherry gets same-sex friends, her unstable mental state will probably improve somewhat. Every time I saw her in class, she sat alone, not talking to anyone. There were people who showed interest in her appearance and figure, but her gloomy atmosphere quickly drove them away.

'At the same time, it was burdensome that she kept looking only at me…'

I believe it will gradually get better.

*****

The weekend has passed, and Monday has come. Over the weekend, I sent the completed manuscript of Volume 16 to my mansion. However, I haven't made a decision regarding Cherry's novel and plan to keep it as it is. Instead of making a thoughtless decision, I intend to listen to Cherry's opinion before making a choice.

By the way, whenever I was at Elena's research lab, Cherry always visited. Thanks to that, Cherry and I have ended up going to a café to discuss our opinions without the need for me to visit her.

"Cherry, I've mentioned this before, but if you really want to, I can send your manuscript to the publishing company. However, you'll face a lot of criticism. I'm worried about you…"

"It's okay."

"I could be a shield for you…"

“It’s okay.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

After spending the weekend agonizing in solitude, Cherry responded that it’s okay even if she receives criticism, and there’s no need for me to be her shield. Her gloomy expression and deep, dark eyes remained, but her lips lifted slightly, creating a somewhat somber atmosphere.

I couldn’t decide whether to say she was feeling good about it or still felt depressed.

“Before that, Assistant Isaac.”

“Yes?”

“When do you plan to release Volume 16 of Xenon’s Biography?”

“I have already sent it?”

“I see.”

In response, Cherry, who had been looking at me with raised eyebrows, tilted her head. She then made a request in her characteristic gloomy and weary voice.

“Can you send mine in two weeks then?”

“I don’t mind. But why in two weeks?”

“Releasing it at the same time as Isaac isn’t possible.”

“Ah… I see.”

I guess we’ll have to go along with that.

“So, what pseudonym do you want to use? Let’s go for something that’s far from the color pink if possible. Observant people might suspect it’s from the Roseberry family.”

“Oh. I already prepared a pseudonym.”

“What is it?” In response to my question, Cherry looked me straight in the eye and answered.

“Mary.”

Finally, she smiled.

“Please use Mary.”

It was a very insidious smile.

I briefly wore a puzzled expression, then nodded. The smile was a bit unsettling, but using the pen name Mary made sense.

It was a manuscript we were sending from none other than our mansion, and Xenon and Mary were the names of the protagonist and heroine. The publisher might find some connection, so they would manage it well.

“Alright, I’ll send it then. I’m sorry to say this, but it’s best not to have too high expectations. I find it interesting, but it’s just my subjective opinion.”

“It’s okay. That’s enough for me.”

“…Is that so?”

“Yes.”

Her words sounded almost reverential. Well, considering she had her dreams crushed and then barely managed to cling to a new one, I understood why she said such things.

“Oh, and this…”

“Hmm?”

Cherry, looking embarrassed, showed me something. It looked like an ordinary water bottle.

(TL: Oh god, please don’t be what I think it is…)

When I made a puzzled expression, she spoke in a shy voice.

“Last time… instead of a meal, I said I’d give you something better…”

“Ah, that?”

Now that she mentioned it, she did say something like that. As a thank-you for helping me, she said she'd give me something better instead of a meal.

Honestly, I had forgotten, but it seemed Cherry remembered.

'Did she say it will definitely smell like cherry blossoms?'

I turned my gaze towards Cherry, who had lowered her head. Her ample chest became even more prominent as she tucked her hands between her thighs due to embarrassment.

I wondered why she was so embarrassed about what she had made. It was a somewhat unusual reaction for someone who usually exuded a gloomy atmosphere.

For a moment, I had doubts about her appearance, but then I opened the lid of the bottle and checked its contents. As soon as I opened the lid, a strong scent of cherry blossoms stimulated my sense of smell.

I did have a strong lilac fragrance coming from my body, but this was… thick? Or sticky?

"What is this? Is it perfume?"

"No."

"Then?"

"You can drink it…"

Cherry explained vaguely without giving a proper explanation. Judging by how red her face had become, she seemed quite embarrassed.

Still, a gift is a gift, and I should graciously accept it. Since it was given to me by my coworker and cute(?) junior, I planned to use it as she wished.

"Thank you. By the way, you said you can drink it?"

"Yes… You can drink it, or use it as a seasoning…"

"Ah, it's like a sauce."

No wonder the scent was so strong. I vaguely heard that this type of sauce was popular among nobles.

And the Roseberry family is famous for being symbolized by cherry blossoms. Naturally, there must be a cherry blossom-scented sauce as well.

'But it's a bit unusual to put it in a bottle. She could just give it to me as a whole.'

With such thoughts in mind, I dipped my finger in to taste it. As I put my finger in, Cherry suddenly raised her head from which a cherry fell. Before long, I looked at the sticky white sauce(?) and immediately put it in my mouth. As I put it in, a proper saltiness and a rich cherry blossom scent swirled in my mouth.

"Ah, uh…"

As I put the sauce in my mouth, an inexplicable exclamation poured out from Cherry's mouth. Her lips, which had gone down, went up, and joy and ecstasy were etched in her pink pupils.

Was it really that pleasant? As the strong scent of cherry blossoms swirled in my mouth, I wrinkled my forehead slightly. It seems like I should dilute it a bit.

"Is it… delicious?"

"Yeah, it's delicious. Except for the strong scent."

Cherry responded to my straightforward answer.

"Hehe."

She laughed strangely and bowed her head again. Why is she acting like that? I briefly paused in my confusion and dipped my finger in the water bottle once more.

"But why does it taste salty?"

It seemed strangely sweet, too.

Chapter 212: 16th Book (2)

The true identity of the sauce Cherry gave me as a gift was the sap from the cherry blossom tree, which can be considered a specialty and symbol of the Roseberry family. While it's common to extract sap from maple or oak trees, Cherry explained that in this world, cherry blossoms produce a different kind of sap.

(TL: I still have my suspicions, but I will believe it for my own sanity.)

Furthermore, Cherry mentioned that if you process the sap, you can make a sauce or perfume with a cherry blossom fragrance, and its flavor is unique but intense, making it suitable for bath products as well. The slightly sweet taste was because Cherry brought the raw sap as it is, but even she wasn't sure why there was a subtle saltiness.

According to Cherry's explanation, you can use the raw sap directly, but she recommended diluting it because its concentration is very strong. Especially since the period for extracting the sap was limited, it's known to be quite expensive. Hence, she gave me a plain container, as the sap itself already carries the cherry blossom scent and can be pricey.

She also mentioned that the processing method is not difficult. You can use it in cooking or simply dilute it in water with a bit of mana, and you're done.

Her promise to give me something better than a meal was by no means an empty one. Although I may not have an immediate use for it, I intend to keep it stored for now.

'I can't bring myself to give it to anyone else.'

Giving a gift filled with goodwill to someone else was not proper etiquette. Furthermore, this sap is something Cherry went to great lengths to obtain and gift to me.

Accordingly, I should show proper manners. Although there is no need for perfume as the scent of lilacs already emanates from my body, I should use it as a bath additive at least. With the intention of giving one to Cherry someday, I began to spend my days in this manner.

And a few days later, Volume 16 of Xenon's Biography was revealed to the world. It was a substantial volume, equivalent to nearly two books, and it received enthusiastic applause from many readers.

[Xenon. Is he a golem who writes without even eating?]

[Readers are sending mixed looks of astonishment and concern at the unprecedented massive volume. He was injured by the elves, but with this pace…]

[Did he fail to control the volume? Frankly, it would be better if he continued to fail, but for the sake of his health…]

The original Xenon's Biography had an average thickness of one joint of a finger. However, this time, due to volume control failure and a faster plot development, it ended up being as thick as an index finger.

By the way, the standard for the index finger was me. As mentioned before, my fingers are long and pretty enough to be called "lily fingers." So you can roughly imagine how thick it is. I was a bit embarrassed because I never thought I would write so much. Perhaps it was thanks to the holy power from Luminous that my unique focus was unleashed.

It was a hypothesis with high credibility.

[In fact, if Xenon puts in the effort, achieving this volume is not that difficult. So, next time…]

Oh, no. It's impossible.

There was a wish in the newspapers that Volume 17 would also come out like this, but unfortunately, it cannot happen.

The reason why Volume 16 came out very thick was fundamentally due to a failure in controlling the pacing. Moreover, the message I wanted didn't even get in, and there's hardly any focus on Cain's tragic past with Satan.

Even though towards the end, Xenon confronts Satan and even engages in a duel, Cain intervenes midway and challenges him to a sacred duel. Due to writing it in a haphazard manner, it fell short in terms of completeness compared to other books. Still, it seems that people are mostly satisfied with the large volume.

Anyway, let's move beyond praising the volume and evaluate the content of the work.

[Satan, symbolizing wrath, finally releases his anger in the end. A very impressive scene.]

[Is the one who turns someone into a devil more like a devil? Or is that devil the real devil?]

[As we see in the case of Satan, we can make someone into a devil. Even though there may be no sin, there is ‘responsibility.’]

[It’s easy to destroy one person. But it’s difficult to stop such a person.]

[When the anger that blinds one’s eyes and ears disappears, you will see what’s around you.]

The evaluations followed as I expected. It will be impressive as Satan, who lived consumed by anger, has his anger resolved thanks to Cain. Moreover, Satan was a victim turned perpetrator, a character of misfortune who turned to the sword due to the betrayal of the nation.

Historically, there were many such people of this type, especially those who seek revenge when betrayed by someone they trusted.

[Revenge is just a process, the moment it becomes the destination, one is no different from a devil.]

[The only way to resolve anger is through love, as shown by Cain. Only love for family, siblings, companions, and romantic love can quell anger.]

[The process was not pleasant, but Satan met his end as a beastmen hero.]

[To end it as family, not as a devil.]

As you may know, there is a scene where Cain challenges Satan to a sacred duel and in the process, they reveal their inner feelings to each other. It turns out that Satan also harbored feelings of remorse towards Cain, and Cain also carried the guilt of not being able to stop Satan.

As time goes on, Satan’s anger subsides, and he cannot bring himself to harm Cain anymore, despite the fact that he could have subdued Cain. This was because every time he attempted to do so, Cain expressed the determination to fight to the end.

Although he had slit the throat of his father, who had betrayed him, Satan could not do the same to his brother because Cain was a true family member.

[It reveals the aspect of beastmen that values family greatly. On the other hand, it also shows a merciless side to the betrayer.]

[The characters Satan and Cain represent the current state of beastmen and the ideal that they should aspire to.]

[Sometimes, it is necessary to show sincerity, not physical strength or intelligence, in order to inspire trust in others.]

It also shed light on the relationship between Satan and Cain. It seems that it dealt with the bond between siblings rather than the romantic love between individuals, as has been shown so far.

Despite their individual circumstances and tragedies, they almost came to harm each other with swords, but brothers are still brothers. If it weren't for the greed of their father, they would have lived happily without parting.

Because of this, the assumption 'what if?' also occasionally surfaced. If the great chieftain had not been ambitious, Satan would have become a great Hikton warrior, and Cain would have governed the nation well.

[Unlike the battles so far, it was one-sided and fierce. But at the same time, it was poignant.]

[It showed that even if it wasn't a flashy and intense battle, it could leave a deep impression.]

[There must have been many emotions in their fists and claws.]

Many people also viewed Cain and Satan's confrontation in the sacred duel favorably. Unlike before, it wasn't intense, and it was a situation where Cain was being defeated one-sidedly, but it portrayed the tragedy of brothers vividly, touching the hearts of many.

Some people praised it as one of the top battle scenes in the series, while others said it wasn't as good as the showdown with Sakran, no matter what. Because it was nearly two volumes long and was tightly packed, the criticisms of people were also diverse. In fact, before it was officially published, I received a letter from the publishing company.

[Hello, Mr. Xenon. I am Musk Grid, the president of the Grik publishing company. The reason for my message is that the manuscript you sent us this time is too long… (omitted) … so I suggest dividing it into two volumes. Ah, of course, it's just a suggestion, and if you wish, you can publish it as it is.]

From the publisher's perspective, it would be much more profitable to split it into two. It was actually a reasonable length for that. However, I just requested that it be sold as one bundle. I'm sorry to the publisher, but there was no suitable point to cut it off, and if it sells out, there might be an empty space in the middle.

In the printing industry, there was almost no enthusiasm for introducing new technology, but that was before Volume 12 came out. Recently, there has been a frequent rush.

The reason, as everyone knows, is because of Xenon's Biography. Starting from Volume 12, Xenon's Biography began to spread widely, and people from all races started buying it.

Now, it sold like hotcakes not only to humans but also to other races, so the printing house was in a situation where they could only exclaim, 'We can't handle this!' Because of this, the publishing company hastily signed contracts with several printing houses, but it was still an unbearable situation as it started selling worldwide.

'Still, I can say they're doing well in business.'

The CEO of the publishing company was a person of deep integrity, so he wouldn't be foolish enough to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Despite the nobles and even the elves coming, he remained resolute to the extent of not revealing any clues about my identity. There may have been suspicions of embezzlement, but that level of corruption can be overlooked.

It can't be helped that the president of the publishing company looked sullen, but considering the enthusiastic cheers from the readers, this might be just fine as it is.

[What will Cain, the new leader of the Hikton, do? Will he abolish the bad habits and traditions, or will he maintain them? Speculation is high.]

[Even on the devil side, one of the top officers, Satan, has fallen, so they should be on alert. The wrath has disappeared, but other sins are still thriving.]

[Who will be the next sin they encounter?]

It hasn’t been long since Volume 16 was released, but there were already many people eagerly anticipating Volume 17. Fortunately, the plot itself was well-structured, so once the writing is done, it’s over.

If the holy power I received from Luminous also affects concentration, it won’t be long until it’s released. It would be nice to just sleep until then…

However, there’s a problem that has arisen here.

However, a problem arose here.

“Hey! Help me out a bit!!”

“No. What are you doing here all of a sudden… By the way, when did you come back?”

“That’s not the issue!”

Leona, who had returned from Animers, grabbed my shoulder and shouted as soon as she saw me.

“It’s starting to look like I will become a Great Chieftain just like this!!”

“…?”

Translators note:

Thank you everyone for the well wishes!

Chapter 213: 16th Book (3)

Volume 16 was released, and about a week had passed. Leona, who had headed to Animers, also returned to the Academy. However, as soon as she returned, she urgently sought me out, saying that she could become a great chieftain and asking for my help, seemingly out of the blue.

Fortunately, there were hardly any passersby around, but if there had been more people, it would have been a dangerous moment in many ways. Of course, it was dangerous for Leona, not me.

In response, we urgently visited a quiet place, a suitable cafe, and I slowly listened to Leona's situation.

"Before we go into the details, have things been resolved in Animers? That's what I want to ask first."

Did she run around looking for me? Sweat beads formed on Leona's forehead. In general, the fact that even the most robust species in terms of hardware was sweating meant that it was urgent.

Thanks to the lilac scent emanating from my body, finding me should have been easy. However, I could roughly sense how dire her situation was.

"Phew… First of all, I apologize for calling you out of the blue. It's a very urgent matter…"

"I think I can tell that it's urgent. So, what's the outcome?"

"Ultimately, it went well. Just as you said, when people laughed or pretended not to listen, I gently provoked them, and they naturally got involved."

"So, does that mean the sacred duel is really going to be held in a tournament format?"

Leona nodded her head firmly in response to my confirmation question. I was honestly surprised by her reaction.

Changing traditions and culture in our era was a very difficult task. Especially since the sacred duel made a crucial contribution to the founding of the country, it would likely be considered integral to the country, and tampering with it would be a courageous act in itself.

However, judging by the result, it seems they themselves recognize that the tradition of the sacred duel was barbaric and a major obstacle to leading the nation.

“It’s in the plans for the future. It won’t happen immediately, but we’ll establish rules and slowly make plans. But to make it public, we need a Great Chieftain…”

“You can’t issue a decree because there’s no regent.”

The only one with enough authority to change tradition is the ruler. And a regent must maintain authority even if someone doesn’t occupy the throne.

If someone declares themselves a king the moment they feel like it, it’s no different from what happened before. Leona mentioned having many siblings, so it’s almost like a power struggle has already begun.

“Why not just pass the chieftain’s position to the eldest son of the first wife? Are beastmen different?”

“It’s a bit more complicated. Normally, the chieftain should make the selection personally, but the problem is that this happened before a proper succession could take place, and they returned to Harte’s arms. Because of this, it’s not an easy task to choose the chieftain hastily. Furthermore, the faction that wanted to abolish the sacred duel is also insisting on choosing the chieftain themselves…”

“It could potentially lead to a division into two factions.”

“Yes.”

It’s common for different groups with varying ideologies within a country to elect their own leaders. In my past life, there were examples like South Korea, Vietnam, Germany, and so on.

This means that Animers, which Hick founded with great effort, could potentially become a divided nation. If we don’t take action quickly, the probability of a civil war breaking out will increase.

I was momentarily taken aback by the apparently more serious state of Animers' internal affairs and asked a question about the part that had piqued my curiosity.

"So, what's the deal with you possibly becoming a Great Chieftain again? Regardless of whether you're the daughter of the third wife, you still have the chieftain's bloodline."

"…First, we need to understand the ideologies of the opposing faction in detail. It's closely tied to their reason for wanting to abolish the Sacred Duel. They want a chieftain with intelligence, not just military power, someone who can handle politics, diplomacy, and state affairs. Until now, lions have been in charge of state affairs simply because they were Hick's descendants. On the other hand, we believe we cannot nominate those who are not lions as a Great Chieftain."

It was something that could be found everywhere, but it was very interesting. While the royal family considered lineage important, it was necessary to focus on the opposing forces.

When you think about it, it could be considered the first step toward democracy. Of course, it wasn't a proper democracy like in my past life, but it emphasized the selection of the monarch. If power is vested in the opposing forces here, the concept of 'voting' may emerge.

Moreover, the Sacred Duel is also undergoing significant changes that are suitable for this. If used wisely, it could take a step towards democracy. It's a bit amusing that the beastmen who were collectively called barbaric across all races are the first to head towards democracy, but in this world, anything is possible.

Anyway, getting back to the point.

"When there is such a tense confrontation between each other, Volume 16 of Xenon's Biography was released. Have you seen it by any chance?"

"Of course, I've seen it."

I'm the author, after all. Leona nodded seriously as she swallowed her follow-up words. Subsequently, she seemed embarrassed, and her cheek turned slightly red, and her ears that had stood up above her head dropped weakly. In that state, Leona hesitated and opened her mouth, not in a cynical tone, but in a very timid one.

"Um… you might not remember, but didn't I say something like this to you last year? I absolutely don't read things like Xenon's Biography that humans write."

“Did you say that?”

I gingerly searched through my memories, tilting my head. The day I accidentally discovered Leona’s true identity, as far as I can recall, was that day.

She called me a red penguin that squawked without fear, so her views on humans couldn’t have been positive. Perhaps even Xenon’s Biography written by a human seemed uninteresting.

Of course, I’ve long forgotten all of that, but it seems she’s still kept it close to her heart.

‘She’s secretly timid.’

On the surface, she tried to appear fierce and strong, but now, seeing her like this, there’s a timid side. I can’t confirm which is her real self. Maybe the timid side is genuine, and the fierce personality is just a front. She was a daughter of the third wife, but perhaps she wore that facade not to be underestimated.

“…Actually, that’s not true. I really like it, you know. Even my siblings enjoy reading it.”

“Your siblings? Doesn’t seem likely.”

“I recommended it to them. To read it at least once. No matter what, you should read a book, right? So reluctantly, they read it. But a problem arose after Volume 16. Do you know what Volume 16 is about?”

Of course, I know. I’m the author, after all. It would be strange if I didn’t.

Leona nodded as I did, then hesitantly began to reveal more about the story.

“As you know, Volume 16 doesn’t exactly have Cain defeating Satan… well, not clearly. Anyway, toward the end, Cain, who may be physically weak but mentally strong, becomes the chieftain.”

“I know that.”

“Here is the problem. Xenon’s Biography is currently being treated as a prophecy. Because of this, there is a growing voice that says someone like Cain, who excels in intelligence rather than brute force, should become the clan leader.”

“…Do you believe that?”

Even if that's the case, it doesn't seem right to follow the book's contents blindly. The contamination of the World Tree's roots, the devil worshippers, and the Reapers were events that have already occurred, not the future.

But Animers are currently trying to follow the contents of Xenon's Biography. They're just trying to fit it in forcibly.

"Of course, there was resistance at first. People questioned whether we should follow something that's just in a book. But thanks to Xenon's Biography, we found out that our situation at Animers is complicated. So everyone believes. Because Xenon knows the future, Animers should also change."

"Not at all…"

"Huh?"

"Not at all."

It was so absurd that I almost made a slip of the tongue. Leona blinked her golden eyes when she saw me disagreeing and continued her explanation.

"Really? But it's also getting involved in political issues here. I'm smart enough to get admitted to the Academy, and I even have the bloodline of the Lion Tribe. There are no issues with my bloodline, and I meet the desires of the opposing faction."

"So they're nominating you as the next Great Chieftain. Is that what you're saying?"

"That's right! I have no intention of becoming the Great Chieftain, not even a bit!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Was the current situation frustrating for her? Leona, filled with anger, slammed her fist onto the table forcefully. However, whether it was a failure of strength control or not, her fist left a clear mark on the table.

I'll have to ask about that later. Leona seemed to realize her mistake belatedly and started to give me a hot look.

"…I'll compensate separately, so just keep talking for now."

"Sorry… Anyway, not only our family but even the opposing forces are choosing me as the Great Chieftain, someone who is intelligent and has no issues in terms of bloodline.

Moreover, they think it's right for me to become the Great Chieftain because I also proposed the changes to the Sacred Duel."

"But it was me who first proposed the improvements to it. Didn't you say you won't lie to your family members?"

"That's also an issue. It seems they were impressed by the idea that a wise monarch, not a strong one, should rule the country. They even seem to suspect you might be a sage."

"Huh."

I let out a bitter laugh. Why do they all call me a sage?

I pondered for a moment about what to say and then spoke in a calm voice.

"We're just friends."

"Uh… Friends?"

Leona seemed to put on a cold expression when I casually mentioned that we were friends. The word "friend" seemed somewhat awkward for her.

Well, she had to keep her identity hidden most of the time, so there probably weren't many people she could comfortably call friends. Recently, others had come to know her true identity, but they weren't particularly close. I was likely the only one she could consider a friend, given her role as the model student who always had to act and pretend.

"Why. Is it strange that I call you a friend?"

"Oh, no! Absolutely not! Don't misunderstand."

"What's there to misunderstand?"

The more I talked with Leona, the more I felt like I was getting to know her true self. It seemed like her current demeanor was her real personality, unlike her usual cynical facade. Perhaps she had been harsh before because I was essentially a stranger. She might have had a mindset that it didn't matter how she treated me since I wasn't really her friend.

I watched Leona, who blushed with embarrassment, in silence for a moment and then took a sip of my coffee. Summing up our conversation so far, it went something like this:

In Xenon's Biography, Cain, who was more intellectually gifted than physically strong, became the Great Chieftain, and Xenon's Biography was currently treated as a prophecy worldwide.

So, it seems that Leona, who is brilliant enough to be admitted to the academy, is speculated to bring a good outcome to Animers if she takes on the role of the Great Chieftain. Moreover, having established connections with a wise sage(?), who is wise enough to propose improvements for the Sacred Duel, she could reap many benefits.

'At least that would be the case in a book…'

In fiction, Animers would achieve tremendous progress after Leona became the Great Chieftain and created an era of peace. They would establish alliances with neighboring nations, and in future major wars, they would play a significant role.

However, one must distinguish between fiction and reality. Whether Leona has the qualifications of a Great Chieftain is uncertain. She could become a tyrant, an even more formidable military leader, or even make history as an unparalleled Great Chieftain.

"Ultimately, you don't want to become the Great Chieftain, is that it? Why don't you want it?"

"I'd rather be a chief aide supporting the leader than the leader myself. Besides, it's already tough enough studying, so becoming a Great Chieftain seems like an absurd idea."

"You lack confidence, don't you?"

"Yes."

Leona confidently replied as if she felt no need to deny it. It must have been quite a surprise for her to receive the offer of becoming the Great Chieftain so suddenly. Of course, from my perspective, it doesn't matter whether she becomes one or not.

However, I can't just pretend not to know when she's making such a request.

Oh, there's one thing I'm curious about. They probably assume I'm a sage over there, so it will undoubtedly have an impact on me as well. I know from the culture of the beastmen that they believe in repaying kindness.

Didn’t Leona even declare in front of Mari that she would become my wife last time? Although it was a mishap caused by a difference in common sense, if Leona becomes the Great Chieftain, she might bestow an even greater honor upon me. Of course, from their perspective, it may be an honor, but it’s extremely embarrassing for me.

“Come to think of it, do they consider me a sage over there? If you were to become the Great Chieftain, would it affect me?”

With a coffee cup in hand, I asked Leona. After posing the question, I sipped my coffee and waited for her response.

“Since you brought a proposal for the Sacred Duel and even gave me advice, probably…”

Leona, who had been pondering my question, cautiously glanced at me and replied in a hushed tone.

“…We might have to have a child, even if it’s against the customs of the beastmen. It’s none other than because you’ll be carrying on the Great Chieftain’s bloodline.”

“… …”

Drip

The coffee that was in my mouth returned to the coffee cup.

Translators note:

1/4

Chapter 214: 16th Book (4)

I couldn't hide my shock as I listened to Leona's response. Just a few days ago, it was Kate asking for the seed, and now it's Leona. What's more, Leona had confidently declared in front of Marie the last time that she would become my wife. It was a misunderstanding caused by cultural differences, but now it's a little different.

Leona might potentially become the Great Chieftain, and in such a situation, she says she'll bear my child to repay the favor. Could this also be a part of their culture? She did mention customs directly, so it's halfway certain.

"…What are you talking about again? Last time, you said you'd become my wife."

I quietly asked without even thinking of wiping the coffee that had spilled from my mouth. Still in shock, I was feeling dazed.

Then, Leona awkwardly laughed and scratched the back of her head in response to my question. Even though she had said it herself, she seemed unsure.

"I must emphasize that this is a story if I become the chieftain. Beastmen regards giving birth to the offspring of the chieftain as the highest form of repayment. If someone has received personal favors or has greatly aided the tribe, they are honored with the privilege of carrying the blood of the chieftain."

"What if the genders are the same?"

"They can ask a family member or relative of the chieftain, or the reverse, or even give their own child at a later date. In any case, it's enough to have the blood of the chieftain running through the offspring."

"Wow…"

Considering it an honor to give birth to the chieftain's offspring, it was truly a savage and beastmen-like tradition. It wasn't for nothing she confidently declared she would become my wife in front of Marie. With such a culture as the foundation, there could be a significant difference in common sense.

I couldn't help but burst into laughter at the beastmen' culture, which elicited only admiration from me, and then I looked at Leona. She seemed puzzled even after explaining it herself.

"…So, the beastmen consider it an insult if someone refuses compensation?"

"Yes."

"Then, does that mean you have to marry someone without any choice once you become the chieftain?"

Leona looked up, deep in thought about my question, before answering.

"Um… Marriage is up to you—if you want to, go ahead, but if not, you don't have to. As long as you have offspring, it's fine."

"Who will raise the child?"

"You can raise them, or I can. If you prefer, you can just have the child and pretend you don't know about it. Human culture and Beastmen culture are different, so I can tolerate that much."

"… …"

I was left speechless, my mind spinning. There's one remarkable thing to note here: Leona doesn't seem embarrassed at all. While there's a hint of awkwardness, there's almost no shame in her response.

Since the last time she confidently declared that she would be my wife, I've been thinking about this, but she sees herself as an 'upper' beastmen, as beastmen-like as she is.

For a brief moment, I felt the gap created by our differing norms, but suddenly, a thought crossed my mind: if Leona doesn't become the chieftain, do they have to give me a child? I quickly asked this question.

"Wait a moment. This is a conversation assuming you become the chieftain, but what if it's the other way around? What if someone else becomes the chieftain instead of you?"

"Maybe? If the chieftain has a daughter, they'll probably give her to you, right? If waiting is too hard, they might even send me away. Anyway, as long as the lion's blood flows in them, it's all right."

“Oh. That’s quite something.”

Why can’t I shake this ominous premonition? I only offered advice borrowed from my past life, but the situation has become incredibly complicated.

I can understand such a culture existing due to a savage environment, but when viewed from a third party’s perspective, it’s very hard to accept.

‘How can I explain this to Marie and Cecily…’

I buried my face in my hands in embarrassment. With the already complicated relationship with Adelia, adding Leona into the mix made it even more complex.

It’s honestly fulfilling as a man when beautiful women show affection towards me. However, after accepting Cecily’s confession, I realized it’s not as simple as it seems.

Marie and Cecily fortunately get along and compromise with each other. But if this situation escalates further, I can’t predict what will happen. Even now, they’re in a heated argument due to the night’s activities. Adding more women into the mix?

I’m not some kind of super virile character from a manga or novel, it’s going to be a challenging time ahead.

“…Is it that bad if I become your wife?”

In the midst of despairing over a bleak future, Leona seemed to take my reaction in a different sense as she muttered.

I removed my hands from my face and looked at her. Her lips were puckered, and she wore a sulky expression, her wounded pride evident. It was a cute sight, like an irritated kitten, rather than a brave lion. I stared at the pouting Leona for a while.

First, let’s start with the main point. Leona is beautiful. It’s undeniable that she’s a beauty with her golden hair and dazzling gold eyes, resembling a beast. Her beauty, which highlights her wildness, and her pointed ears that make you want to touch them, stirred an irresistible impulse.

While she’s usually fierce, her current appearance exuded a contrasting charm. How many men could refuse a beautiful woman like this, who is willing to become their wife? However, I need to consider my current situation carefully.

‘I have to let her know that Cecily too is my lover…’

If that happens, I'll definitely have to reveal that I am Xenon. The beastmen culture complicates my position in many ways.

First, let's try to appease the upset Leona. The more I remain silent, the more it could hurt her.

"It's not because of that; it's because of my situation. Actually, I don't have just one lover."

"Oh, the demon princess?"

"Huh? Uh, how did you know?"

I was genuinely shocked. Except for a few close acquaintances, I've been keeping my relationship with Cecily a secret. So, I'm careful when we go on dates and try my best to avoid suspicion.

For situations like nighttime, we sneak out of the academy to do it in Helium without anyone knowing. However, Leona figured it out in an instant, and she even responded as if it weren't a big deal.

Leona pointed at me with her index finger as I displayed a bewildered reaction and replied.

"Smell."

"Smell?"

"Yeah. As you probably already know, every person has their own unique scent. In your case, it's the scent of lilacs, Marie has a fresh lemony fragrance, and the Demon Princess has a sweet peachy scent. Sometimes, I can even smell a lemon scent from you, but peachy scent too. Unless you blend your bodies together, it's impossible for human scents to mix."

"… …"

"So, I had a rough idea that the Demon Princess has become your lover, but I didn't see the need to announce it to everyone? That's why I kept my mouth shut. Don't underestimate a beastman's sense of smell."

Leona gestured with her fingers, seemingly emphasizing her point.

An animal's senses are far superior to those of humans. So, a beastman's senses should be the same.

I felt a sense of futility as everything I had tried to hide seemed meaningless, but at the same time, I felt relieved.

I remained silent for a while with a dumbfounded expression before eventually bursting into laughter.

"… Aren't you curious why Cecily became my lover?"

"I'm not curious at all. If your hearts match, you become partners, simple as that. Or maybe you have some hidden power."

I was slightly taken aback by her words. However, I realized that my thoughts had been focused in that direction solely because of the way humans think. I hadn't even considered it as a possibility.

"Are you secretly an easygoing person?"

"Call it being accommodating."

Leona proudly replied, sticking out her chest as if she was proud. So this is where the difference between our species comes into play. I shook my head in disbelief as I observed it.

"So, is it difficult for you to accept someone as you have two partners? Because they might reject them too, right?"

"It's closer to that. It's hard to reject outright. It could be taken as an insult. Is there any other reward besides that? Like material compensation."

"I consider myself as your material compensation."

"Wow…"

I felt dizzy. The savage customs of the beastmen were so deeply ingrained that I couldn't deal with them using common sense. Should I just accept it as it is? It's a problem whether Leona becomes the Great Chieftain or not.

From a quick glance, it seemed like Leona had already made up her mind… No, it seemed like she didn't even think about it. Even if she lived at the Halo Academy and learned about human customs, the beastmen's common sense was deeply rooted.

So, it wouldn't be a big deal for her even if she became my wife. How can I politely refuse? Regardless of whether Leona likes it or not, this is a practical problem. While I was seriously contemplating with a furrowed brow, Leona casually spoke up.

"Don't worry, accepting it is also one way. And if I become the Great Chieftain, you can just have children and ignore them, right?"

"You might not understand as a beastman, but I'm human. I must take responsibility for my child."

"Well, I guess I'll have to take a different route then if I'm not going to be the Great Chieftain."

"Hmm? What are you talking about?"

"If I become the Great Chieftain, I have an obligation to have many offspring. So, not only you, but other men will also have to accept me as a mate."

I furrowed my eyebrows. Normally, males having multiple females was common, but I had heard of the opposite situation as well. And the Great Chieftain is the king of the beastmen.

Power could also be considered a form of strength, so it was a position that no one could touch. In other words, if Leona became the Great Chieftain, it meant that she would have to accept other men besides me.

Honestly, I didn't like that idea. If Leona were someone else's, I might have overlooked it as a unique custom, but not when it came to my child. Whether it was because of memories from a past life or just my own desires, I felt repulsed by that. I had always been averse to the idea of having children outside of marriage.

"…I'm a bit uneasy about that. Can't it be changed?"

"It's not easy to change this. That's why I don't want to become the Great Chieftain. It would be much better for me to become your third wife."

"…Leona."

"Yes?"

I looked at Leona, who was giggling, with a conflicted expression and eventually let out a sigh.

In response to my sigh, she also stopped smiling and adopted a somewhat serious expression. After a subtle silence settled in, I began to slowly bring out my inner thoughts.

“It might be because I’m human, or it could just be a personal perspective. I believe there should be affection between us to have a relationship, and I think the ultimate goal of that should be a child. At least, I don’t see it as a ‘reward’ or ‘duty.’”

“… …”

“I don’t dislike you at all. It’s just that… how can I put it… it feels like you’re treating yourself like an object. At least, I want to cherish and value my own person. Not as an object but as a lovely woman.”

I could have said such nonsense, having already accepted Cecily and having been confessed to by Adelia. But I really dislike insincere affection.

Between people, it’s not about obligation, but true feelings should come and go. At least, I live my life thinking that way.

The reason I unconsciously accepted Adelia is also because of this. She doesn’t know I’m Xenon, and her affection towards me is genuine.

“So, for now, I can only reject you. I won’t stop you from not becoming the Great Chieftain if you wish, but becoming my wife is something I’ll gradually consider. Let’s build our relationship slowly as individuals, not as a reward, but as two people.”

“What if I insist on becoming the Great Chieftain?”

“We should pretend that conversation never happened. It’s better for both of us to remain friends.”

In some ways, you could say it’s selfish. I don’t want Leona to be with another man, and I’m pushing away the idea of becoming my wife as well. So, maybe I could just close my eyes and have a child once, but pregnancy wasn’t that easy.

Beastmen birth rate is similar to humans, so their fertility period is probably similar too. So, we have to do it at least a few times. She hasn’t developed any affection for me until now either.

“Actually, you could call it selfish. I don’t want another man in your life, and I’m refusing to become your husband for love reasons. That’s how I feel right now.”

"… …"

"What do you think?"

Leona listened to my innermost thoughts somehow spilled out and had a subtle expression on her face. I anxiously waited for her words to fall from her lips. If she were an ordinary human, I wouldn't have anything to say even if she slapped me and cursed me. The statement I made was at the level where I would take all the curses in the world without any objections.

However, she currently sees herself as a kind of commodity. This is precisely the part that I dislike the most. I wished that she would at least think of herself as a person, not an object.

"…I see."

After a brief moment, Leona nodded as if she understood. I tensed up inwardly.

What will come out of her mouth, really? Although she had just spoken, I couldn't help but feel anxious.

How much time had passed in this silence? While waiting anxiously, Leona, whose mouth had been tightly closed, began to slowly open it.

"I like it."

"…What?"

"I like it."

And, quite unexpectedly, those words flowed from her mouth. To make it even more surprising, she wore her characteristic cynical smile.

While I was left stunned, Leona clenched her fist, and as if convinced on her own, she nodded and continued speaking.

"Yes. A male should have ambition, right? The aspiration to dominate without sharing a female with anyone else. I really like that."

"No, that's not what I meant…"

"I know. So your words mean you want to feel affection from me, right?"

Swish

Leona spoke incomprehensible words, then pulled out a tail hidden in her pants. A tail resembling the end of a brush.

While I was focused on the swaying tail, she slowly got up from her seat and approached me.

Subsequently, she looked straight into my eyes, chuckled, then slowly knelt down and brought her head close to mine. Her pointed ears stole my attention.

“Touch.”

“What, what?”

“Touch my ears. Don’t you want me to express affection towards you?”

Upon hearing those words, I shifted my gaze to the two ears that were perking up. Touching tails was an act reserved for couples, and touching ears signified the granting of affection.

So, she was allowing me to touch her ears as a sign of affection in response to my words. She was expressing it directly, not metaphorically. I was unsure how to proceed, but Leona encouraged me by pushing her ears closer. Eventually, I found myself touching the ears that had popped up unexpectedly.

Swoosh

“Rrrrow.”

As I touched her head, Leona started to purr like a cat. I focused on the sensation in my hand. When I petted Marie and Cecily’s heads, it felt only soft, but Leona’s texture was quite different, probably because she was a beastwoman.

It was more rough than soft. However, it had a strangely addictive quality, and I couldn’t stop petting her. On the other hand, her ears were very soft.

“Rrr. Rrrrow.”

Leona continued to purr and impatiently rubbed her head against my hand as if urging me to continue. I, too, continued to pet her head with a complex expression. It felt like I had a big cat in my hands.

Just doing this alone made my feelings complicated, but Leona seemed completely intoxicated by my touch, going so far as to engage in even more affectionate actions.

Lick

“Uh!”

The common behavior of animals in the cat family, grooming. Leona grabbed my hand while I was petting her and licked my palm with her tongue.

Startled by her sudden action, I hastily withdrew my hand, and it seemed Leona was equally flustered as she quickly apologized.

“Oh. I’m, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to…”

“No, no. It’s okay. I was just a little surprised.”

“That’s a relief. So, did you feel my affection?”

Leona still knelt on the floor, making it impossible for me to avoid her gaze. Her tail swayed gently behind her, and her ears perked up with an expression that seemed filled with anticipation. Not to mention her irresistibly cute face.

I covered my face with one hand, feeling my heart pounding. But that hand was the same one Leona had just licked with her tongue.

After a moment of discomfort, I sighed deeply and spoke.

“…I’ll talk to others.”

The number of women in my life was increasing.

Translators note:

Man, I love Leona, she’s so cute… and normal… comparatively…

Chapter 215: Great Chieftain (1)

Originally, cats are sly, prickly, and independent creatures. They often have a subtle sense of boundaries and tend to have mostly calm personalities. Typically, they don't easily approach others, but some can be rather friendly, sociable and show a lot of affection. They might even go for walks.

And Leona, who expressed affection to me, was similar to this. At first, she was cynical and often growled, but as I helped her, we became closer, and today she even let me pet her head. Of course, she's not a cat but a lion, but let's overlook that since they belong to the same feline family. She takes pride in being a lioness, so mentioning it might lead to an unfortunate incident.

Anyway, I found myself chosen by her due to some circumstances. I plan to speak with Marie and Cecily, but solving the Great Chieftain issue was more urgent. The problem is that it's the most challenging part. Judging from the current situation in Animers, Leona is the most likely candidate for the next Great Chieftain. There's no other being who can perfectly satisfy the desires of both the royal faction and the opposing faction.

"When will the decision be made?"

"It'll probably come from above in about three days. It would be ideal to decide after I graduate from the academy, but that's unlikely. We need to appoint someone as the Great Chieftain as soon as possible since we currently don't have one."

"Will the final decision be made then?"

"Yes."

"In that case, what about the academy?"

"For now, I will just hand over authority to them and focus on my studies. Just think of it as leaving my position temporarily vacant."

Three days from now, the schedule was quite tight. We need to find a way to prevent Leona from becoming the chieftain during that time. Of course, I planned to inform

Marie and Cecily as well. If Leona becomes the chieftain, they won't have any connection with her, but if it goes the other way, they must know.

Being kept in the dark and suddenly being introduced to Leona without them knowing would be disrespectful and inconsiderate, so I have an obligation to let them know.

"Are you attending the class at 3 tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"Let's meet then. We need to inform Marie and Cecily too."

"Okay."

"But…"

I hesitated as I looked at Leona. Currently, she wasn't sitting across from me but beside me. She was even leaning her head on my arm as if showing her affection, making purring sounds. There was even a happy smile on her face. What could have caused this change in her mood in such a short time?

"…Leona?"

"Yes?"

"Can you explain why you're getting so close? You've already shown your affection."

"Just because I like your scent. Honestly, I've wanted to do this since before."

Leona continued to purr, pressing her cheek against my arm without saying a word. It seemed like she was intoxicated by the lilac scent vibrating from my body.

I suppressed a sigh trying to escape and gently pushed her head away. She yielded without any resistance, but a question formed on her face.

"Enough for now. Think about how you can get out of the position of chieftain too. Is it really true that there isn't a single person with the aptitude?"

"Um…"

"Before that, tell me who leads the opposing faction. Judging by the way they lead, they seem like a formidable figure. They might not have a center, but there's likely someone skillfully coordinating things."

"…Are you talking about that woman?"

Leona seemed uncomfortable when asked about the opposing faction. Judging by the way she referred to her as "that woman," it seemed like she was a woman, and her reputation didn't seem to be particularly good.

However, discrimination was widespread due to the focus on strength among the Beastmen. So, I couldn't take Leona's words at face value.

"I don't know who that woman is. Can you explain properly?"

"…Alright. Her name is Jinai Crochuker. She's a Hyena Beastwoman."

"Hyena Beastwoman?"

My eyes widened when I heard Hyena Beastwoman. I didn't remember much, but I had heard that Hyena Beastmen received a less favorable evaluation even among the Beastmen.

Just how bad was it? If you were to ask a beastmen if they are a hyena, a sacred duel would immediately fly at you. It was discriminatory, but I suspected there might be a reason for it.

I, too, don't have a favorable image of hyenas due to memories from my past life. They are cunning and malicious, and in many ways, they fit the image of a scoundrel.

However, this was just an image, and in reality, hyenas play a very important role in the ecosystem. Moreover, even if we look at them as a group, they belong to the strongest individuals in the food chain, competing with lions.

But it seems that the hyenas on the opposite side have a leader. I had a feeling that something complex might be involved.

"Hyena beastmen don't have a good image even among your kind, right? They say that you might even receive a challenge for a sacred duel if you call someone that."

"That's right."

"Can you tell me why they have such a bad image?"

"Historically, they were conniving individuals. They used all sorts of tricks to create divisions between the tribes and would seize any opportunity they got. That's why hyena

beastmen used to live as wanderers until they were persuaded by Hick to join Animers. But their nature created the situation we're in now."

"Hmm…"

Listening to it, all sorts of negative aspects come to the forefront. It's not much different from the image from my past life.

However, to truly understand a person's character, you have to meet them in person. I hesitated while stroking my chin and asked Leona one thing.

"Have you ever met them in person?"

"No. I've only heard about them. Historically, hyenas didn't have a good reputation."

"Indeed."

I nodded involuntarily upon hearing Leona's response. While I would need to meet them in person to truly know, I can see why Hyena beastmen might be considered miniature versions of devils.

Prejudice exists everywhere, as demonstrated by the example of demons. It's possible that Hyena beastmen, like demons, have been oppressed by prejudice throughout their lives.

Nevertheless, seeing someone rise to prominence as a central figure in opposing forces must indicate an exceptional individual. I'd like to meet them at least once.

"Leona, it's not right to judge someone just by what you've heard. Look at the demons, for instance. They were persecuted before the Xenon incident happened. Couldn't the Hyena beastmen be in a similar situation?"

"That's true, but they have brought great chaos to Animers. It's hard to see them in a positive light as a member of the Lions."

"You're right. But I'm a bit uneasy about the fact that Hick brought the Hyenas himself. If the Hyenas were truly a vile race, Hick wouldn't have brought them, would he?"

"… …"

Hick, the founding king of Animers and the wealthiest beastmen in history. After the racial war scattered the tribes everywhere, he united them to establish Animers, and he deserves praise as a hero.

However, someone with such heroic qualities like Hick directly incorporating the Hyenas into Animers, would have been an obstacle to its founding if they were as wicked and vile as their reputation claims.

History reveals many facts but not everything. While it is said that humans began using magic because they fought against the elves during the racial war, the reality is that it was passed down by the demons.

Perhaps hyenas have their own circumstances as well. At least that's how it looked from a third-party perspective.

"Of course, this is just my opinion, so take it into consideration. I'm not suggesting we crown the hyena as the chieftain. It's all about letting go of prejudices."

"…Alright. I'll keep that in mind."

"Good. Then…"

I gently patted Leona's head, which had become gloomy, with a contented smile. It was an action that I took without even realizing it, seeing her in such a gloomy state. In response, Leona's previously drooping ears perked up.

She looked at me with vacant eyes for a moment. I quickly withdrew my hand with a start, but her gaze continued to fixate on my face.

"Oh. Sorry. If… it made you uncomfortable…"

"Hey."

"I apolog… huh?"

Just as I was about to apologize hastily, Leona suddenly made a strange request.

"Can I bite you once?"

"…No, you can't."

With those sharp fangs? Does she want to kill me?

*****

The day after, the meeting of the trio, Marie, Cecily, and Leona, approached. Despite steeling my resolve, I couldn't help but think that I should just let them know since I was

bound to receive an earful of curses. However, Leona had already nearly given up her position as the Great Chieftain. She was already delightfully nonchalant about the prospect of losing the chieftain's seat once I offered my help.

In this situation, her declaring that she would become my wife was certain. To lessen the shock of it all, I had to somehow break the news in advance. There's a saying that it's better to get bitten by a mad dog sooner rather than later for a reason.

Fortunately, Rina seemed to have caught onto something and vacated the scene. Thus, I, Marie, Cecily, and finally Leona, could have a peaceful meal.

"From now on, I Leona Lions, will be Isaac's third wife. Please take care of me."

"Cough!!"

Before the ordered meal arrived, Leona confidently made a statement, skipping all the circumstances before and after. My throat was parched from nervousness, so I had no choice but to respond exactly as she did. I wondered how the others would react while I was giving this kind of response.

"…Marie? Did I hear that wrong…?"

"No. I think we heard it clearly."

Both Marie and Cecily seemed taken aback. Cecily, in particular, had a face that seemed to be trying to determine if what she heard was real or not. While Marie already had some familiarity with Leona and some understanding of the differences in common sense between humans and beastkin, Cecily was meeting Leona for the first time. She could do nothing but be bewildered by the situation.

"No… Cough! Cough! Well… Cough!"

I hurriedly tried to speak, sensing the strange atmosphere that had developed due to Leona's statement, but it seemed like only my coughing could be heard. It was only after Marie patted my back that I finally managed to calm down.

Nevertheless, I couldn't help but cough occasionally.

"Cough. Hey. You left out so much… Cough. What will they think if you suddenly say that?"

"It doesn't matter as long as the problem is resolved, right?"

“…Isaac?”

As soon as Leona said that, Marie next to me called my name in a cold voice. I turned my head in surprise to find Marie glaring at me fiercely. Unable to say anything in response to her expression, I watched as Marie continued to glare at me for a while before finally letting out a sigh.

Guilt weighed heavily on my chest, making it difficult for me to speak. Meanwhile, Cecily, who still didn’t understand the situation, asked us with a questioning look.

“Can someone please explain the current situation? Marie, it seems like you have some history with Leona?”

“Oh, right. I didn’t tell the princess. Let me show you.”

As Cecily asked her question, Leona answered in her place and showed her own animal ears on top of her head. She even twitched them. Cecily, momentarily surprised by the animal ears that had appeared on top of Leona’s head, soon nodded calmly.

“Indeed, it seems she really was a beastwoman. I had a suspicion from the moment I saw her.”

“Oh? You knew?”

“Just because she hides it doesn’t mean the ‘truth’ changes.”

As expected, Cecily already seemed to have figured out Leona’s true identity, as expected of the next demon lord. In a world with mana and magic, it shouldn’t be too difficult to uncover someone’s identity. She briefly glanced at Leona’s ears and then turned to me with a question.

“Leona being a beastwoman aside, what’s the deal with her being a third wife? Can you explain in more detail?”

“I’ll gladly hear a detailed explanation, Isaac. I heard that bullshit last time, so why do I have to hear similar things again?”

Lovers had their own ways of applying pressure, but I was already prepared for such a situation. With an excited heart, I began to explain step by step, starting from Volume 16’s publication until the story just before Leona was nominated for a Great Chieftain.

I didn't leave out any details, as there might be room for misunderstanding. I had prepared thoroughly, so I could continue without interruption. After all the explanations were done, as expected, there was a long and silent pause.

Marie and Cecily didn't respond or react at all initially. As someone awaiting their response, it was a nerve-wracking situation. Leona, too, seemed aware and quietly waited, not uttering a word.

"…Sigh."

How long has this heavy silence hung in the air? Marie exhaled a long sigh, as if the weight of it all had become too much. Then, she rested her chin on her hand and whispered in a somewhat resigned tone, as if lamenting something.

"Last time, one asked for your seed, and now another openly declared that she wants to become your wife…"

"… …"

"I expected there would be more women, but I never dreamed it would happen like this… That damn Xenon's Biography…"

As she sighed, she turned her gaze toward Leona, still holding her chin. When their eyes met, Leona seemed taken aback and assumed a somewhat embarrassed posture. Her self-assured declaration of becoming my wife had disappeared, leaving only a sharp-witted cat behind. The noises coming from Marie seemed far from friendly.

Marie stared at Leona for a while and then finally removed her hand from her chin to speak.

"I understand the situation. If you become the chieftain, you'll not only bear Isaac's child but also receive the seed of other men to increase your offspring. And if it's the other way around, you become Isaac's wife, right?"

"Yeah, that's right!"

"That's how the beastmen repay their debts. If he refuses, it will be seen as an insult. Isn't that right?"

"Exactly."

It seems that Marie couldn't easily accept the situation. I, too, initially felt the same way as her.

The customs of the beastmen may seem barbaric to humans, especially treating people like commodities, which can be quite unsettling. Meanwhile, the Demons, originally humans themselves before the transformation, don't differ much in common sense, aside from cultural differences. On the other hand, beastmen have stronger instinctual traits, much like animals.

"Leona, do you think that's a normal culture? The tradition of treating people as some kind of bounty?"

"At least it's entirely normal for beastmen. I hope you won't casually disparage another culture."

Leona, who had a strong sense of pride as a beastwoman, immediately countered. Not only did she display a displeased expression, but her words also carried thorns.

Marie, realizing her mistake, quickly apologized. She seemed so embarrassed that it was as if she had made a terrible blunder.

"I'm sorry. But it's just so hard to believe… you're willingly going to become the third wife?"

"What's so strange about that? I don't find it strange at all."

"No, I mean… uh…"

Marie groaned while clutching her head. She couldn't find a way to convince her because words weren't getting through. Her current feelings were likely something like this.

Cecily, looking at her with a mix of sympathy, shifted her gaze to Leona. Then, in her unique charming voice, she spoke.

"Leona, it's possible to respect beastmen culture for what it is. But I hope you'll also respect human culture. Declaring yourself as the third wife might be somewhat disconcerting from a human perspective."

"Princess, you became Isaac's second woman, didn't you? Isn't that similar?"

"I love Isaac, and he loves me too, so it's possible. Do you love Isaac?"

“As a male, I’m quite fond of him. I have a strong desire to keep him all to myself without sharing him with any females.”

“… …”

This time, Cecily was left speechless. Her expression showed amazement at the beastmen-like statement, which was very fitting for her.

If things continued like this, it would be like going in circles. I spoke cautiously as the awkward atmosphere settled.

“…I may have said that, but nothing is confirmed yet. We still need to resolve Leona’s nomination as the chieftain. I just wanted to let you all know about this situation for now.”

“Right. You did well to inform us. If you hadn’t, I might have squeezed you so you couldn’t be with other women.”

“I agree.”

Cecily growled like a fierce dog and Marie agreed. Her terrifying words were enough to send a shiver down my spine.

Fortunately, there was no talk of parting ways, but I knew I would have to deal with the aftermath.

As I shivered at the goosebumps that sprouted on my thighs, Marie lifted her head and offered a solution.

“Alright. I understand Leona’s situation now. You don’t want to become the chieftain, right?”

“Yeah. I hate it.”

“I agree. Even if I were like you, I’d refuse to be a seed pouch. That’s something we can empathize with as fellow women. But becoming Isaac’s wife, let’s consider that gradually. We must respect the beastmen culture while also familiarizing ourselves with human culture. Do you understand?”

“Um… I get it. We have plenty of time.”

“It seems to be roughly settled then. And Isaac.”

“Yeah, what?”

Marie called me and looked at me with her burning blue eyes. I was overwhelmed by that gaze and remained silent.

“Isaac?”

Cecily called my name seductively from the side. When I turned to her, I caught sight of her eyes filled with desire, glowing with a deep red color.

Two pairs of different eyes were glaring at me as if they could devour me. Who could withstand this gaze? As I nervously swallow my saliva, Marie and Cecily simultaneously open their mouths.

“I’ll make sure you don’t think about other women today.”

“So this is what happens when you look at other women. Understood.”

At the same time, Marie discreetly placed her hand on my thigh, and Cecily gently wrapped her arms around mine. Those who know what this means will understand. The situation has been resolved nicely, but it seems I may have to sacrifice my waist.

‘...I’m lucky to have received divine protection.’

I might wake up tomorrow. It was when I was shedding tears inwardly.

“…Two lionesses.”

Leona, sitting in front, exclaimed in awe.

Translators note:

3/4

Chapter 216: Great Chieftain (2)

The issues related to Leona were resolved one way or another. Leona also said that she would take her time to think after solving the chieftain problem, so there was no need to worry about the future. Of course, I couldn't avoid sacrificing my waist in the process.

Not long after Kate asked me for my seed, Leona's situation happened and my beloved lovers jealousy exploded. It was a given that I had to keep going until I was physically exhausted, as if I wasn't even allowed to look at another woman. The next day was the same, especially with Marie, who was so passionate that she might skip class the next day due to exhaustion.

In addition, she insisted that she always came first and that she would take me first, openly displaying her possessiveness. There was no one as adorable as a jealous girlfriend, so I eagerly complied. As a result, Marie fainted, but we were satisfied knowing that we had confirmed our love for each other once again.

"Hey, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, don't worry."

And so, as the day approached when someone would come looking for us from Animers, I casually answered Leona's question filled with concern.

I don't know if it's because of my holy power or because I've been training my body with Adelia regularly, but my back was fine. It was the first time I had to face both of them at once, so it was a bit challenging, but I quickly recovered and could resume my daily life.

(TL: At once?! O.o)

"Hmm…"

Leona looked at me with a calm expression and then glanced down. I could feel that she was looking at a certain place. I narrowed my eyebrows slightly and scolded her for her seemingly critical gaze.

“Don’t look at strange places and focus on getting ready. You might become the chieftain if you’re not careful, and you’re not even worried.”

“Well, I’m not worried because you’re here.”

“Sigh. You’re so carefree.”

Leona was supposed to handle the main issue, but I ended up taking care of it. Of course, it was partly my responsibility due to the incident with Xenon’s Biography. As for the matter of becoming my third wife, we could slowly work it out. For now, the chieftain issue was more urgent.

“So when is he coming?”

“He should be arriving soon.”

It was evening after all the classes had ended. Currently, Leona and I were waiting near the academy entrance.

It would have been better if he had come on the weekend, but the situation didn’t allow for that. So, we decided to meet in the evening after all the classes had ended.

“Who’s coming?”

“First brother and Jinai.”

“Is it just the two of them coming?”

“Yeah. They’re strong enough that we don’t really need security, and it becomes troublesome if we stand out.”

“Just being together might make you stand out, though. Are you okay?”

As everyone knows, Leona hides her true identity as a beastwoman while pursuing her studies. In this world, there was a prejudice that beastmen are aggressive and uneducated, making it certain that they would not be able to enroll in the academy.

However, in my opinion, beastmen don’t study not because they’re uneducated but because they don’t need to use their brains. You could say they’re cases where they don’t need to use their heads because their bodies are so capable. Anyway, since a beastman has never enrolled in the academy, if Leona’s true identity is revealed, it will cause a big problem. Leona nodded as if she knew that too.

“Let’s be as careful as possible not to get caught. That’s why only the leaders are coming. Ah, there they come.”

As Leona pointed her finger towards the entrance, I turned my head in that direction. Two figures approaching from the main gate towards this side came into view.

My eyesight isn’t that great, and they were too far away for me to see their detailed appearances. Meanwhile, Leona waved her arm happily, as if she were glad to see them.

As they approached from a distance, one of the two people was showing a welcoming gesture by waving their hand. On the other hand, the person next to them didn’t show any reaction.

Perhaps the person waving his hand is Leona’s brother, and the one next to him is Jinai. However, even from a distance, their body shapes looked similar to each other.

‘Now that I think about it, didn’t they say that hyenas have larger bodies for females compared to males?’

For these reasons, I heard that hyenas uniquely maintain a matriarchal society. Could it be that’s why the leader is a female, not a male?

As I observed them getting closer little by little, I became curious if there was anything to be cautious about, so I asked Leona:

“Is there anything I should be careful about when talking to them? For example, something sensitive?”

“Well, if there’s anything, it’s their age, maybe? They tease each other about age. So, be careful not to mention it.”

“Got it.”

It seems that Leona still holds some prejudice against hyena people.

*****

As planned, we met with representatives from each side and then headed to a more comfortable place for our conversation. Fortunately, both of them had already taken care of their meals, so we could just chat at a café.

However, the issue was that both of them were incredibly massive in stature. I thought I'd never see someone bigger than my father in my lifetime, but the hardware of the beastmen was truly imposing.

In the end, we decided to go to a restaurant for our conversation instead of the cramped café. It just so happened that Leona and I also needed to have a meal, so we asked for their understanding.

"Nice to meet you. I am Balkan Lions, the chieftain's eldest son. It's an honor to meet the sage who delivered wisdom to the Animers."

Said the lion-beastman sitting across from Leona. Unlike Leona, he had a face more reminiscent of a beast than a human.

With a lion-like mane in place of hair and dazzling golden eyes, he gave off the impression of a brave warrior.

Furthermore, his attire was not casual clothing, but rather leather armor, giving off an image closer to that of a warrior than royalty. His deep and cavernous low voice also exuded masculinity, revealing a sense of strength.

"Jinai Crochuker."

The hyena-beastwoman sitting across from me also had a face more reminiscent of a beast than a human. With protruding snout and black eyes, unlike Balkan, the fur was drab and dirty-looking, mixed with a somewhat sinister impression.

However, the well-tailored purple silk robe and ornate glasses unexpectedly displayed an intellectual aspect. Her voice, too, was pleasant, even soothing.

As Leona mentioned, she gave off a cunning impression, but I should also add that she seemed capable.

"Pleased to meet you. I'm the one who advised Leona… I am Isaac Ducker Michelle. I'm not a sage, so you can leave out that title."

The reason for my momentary hesitation was, of course, my father. Even though it was an incident in the border zone, my father had a dreadful record of slaughtering beastmen.

As expected, the two in front of me were taken aback when I revealed my identity. Balkan was the first to ask.

“Michelle? Are you the Red Lion’s child?”

“Yes. I’m the son of Hawk Ducker Michelle.”

“I expected it from the red hair and golden eyes, but… it’s quite surprising.”

Father’s reputation seems to have reached the ears of the Animers. After all, he was rather famous, so it’s strange not to know.

As I awkwardly smiled, Balkan stared at me with an interested expression and then shifted his gaze to Leona.

“You seem to have quite a remarkable network of acquaintances.”

“Just happened that way.”

Leona shrugged nonchalantly, as if it were no big deal. In the meantime, Jinai glanced at me, then chuckled and spoke.

“You seem to be the type who uses your brain more than your body, huh?”

“How did you know?”

“You can tell just by looking at your hands.”

Jinai pointed at my hands as she replied. Well, anyone could see that I had never properly held a sword, and my hands were long and slender.

It was a matter of no consequence to me, but it seemed to bother Balkan. He frowned slightly and spoke sternly.

“Isn’t it impolite to say such things to a warrior’s son?”

“Why? I just told the truth. Can’t I even say that?”

“Be careful not to run that sarcastic mouth of yours too recklessly.”

“I’ll be careful.”

Even without saying it explicitly, it seemed like there was some tension between them. It was natural, considering that Balkan had lost his father to the sacred duel and blamed her for pushing Animers into chaos.

“I hope we don’t have any accidents here. I don’t think I’ll lose my neck, but I still shouldn’t let my guard down.”

“Cough, cough. My apologies for the interruption. Anyway, Leona, do you have any intention of becoming the Great Chieftain? Jinai also agrees, so it depends on your opinion.”

“While it’s annoying that the lion always stands on top, there’s no one with a clearer reason than the young lady.”

Both Balkan and Jinai seemed eager to elect Leona as the chieftain without any selfish motives. Moreover, the title ‘young lady’ suggests that, in her own way, they respect Leona.

However, they don’t know. Leona has already firmly made up her mind. After listening to their words and glancing at me once, she declared with a resolute expression.

“No, I won’t take the position of the Great Chieftain.”

“What?”

“Hmm…”

Unlike Balkan, who showed clear surprise, Jinai remained calm. Although her expression looked surprised, she didn’t react as emotionally as Balkan did.

Seeing that, it could be inferred that she expected Leona’s refusal to some extent. She seemed as smart as she appeared.

“What, what do you mean? You’re rejecting the position of Great Chieftain?”

“Exactly. I never had the slightest intention of becoming the chieftain in the first place. I may be intelligent, but I’m not wise. As Isaac said, a ruler should be wise.”

Knowledge and wisdom may seem similar at first glance, but there is a distinct difference. Knowledge can be acquired through learning, but wisdom was not gained simply by learning.

Especially in the aspect of coping abilities, the true nature of these two abilities was revealed. Knowledge often leads to frantic actions when a specific problem arises, but wisdom allows one to navigate through it smoothly with appropriate adaptability.

Because of this, it's not about being smart but about being wise. You never know how the world will change, and there are various unpredictable variables in the future.

"Balkan Oppa, I am not wise. Even the improvements in the sacred duel were all told to me by Isaac, I am just a messenger. And even in Xenon's Biography, Cain is described as highly intelligent, but upon closer examination, his wisdom stands out more."

"Um…"

"If I become the Great Chieftain, I might be able to immediately resolve the current chaos, but it won't be the case afterward. A situation like this could happen again. The nation is important now, but above all, the future matters."

After Leona, I continued.

"As Leona said, a king should possess not only intelligence but also wisdom. You can forcibly place Leona in the chieftain's position, but it will lead to unfavorable results for everyone. Historically, benevolent leaders have had better outcomes than tyrants."

"Are you saying that Leona will become a tyrant?"

"No, that's not what I mean. However, a king, or in this case, a chieftain, should not be placed in the position without proper justification. Hasn't it already happened that someone who ascended to the Great Chieftain's position through the sacred duel committed tyranny?"

I wasn't referring to the former Great Chieftain who was the father of Leona and the Balkan, but to someone who had been one before. A person who was the source of all evil and a tyrant that himself threw Animers into chaos.

After listening to my words, Balkan reluctantly nodded as if he had to admit it. He would sympathize with my words since the tyrant openly committed atrocities.

"But if that happens, there is no one suitable to sit in the position of the great chieftain…"

"Just put me there. What's there to think about? I can handle it well."

When Balkan was lost in deep thought, Jinai chimed in from the side. Balkan and even Leona started to show fierce expressions and emit a menacing atmosphere. Even if it was a joke, it seemed like it had gone too far.

I glanced around cautiously in the rapidly chilling atmosphere. Jinai, receiving the intense gazes of the two, maintained a nonchalant attitude.

Is being tough like that also a hyena's characteristic? I have a feeling that one wrong word could be fatal.

"…If you make fun of me one more time, you'll have to give up on going back in one piece."

"Huh, scary. Hey, wise one."

"Yes? Me?"

Despite Balkan's fierce threat, Jinai called me without any concern. I felt a little puzzled by being referred to as the wise one.

She hesitated for a moment, then extended her upper body slightly forward and, in a soothing voice, opened her mouth.

"What do you think about me becoming the great chieftain instead of those stubborn lions? Even though I may not seem like it, I have a clever mind. Your idea of wisdom, as you said."

"That's not wisdom, that's cunning."

"If it were cunning, I wouldn't have been able to influence the opposing faction so significantly, would I? Cunning helps oneself, but wisdom helps others, right? Isn't that so?"

"Well, you have a point…"

As Jinai said, there is a distinction between cunning and wisdom. Wisdom helps others, while cunning can have somewhat selfish aspects. However, it depends on how they are used, fundamentally, they can be similar. I rolled my eyes for a moment and carefully responded.

"…Do you consider yourself wise, Jinai?"

"Somewhat?"

"In what way?"

"I'm good at using people."

“Isaac, as I’ve said before, it’s better to take half of what she says with a grain of salt.”

As Jinai and I continued our conversation, Leona warned from the side. Her persuasion skills had the ability to captivate people. Through such skills, she must have helped the opposing faction grow and, further, brought confusion to the Animers. But suddenly, I became curious about something here.

What is her goal? Regardless of the faction, they all have their own goals. And Jinai can be considered the center of the opposing faction.

I watched Jinai, who was lost in thought and chuckling, and asked.

“So, what is your goal, Jinai? I’m curious to know what you’d like to do if you become the chieftain.”

“Nothing special. Just living a slightly better life than now? Maybe cultivate some land for food reserves and, as a side note, overhaul the political structure. Those traditions are useless, it’s best to eat your fill and live well.”

“I see.”

I nodded.

I looked around and subtly said.

“Wouldn’t it be better if Jinai became the Great Chieftain?”

And a response came immediately.

“Are you insane?”

Not from Balkan or Leona but from Jinai herself.

Translators note:

4/4

Chapter 217: Great Chieftain (3)

When I spontaneously accepted it, Jinai looked at me with wide eyes and asked if I'd gone crazy. It's a bit surprising that not someone else, but Jinai, reacted this way.

Earlier, she was saying that it would be fine if she became the Great Chieftain, but when I accepted it, she seemed really flustered.

I wonder if she had some intention to provoke Balkan and Leona. From the way she widened her eyes, it seems she didn't anticipate this situation.

I looked at her and, in an almost bewildered tone, asked,

"No. Just a while ago, you said you'd become the Great Chieftain, didn't you?"

"It was just something I said. If we were to make someone like me the Great Chieftain, that country would be ruined."

"… …"

There was nothing I could say to her self-aware statement. I glanced at Balkan beside me.

Balkan had an expression of utter surprise at Jinai's dramatic change in attitude. Leona, too, seemed to be in a similar state, with her eyes wide open.

I looked at Jinai, who appeared to be growing anxious, and nodded. It seems she really has no intention of becoming the Great Chieftain.

More than anything, it hasn't been long since I met Jinai. It's not like I can see the future…

'…I'm a transmigrator not a prophet.'

Let's just move on. Anyway, it's a bit strange for me to propose for her to become the Great Chieftain in just a few minutes.

“It’s more like something I said casually. It hasn’t been long since I met Jinai, and it’s a bit odd to say something like this out of the blue, don’t you think?”

“Is that so? I was quite surprised.”

“But, you know, it doesn’t seem like a bad choice for Jinai to become the chieftain.”

“Are you crazy?”

In the moment Jinai was about to relax, I affirmed it again, and she panicked once more. However, this time it was not a joke, but partly sincere.

However, it would be good to investigate everything about her one by one. If I only listened to what was said, she may seem suitable for a “king,” but the details were unknown.

Moreover, Leona advised me to be careful with Jinai’s slyness. This, too, could be a high-level psychological game. For now, it’s a priority to probe and grasp Jinai’s true intentions.

“Jinai, why did you say you raised the opposing faction?”

“To fix those damn traditions and customs. Because of the guys who overthrew their fathers, the entire Animers starved. Does it make sense to rob 50% of the taxes just to fill your own stomach? And some guy applied for a sacred duel a year later and lost. In the end, we suffered for two years.”

“Ehem.”

As Jinai grumbled in a voice full of complaints, Balkan cleared his throat, as if he had nothing to say. It seems that the person who applied for a sacred duel against the tyrant was a member of the lion tribe.

You can only take part in one sacred duel per year, so you can neither apply nor receive it for a year. Moreover, since the tyrant has won once again, they couldn’t do anything and suffered for two years.

If the tyrant commits tyranny, the price will be borne by the people. Two years may seem short, but when the scale grows to a national level, the suffering increases exponentially.

“Thanks to that, our tribe had nothing to eat, and that’s why the hyenas created the opposition. So I thought, ‘Oh, because of this darn tradition, we might all starve to death. We need to change the tradition.’ With this thought.”

“A revolution, right?”

“Is that what you humans call it? Well, at least these guys know there’s a problem with tradition, otherwise, things could have gotten a lot worse. The wise one did a great job.”

If you only listen to it, it seems that the revolution was started with good intentions. But what should be focused on is the ‘influence.’

Animers is a country founded by Hick, the nation’s sponsor and founder, based on tradition. Naturally, there would be many people who follow that tradition, and there would be many who follow the philosophy of change like Jinai.

She was even a hyena, a race faced deep-seated prejudices. If she personally raised influence, it means she has excellent political power.

“Because you’re a hyena, it must have been difficult to build influence. How did you do it?”

“I put forward a different face. The complaints weren’t exclusive to our tribe. I gently manipulated one noble tiger to represent us. Well, over time, it became clear that I was the representative.”

“It went well until then, didn’t it?”

“Yes, but they seemed burdened, and they disclosed every detail. Although it was a bit embarrassing, we managed to get through this level of betrayal without much trouble. Naturally, that guy also stepped down from his position.”

She’s a typical example of a “courtier.” She respects the authority of the leader but secretly seeks power as the second-in-command.

However, from her perspective, it’s not a choice but a necessity. There are few who would follow someone with a bad reputation like a hyena, so she had to present another figure as the leader.

As she is a hyena, she would probably be viewed as despicable and be criticized as treacherous, but at least from my perspective, she wasn’t. She simply excelled in

political skills.

“Well, there are many people following me now, and I’m living quite a decent life. We must change those old traditions, but some things will remain unchanged.”

“Hmm… is that so? What about Balkan?”

“You can’t trust a suspicious woman.”

“What about Leona?”

“The same. I can’t trust her at all because we can’t see through her true intentions.”

Despite their continued skepticism, Jinai simply shrugged her shoulders and didn’t seem to care. In many ways, she showed characteristics of a courtier, making it challenging to fully trust her.

So, what about her real abilities? Her political skills have been roughly proven, but we need to look elsewhere.

The first question is how she grew her influence. Not the politics part, but the funds.

Even someone with deeply held beliefs can lose their willpower if they lack basic resources. Throughout history, having abundant resources often leads to better results.

The opposing faction of Animers was no different. If the country was in turmoil and other tribes joined the opposing faction to prevent it, but received no support there, their numbers would decrease, and their influence naturally would weaken. If they were a faction strong enough to directly oppose tradition, they must certainly have a large budget.

“So, Jinai, how did you grow and sustain the opposing faction? It must have required a lot of resources.”

“Oh, that? I just sweet-talked the people above to get their support. By the way, I also took a little from them.”

Jinai pointed to the Balkan with his finger, wearing her characteristic sly smile. Balkan appeared uncomfortable with that gesture. When I shifted my gaze to him, he let out a long breath and spoke with a nonchalant voice.

“…It was the chieftains, not us, right? Jinai gave bribes to the chieftains to get information and then used that as a basis for profit.”

“Information? What kind of information was it?”

“It’s simple. We bought and sold the land that only the chieftains knew about in advance. We also bought all the goods coming from abroad and sold them at high prices. Right now, thanks to Xenon’s Biography, we’re making a fortune selling it to the beastmen.”

“… …”

What Jinai mentioned was profiteering and hoarding, especially in the case of Xenon’s Biography, it was so serious that the Minerva Empire has even legislated against hoarding. However, considering the current international legal framework, it’s uncertain if these concepts apply to Animers. Even without considering that, Jinai’s actions were illegal or at least unethical.

The reason she can openly declare this might be due to the absence of proper laws. Animers has only been around for just over 300 years, so there might be weaknesses here and there. Jinai cunningly exploited these weaknesses. In many ways, her abilities are remarkable.

“Oh, so you’re saying I didn’t put some extra money in my pocket? I do have a legitimate salary, too.”

“It’s strange to hear the word ‘salary’ from your mouth.”

“Is it? Anyway, I’ve used this approach to build connections and gather resources to strengthen the opposition. No one else stepped up, so I did it, and anyone else could have done the same.”

Upon hearing this, I immediately replied.

“Why don’t you just become the chieftain?”

“Are you crazy? I told you I won’t become the chieftain. How many times do I have to say it?”

“No matter how you look at it, it seems like Jinai is the most suitable person for the chieftain position, don’t you think?”

Jinai was the epitome of a courtier, and not just any but one with exceptional abilities. Like with the chieftains, she build connections with high-ranking officials through bribery, and she has the ability to manage resources. She claims that anyone else could

do it, but I don't think so. It's probably because she has a natural talent for it that she can engage in such large-scale corruption with ease.

Above all, she is well-versed in the current situation, and her vision was exceptional. No matter how excellent the information is, it's meaningless if the user lacks intelligence.

In that sense, there is no deficiency in Jinai becoming the current Animers' chieftain. Instead, we should use her intelligence for the country's progress.

"Even if you say that, the lions won't tolerate it, will they? We would be placing a hyena as our head."

"Of course, it's frightening. If I make a mistake, I might get bitten right away."

"Is that so?"

"That's why I think it's right for you to become the chieftain. You won't go crazy and commit tyranny even if just because you might get bitten. Besides, the sacred duel has changed."

"Hmm."

After hearing my words, Balkan seemed to have a change in his mindset. Seeing this, Jinai became anxious and said urgently.

"Hey, hey, you're not seriously considering it, are you? You know that what I said is nonsense, too."

"Well… honestly, there is no one as suitable to be the chieftain after observing your tactics for the past four years. However, not only our siblings but also the people will surely resist it."

"Is, is that so? See, it wouldn't be good for me to become chieftain. There might be another rebellion."

When Balkan mentioned practical issues, Jinai showed a relieved reaction. Even if she had the ability, if Jinai became the chieftain, there would likely be more talk within Animers.

She was of a tribe not well-regarded in general, the hyenas, and she had committed various wrongdoings. But here, Leona dealt a blow to Jinai.

“You bribed the clan leaders earlier, didn’t you? We can use those people.”

“Huh?”

“What?”

At Leona’s words, Balkan, and of course, Jinai, widened their eyes. Now that I thought about it, they could use that.

Meanwhile, Leona, calmly endured the gazes directed at her, looked directly at Jinai and voiced her thoughts.

“You bribed the clan leaders earlier to buy information, right? Do it the same way. ‘If I become the chieftain, I’ll show favor to your tribe’, or something like that and you can gently persuade them.”

“But won’t those guys try to stop me from becoming the chieftain? They’re stubborn guys with strong pride.”

“Why bother stopping them? If we push, the other clan leaders will follow along easily. Right?”

Leona sought Balkan’s agreement. It seemed that Balkan had also organized his thoughts, as he nodded in agreement with her words.

“Leona is right. The noble clans are already on your side, and the low clans won’t get involved in this kind of thing.”

“No…”

When Jinai was still unable to regain her composure due to the siblings’ joint attack, I added one more thing.

“And it doesn’t matter if Jinai becomes the Great Chieftain, her political influence has already been proven as she has built his power base and polished her connections. If Jinai becomes the chieftain, do you think other clan leaders would dare to think of corruption? With Jinai as the clan leader?”

“…The methods of the clan leaders are too simplistic. They wouldn’t even know if you secretly took something.”

“See? Honestly, Jinai does have a desire to become the Great Chieftain right?”

Jinai's heart was gradually tilting towards becoming the chieftain. Jinai, with an expression that seemed to be in deep thought, let out a sigh and replied with a reluctant voice.

"…I guess a little."

"Is that so?"

"But! I'm not going to become the Great Chieftain. I will stick close to the clan leaders and discreetly take what I can. Humans call it embezzlement, right?"

Jinai openly identified as an embezzler. It seems that she was feeling threatened, as she may become the chieftain, so she threatened to embezzle. It was a statement that could completely erode trust. I listened to his words silently and then turned to Balkan and asked.

"Is that so? Are you going to keep him by your side?"

"I'd rather keep him under me so he can't do anything. If he becomes the tribe leader, there will be nothing left to embezzle."

"I have similar thoughts. It's better to prevent any embezzlement in the first place. The kingdom would be like your property; why would you steal from it?"

"If she embezzles, it would probably be the people's food. But we can prevent that."

"I'll trust only you guys."

It had no effect at all. Jinai, watching the scene, made a baffled expression and covered her face with one hand.

"Damn it, this isn't it."

"Congratulations. You'll become the Great Chieftain you've dreamed of."

"You shut up."

It seems like it will be resolved well.

Translators note:

Chapter 218: Great Chieftain (4)

The proceedings were as casual as roasting beans in a lightning fire, but the position of the chieftain couldn't be decided haphazardly. It was concluded that Jinai would become the chieftain to some extent, but it wasn't 100% certain. As Balkan mentioned, it would take some time to carefully coordinate the opinions of the noble tribes and the people.

However, the original goal of resolving Leona's chieftain issue had been successfully achieved, so there was relief. Leona had some concerns about the possibility of Jinai becoming the chieftain, but she appeared relieved.

"If I really become the chieftain, then you'll see."

"People who say such things are usually the least scary."

It was an unexpected turn of events that Jinai, who was in danger of becoming the chieftain, was posing a non-intimidating threat to me. Nevertheless, my reaction was more annoyance at getting entangled in a troublesome matter, rather than anger.

If Jinai truly possesses the abilities I imagine, then it's not just empty words. She could govern Animers more wisely. She often expressed discontent with tradition, has exceptional political skills, and a long-term vision. So, even though it may be difficult, she could potentially become the Great Chieftain.

I suddenly felt a sense of relief and for a moment, the customs of the beastmen came to mind. I remembered hearing before that if Leona were to become the clan leader, she would have to bear my child.

So, could the same be true for Jinai? As this thought crossed my mind, I felt my expression waver, and with a slightly anxious voice, I asked.

"…I'm sorry, but I heard from Leona before. If she were to become the chieftain, there's a tradition that she would have to bear my child as a reward, right? So, if Jinai becomes the chieftain…"

“Why not? Should I bear your child too?”

It already seemed like I was in a tough spot when Jinai asked in a tone that felt like a sharp jab. I immediately shook my head in response.

I helped Leona get away from the chieftain’s position because I didn’t want to treat her like a pawn. Above all, forming a relationship with someone who had an animal face was far from my preference.

Jinai, upon seeing my reaction, smirked and shrugged her shoulders to ease my anxiety.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t really follow those traditions. Don’t humans prefer material things more? I can give you expensive jewelry or something.”

“That’s fortunate.”

“Fortunate? Why does that sound like it bothers you? Even though I look like this, I’ve received many compliments within the Animers, you know?”

“That’s because I have a lover.”

It seemed my reasonable excuse had worked, as Jinai nodded while watching me silently. She disliked rigid traditions, so she seemed unfazed by it.

By the way, it was fascinating how that animal face fit into the category of beauty in Animers. Differences in culture never ceased to amaze me. In my past life, beauty standards varied across cultures and eras, so this was probably something similar. I wondered if Leona was also part of the less attractive category in Animers.

While lost in such pointless thoughts, Jinai spoke up.

“If you have a lover, there’s nothing you can do about it. I have five husbands, so it would be awkward for me if you asked me to pair up with you.”

“You have five husbands?”

“Yeah, because I have both good abilities and strength. It’s natural for males to fight over me.”

Originally, hyenas form a matriarchal society, with females being larger and much stronger than males. It seems like this was a fact that applies to the world as well.

Furthermore, hyenas have a mating culture that might be described as chaotic. However, it seems not to be the case as she mentioned having a husband.

Jinai looked at me with an admiring gaze, as if finding me intriguing, and confidently spoke.

“Why? Are you in love, by any chance? If you want, I can do it for you at least once.”

“I’m sorry, but your face is far from my type.”

Still, not an animal face. This is a preference that won’t change even if I die and come back to life.

Unless there were only animal ears and a tail attached to a human-like Leona, at least not a face like Jinai’s with a snout and a close resemblance to an animal.

“Wow, that’s strange. Do you really have a preference for a face like Miss Leona’s?”

“Yes.”

“Me, me?”

In response to the short and bewildered question, Leona replied with a surprised voice. What’s there to be surprised about?

In fact, I had more questions. Leona spent time at the Halo Academy, so she should have some knowledge of human culture. So, it’s a bit unusual that she’s so amazed by the fact that the aesthetic sense of the Beastmen and humans was completely different.

At least in my eyes, Leona’s beauty was quite impressive. Unlike Marie or Cecily, she was not flashy and had a wild, almost primal appeal of her own.

“Why are you surprised? You’re a beauty by human standards, too, aren’t you?”

“Really? I didn’t know that. I thought my face was, at best, average by human standards.”

“Well… I can see why you might think that.”

The Halo Academy has a higher proportion of nobility compared to commoners, and nobles often tend to have looks that far surpass the average.

There was a reason for Leona to think that way. Even though there are people who work within the academy, Leona usually keeps to herself, dedicated to her studies.

'A person like that asked me to pet her as a sign of affection…'

Surprisingly, compliments about her face seemed to have an effect on Leona. Her face blushed slightly. Judging by the way her ears drooped, it was quite clear. Unlike when she confidently said she would become my wife and bear my child, she now appeared somewhat embarrassed. It was a rare sight.

I silently gazed at her, then shifted my gaze forward and asked a related question,

"Are faces like Jinai or Balkan popular?"

"Yes, they are. I'm sorry to say this, but at least by our standards, Leona's face is quite far from the ideal. Of course, everyone has their own preferences, so you can also consider it as a matter of cultural differences."

"What about Leona's mother?"

"…Our father didn't really discriminate much. Leona's mother has a face that is close to human, just like Leona."

How carnivorous. As expected, there are various people in the world, and with that comes a variety of preferences. Nevertheless, thanks to that, she was able to enter Halo Academy, so she can consider it a good result in her own way. If she had an animal-like face, she might not have even attempted such a thing.

"Anyway, let's end the conversation here for today. You really do share some wise stories."

"Me? Not at all?"

"Keep your lips sealed. It's not entirely confirmed yet, so I hope you won't grumble."

"If you take it positively, then I appreciate that."

The issues related to the great chieftain were settled more or less, albeit with some difficulties. Jinai seemed somewhat dissatisfied, but Balkan brushed it off with ease.

And Leona…

"Am I… pretty?"

The words I had spoken earlier still seemed to linger in her mind, and her thoughts were still elsewhere. She was trying to control her blushing face by covering her cheeks with her hands, but it didn't have much effect.

I decided that I should remain silent when I saw that. However, Balkan's tone was somewhat different, and he called Leona's name in a serious voice.

"Leona."

"Uh, yes? You called?"

"I understand your thoughts well. We should abolish the idea of making you the chieftain."

"T-Thank you."

"But we should offer some compensation to the sage. Sage."

Perhaps he's changed his thoughts or anticipated something after hearing our conversation. If that's the case, he would consider my relationship with Leona more carefully.

"For now, we'll rely on you to take good care of Leona. I hope you'll wait until after she graduates from the academy to have a child. Can you provide that level of consideration?"

"…I understand."

Of course, the Lions of Animers, who lived and died by tradition, wouldn't care about that kind of thing. I was a fool to think a brief conversation could change his mind.

Balkan, who had smiled contentedly as if he had made the right choice now, shifted his gaze to Leona. Perhaps because it had become an established fact that we couldn't do anything, Leona was visibly tense now.

"Leona, you also need to live wisely like your mother. Even if she was the third wife, she's been a great help to our father."

"Yes, of course."

"Good. We'll send your mother to the academy soon. After all, she should at least see the face of the man you'll be married to."

The matchmaking was progressing smoothly. It seems that now it's best to let go of all concerns and accept it comfortably. However, if I do accept Leona, I'll have to tell her the fact that I am Xenon. I'll explain this gradually, so there shouldn't be a problem. But there's a bigger challenge remaining.

'How should I tell Adelia…'

Adelia. Since her last duel with Hiriya, Adeliaa confessed her feelings to me. She promised to protect me no matter what, even if I don't accept her feelings.

That's how it is. If I accept Leona, it will deeply hurt Adelia's feelings. Her personality is delicate, and even if she pretends to be fine on the outside, she might secretly burst into tears. So, once Balkan and Jinai leave, I plan to let Leona know about this. Let's take becoming lovers slowly.

"We'll go now. You can talk privately and confirm each other's feelings."

"Farewell. If I truly become the chieftain, I'll provide you with some jewelry."

While saying this, Balkan and Jinai seemed to have nothing more to discuss, as they immediately got up from their seats. Leona and I also tried to stand up to see them off. However, Balkan gestured that there was no need for a farewell. Despite feeling it was impolite, I had no choice but to remain seated after hearing Balkan's words.

"No need for that. It's customary for beastmen to leave immediately once the topic of conversation is done unless there's another topic to discuss. Humans call this 'in and out,' I believe."

"I think I have a rough idea."

"Your wisdom is truly remarkable. Let's be on our way."

Afterwards, Balkan and Jinai left, leaving only Leona and me in the room. Unlike before, there was a strange awkwardness hanging in the air.

Up until now, we had a relationship that could be described as that of ordinary friends, but soon, we would become a married couple. Leona seemed to be hesitating to speak, perhaps aware of this fact.

I cautiously opened my mouth in response to the subtle atmosphere, clearing my throat.

No, it was the moment I was about to open my mouth.

“…Hey.”

“Leona… Yes?”

“Do you really think I’m pretty?”

Suddenly, when Leona asked if she was pretty out of the blue, I couldn’t help but be taken aback. However, Leona seemed somewhat serious, looking me straight in the eye.

Before I knew it, her upright ears and her distinct sharp gaze were in contrast, creating a unique charm. The blush on her cheeks, as well as her unique contrasting appeal, were evident.

I stared quietly at Leona, as I looked at her perky ears. While she may not be flashy or distant, her beauty was enriched in its own way.

Particularly, her ears sticking out above her head were the highlight of her charm. Even though it may be far from fierceness, it was the embodiment of a different kind of cuteness. Who could call this appearance ugly?

“Of course, you are. At least in my eyes.”

“More than your other lovers?”

“Comparing like that is wrong. They have their own beauty, and you have your own beauty. You are just as beautiful as they are.”

“…”

It was a sincere statement without a hint of falsehood. Just like Marie has her own unique qualities and Cecily has her own unique traits, Leona has her own distinct characteristics.

Leona seems to have realized that there’s no falsehood in my words, as she started blushing more fervently and fidgeting with her ears. After staring at my face for a while, she eventually averted her gaze. Occasionally, her trembling golden eyes and quivering lips gave off an embarrassed appearance.

“Th-thank you. It feels weird hearing it from you.”

“You could have heard it from someone else if not me. But first, Leona.”

“Yeah, go ahead.”

“Actually… I have something to tell you.”

As soon as I had the chance, I brought up the topic related to Adelia. When a story about a different woman, not Marie and Cecily, came up, Leona also showed her curiosity.

Of course, I briefly explained her situation, leaving out the fact that Adelia was a royal bastard child of the Ters Kingdom. I didn’t tell Marie and Cecily either. Originally, I had planned to reveal everything about Adelia when I fully accepted her, but Leona was a new variable, so I had no choice.

“…It’s going to be difficult to accept her right away. She confessed to me, and Adelia also awaits in that position.”

“Why not just accept her?”

“There are circumstances here. I will explain little by little. So, can you wait?”

In response to my request, Leona blinked a few times and replied as if she couldn’t understand.

“Doesn’t matter to me. I’ll start being your wife when that happens.”

“…You can wait?”

“Why can’t I wait? If you think so, that’s how it should be. You obey the male. That’s the basic family system for beastmen.”

Ah, that’s right. She was a beastwoman, wasn’t she? I feel like I’ve been overthinking this for no reason, and I feel like a fool. Still, I can’t help but feel grateful for her kindness. She could have taken it negatively, but she just brushed it off as if it were nothing.

Feeling thankful to her, I slowly reached out and gently stroked her head. Last time, she made the first move, but this time, I extended my hand first. In other words, I’m also expressing affection. Leona seemed to have noticed the meaning, her eyes widening briefly, and then she smiled and leaned her head against my hand.

“Purr, purr.”

As I pet her head, Leona purred contentedly, just like a cat. She’s always more like a cat than a lion.

After that, the tail shaped like a paintbrush swayed, stirring up the desire to touch it. However, it was said that touching the tail was only possible after becoming a couple, so I endured the urge.

As we continued to express our affection for each other for a while, Leona, who I really liked, lifted her head, purring. It felt like an adorable cat looking up at me.

“Isaac.”

“Yeah?”

“Then do you plan to mate with that female afterward?”

At the mention of mating, my hand, which had been stroking, abruptly stopped. Even when referring to a man and a woman, it seemed like beastmen called it a male and a female, even in the context of sexual intercourse.

I was taken aback by the direct question, but I regained my composure. I already knew that Leona had a straightforward personality, so I didn’t fumble.

“Maybe so, right? It might take a while.”

“Alright. That’s a bit disappointing. I wanted to start in three days if possible.”

“Three days? Why?”

“That’s when the estrus begins.”

“…Estrus?”

Once again, I was taken aback by the word “estrus.”

(TL: estrus – a recurring period of sexual receptivity and fertility in many female mammals; heat.)

I could guess what it meant just by hearing it, but I needed a more detailed explanation.

In response, Leona, still in my embrace, explained about estrus.

“Beastmen go into estrus at specific intervals. If we compare it to humans, you could call it a menstrual cycle. In my case, as a lion beastwoman and taking after my mother, it comes around about once a month. It’s somewhat similar to a human’s menstrual cycle.”

“…So, does that mean your sexual desire surges during that time?”

“Exactly. The reason beastmen can’t control their instincts is because of estrus. I wanted to try it with you since we’re getting married anyway. Besides, contraception is an option, right?”

“W-Well, yes. But still, we can’t.”

Leona seemed to understand and confidently brushed it off, despite my unease. It appeared that she just wanted to test the waters.

I briefly found relief in her consent, but soon, the worst-case scenario that could come in the future crossed my mind.

‘Wait a minute. So, if Cecily’s evil cycle and Leona’s estrus were to overlap…’

I needed to prepare for that situation, even if just to be ready for it. Otherwise, not only my physical strength but even my very life could be completely drained.

Of course, I also had to put more effort into writing to better receive divine power. Originally, I had planned to take it easy, but now I had to write to survive.

‘...Now, I have to write to survive.’

Readers might enjoy it, but for me, it’s a sad reality.

Translators note:

Chapter 219: New Star (1)

Since the launch of Xenon's Biography, the publishing company that made a contract with the Michelle family has been experiencing increasing sales with each passing day.

Before the release of the 12th volume, it was mainly popular among humans and demons, but now it was being sold like hotcakes to all races. Giant trading companies from all over the world were making efforts to secure contracts with the publishing company by any means necessary, and the company's CEO occasionally took bribes while trying to make the most profit.

Originally, Isaac was supposed to personally visit the publishing company to make the contract, but due to the risk of his identity being exposed, he delegated the authority from the time of the contract. The copyright was definitely with Isaac, but the sales management was in the hands of the CEO.

Therefore, if the CEO decides, he could falsify them, but surprisingly, he doesn't. Why?

Even without that, because it was selling so well, there was no 'need' to steal any money from it. To be honest, he did take a bit when it was first sold. But as time passed, he stopped that act, given that the revenue coming in from the publishing house was more than enough to make a living.

The accountant in charge of managing the publisher's revenue was so overwhelmed that they submitted their resignation letter several times. It's a job that can drive you crazy even if you manage to get through a day's worth of work because the work keeps piling up.

It's a laborious task that requires manual work for each and every step, and, in addition to that, managing the publisher's kickbacks. Of course, the CEO, while gently letting the accountant slide, also soothed them with cash treatment.

He didn't forget to recruit more staff to assist the accountant's work. The accountant was one of the most critical roles after all.

As Xenon's Biography was launched, the profits they made were beyond words, comparable to the wealth of a duke. In the Minerva Empire, the class with the most wealth was the dukes, so you can get a rough idea of how much that is.

Money rolled in just by breathing. Even though there are many expenses in various places, there is enough capital to cover them.

In other words, if the CEO wants to buy a carriage, he can just stand still for a few seconds. In fact, there have been times like that.

While happy days continued day by day, the publisher's CEO couldn't be happy all the time. It might be a bit surprising to hear this from someone who loved money so much. The reason for this was nothing but the hardships the CEO has experienced up to now.

When a new Xenon's Biography volume is published, it will definitely sell. However, turning this statement around, it means that books other than Xenon's Biography are struggling. The books before Xenon's Biography was published were so difficult to read that even nobles found them challenging. It was not just the readability, but also understanding what the story was about that was difficult.

The only relatively easy ones were the few essays that adventurers wrote themselves. Since the adventurer's experiences were shared as they were seen and felt, they were quite popular. As Isaac evaluated it, it may be simple, but it's just as entertaining.

However, even their demand fell far short compared to Xenon's Biography. For the time being, Xenon's Biography will sustain them, but things will change once it's completed. If Xenon's Biography reaches its conclusion, the profits could hit rock bottom, not just drop. The current story seems to be around the middle, so completing it within a year would be quite challenging.

Therefore, they should start transitioning into the next phase as soon as possible. The publishing company's CEO, who has a keen sense for the smell of money, was well aware of this. Besides the frequent pressure from the nobles and the recent publication hiatus due to a major theft and the elves who have recently visited the publishing company that have caused significant trouble. No matter how strong someone's mental fortitude may be, they can't help but feel unwell somedays.

For these reasons, the CEO made one decision: to focus on something other than Xenon's Biography. Even though it may not bear fruit immediately, another bestseller might emerge eventually. Thanks to Xenon's Biography, the percentage of people reading books has increased, so they will produce something new sooner or later.

“Sigh…”

Certainly, it wasn’t easy at all. The CEO let out a sigh as he counted his money.

Looking down between his covered hands, he noticed a thick manuscript. The meticulous handwriting suggested that someone had put a lot of effort into it. This manuscript was not part of Xenon’s Biography but rather the work of an aspiring writer. While one might assume it would be included in Xenon’s Biography, the publishing house was a distinct entity. Manuscripts were turned into books that could be sold. That was the basic job of a publishing house.

“Starting from the basics and coming here…”

The boss lamented while looking at the manuscript on his desk. Even he was unsure of it. He had been sent the manuscript by mail, and the result was, unfortunately, clear. The readability was abysmal, and the writing was quite complex. In fact, it was more like paragraphs than sentences, with each sentence being quite long.

This was a common mistake made by beginner writers. Writing sentences that are overly long and meandering. As the CEO of a publishing company, he’s witnessed countless authors make this mistake. Even if the story is good, people won’t read it well in such cases.

So, this manuscript was, without a doubt, rejected. He read it all the way through out of respect, but his head involuntarily shook.

“Why does this keep happening…”

The CEO pushed the manuscript far away, burying his head in his hands. In the past year, stress had built up to the point where he felt he might go bald. Thankfully, it had all been resolved with financial therapy, so there was no need to worry about that.

Ever since the Xenon series became a worldwide sensation, there was a craze where everyone wanted to become an author, but there was nothing noteworthy. No matter how good their readability and sentence structure were, imitating them was a different story.

However, there were authors who elevated their own writing skills through ‘transcription.’ Moreover, Xenon’s Biography has a writing style that anyone can replicate if they try, making even the act of ‘transcription’ easy.

However, the real challenge was how to make your writing skills, honed through ‘transcription,’ stand out from the rest. Especially after the 12th volume, Xenon’s

Biography is almost treated as prophecy. Not to mention Isaac, who is being revered as a saint.

Is there a book with similar writing skills to Xenon's Biography being published here? Frankly, it's not a problem if the writing skills themselves are similar, as long as the story is different.

The biggest issue is the lack of courage to "dare" to follow suit. Unless you're in a world where social civilization is highly developed it can be problematic.

But here, there is a king who reigns over the country, nobles who govern their territories under the king's command, and commoners living within those territories. It's a clear class-based society.

In a class-based society, there is a sense of 'honor' that must never be tarnished. Especially if someone tarnishes the honor of a noble or higher, they may face immediate judgment, and there would be little room for complaint.

So, if you were to write a book similar to Xenon's Biography, even if the story is different, there would be an underlying anxiety about harming Xenon's honor.

Even if you were to publish it while concealing my status, you should be prepared to receive a lot of criticism.

As a commoner who was also immersed in the new culture of 'capitalism,' I couldn't understand them.

"Should I write a letter… or maybe not. But I still feel uneasy…"

However, he didn't entirely not know. In my heart, he wanted to write a letter to Xenon and ask for this favor.

From the publisher's perspective, it's not good to focus solely on the Xenon series, so can't they at least say a few words? He wanted to ask if they can be lenient for the sake of those authors who nurtured their dreams while reading Xenon's Biography.

He wanted to say these things, but the CEO knew Xenon's true identity. It's strange that they don't know, considering they signed the contract themselves. If he were a commoner, it might be understandable, but Isaac was a noble. Even though he's a baron, the CEO should know his place and not make demands.

In truth, when he received the manuscript for the new volume last time, he had some greedy thoughts, so he subtly made a request. Since the volume was too long, he asked if they could split it into two and release it. He emphasized the quantity without mentioning the benefit to the publisher. However, the response that came back was a resolute and firm rejection.

That one rejection made the CEO hesitate. He wanted to gather the courage to try just one more time, but he was unsure whether it was crossing a line or if it was okay.

"Hoo…"

The CEO let out a sigh as he glanced at the manuscript he had pushed aside. It seemed like he needed to write a letter first in order to send that back.

As the CEO opened the desk drawer to retrieve some stationery and a pen.

Knock knock knock

[CEO? It's me, Matthew. May I come in?]

"Oh, yes. Please come in."

Recently promoted to the position of secretary was a man named Matthew. As soon as the CEO recognized that the person knocking was Matthew, he immediately granted entry.

The door opened, and in came a tidier-looking Matthew, who had adopted a more polished appearance. Originally, Matthew had played the role of a liaison between Xenon and the publishing house, but he excelled at his work, and his demeanor was impeccable, making him the perfect fit for a secretary.

Furthermore, he had realized that taking up the role of a secretary would spare him from the grueling 'on-duty' hours that had previously been a part of his job.

"Alright. What brings you here this time? Perhaps…?"

The CEO asked with a subtle tone of anticipation. Matthew didn't visit the CEO's office unless it was something important. And, when it came to important news, it was inevitably related to Xenon's affairs. There wasn't much else to talk about, so the CEO could only anticipate.

The 16th volume was revealed to the world not too long ago, but the CEO had noticed an acceleration in the recent writing speed.

“It’s not related to Xenon’s Biography… well, we can say it’s related to Xenon.”

“Hmm? What do you mean by that? Are you saying that what’s in the mail isn’t Xenon’s Biography?”

The CEO inquired as he pointed to the item nestled in Matthew’s armpit. If it wasn’t Xenon’s Biography, then what could it be?

Matthew, displaying a puzzled look that even he found unsettling, handed over not a piece of mail but a letter. The CEO accepted the letter without any particular suspicion.

The sender of the letter was, as expected, Xenon. Nevertheless, the fact that what was contained in that mail wasn’t the manuscript of Xenon’s Biography was somewhat perplexing.

In any case, he should check the letter. The CEO read the letter with a puzzled expression.

[Hello, Mr. Musk. It’s me, Xenon. I’m writing to you not with a Xenon’s Biography this time, but with a manuscript written by someone I hold dear.]

From the first sentence, his eyes widened. The CEO blinked his eyes a few times at the unbelievable words.

Usually, when Xenon sent letters, he conveyed what he wanted to say to ‘readers,’ not himself. He was nothing more than a representative who would clarify Xenon’s intentions.

But this letter was clearly speaking to him. The CEO looked at the letter with a bewildered expression, then turned his head to look at Matthew.

More precisely, at the mail tucked between Matthew’s armpits. The CEO stared at the mail for a moment, then, with a sudden movement, he turned his head and read the letter.

[If you happen to see the manuscript, you might feel that it is similar to my Xenon’s Biography. It’s inevitable because the author wrote as they read my writing. However, if you sense warmth and see beautiful sentences, you will feel that it’s different. Originally, this could have been a story that came into the world a bit earlier, but

unfortunately, it fell through due to personal circumstances. I can guarantee it's fun with my honor on the line, so please give it a read.]

I guarantee it's fun without a doubt. This is none other than Xenon, the author of Xenon's Biography, saying this. He was even willing to stake his honor on it.

This alone is enough to make the CEO's heart swell, but there was a practical issue – the "copyright contract." No matter how excellent the manuscript is, it's pointless if you can't secure the contract. Even if you engage in various forms of misconduct, including tax evasion, this aspect was managed meticulously.

He furrowed his brow slightly, pondered for a moment, and decided to start by reading the rest of the letter. The contractual matters could be dealt with gradually, and that would be enough.

[This child's pen name is 'Mary.' As you know, sir, she is Xenon's lover, but in reality, we are not in a romantic relationship, so please do not misunderstand. I simply decided to protect her. Finally, I have something to say.]

The pen name is Mary, or whatever, let's put all that aside and focus on the last paragraph.

[As I read this manuscript and met this child, one thought came to my mind. There are countless sprouts in the world, but they are often trampled upon or wither away without ever blooming. The world may call me a prophet, a saint, but I am just a mere writer. Culture is a beautiful creation that should be allowed for everyone without discrimination. There may be sprouts out there who are hesitant to show their courage just because their work resembles mine. So, please, Mr. Musk, tell them in my place. I will permit them to try, and there is no need to be afraid. Of course, if someone copies my story verbatim, please deal with that sternly, but still, let them try to bloom. I would be grateful if you could convey this message.]

[P.S. I hope the contract issues can be handled the same way as Xenon's Biography. We will visit separately soon, so please wait until then.]

"Haaa…"

The CEO exhaled the breath he had been holding after reading the entire contents. Scratching the itchy parts had a refreshing effect, leaving an indescribable feeling gnawing at his mind.

As if things weren't already troubling enough, he wondered how he could time this letter so perfectly. Moreover, he even handed over the manuscript that was mentioned as interesting, so the CEO couldn't be happier.

"Matthew."

"Yes, sir."

"Hand over that manuscript for now."

A new star was rising.

*****

Meanwhile, Isaac…

"…So, how many wives is this now?"

"No, it's not like that this time. I'm serious."

"H, Hello…"

He was arranging a meeting between his acquaintances and Cherry.

Translators note:

Chapter 220: New Star (2)

This world allows for polygamy to some extent, but that doesn't mean it can be taken lightly. In order for a husband to take another woman, in other words, a concubine, he must obtain the wife's permission, and if not, it's considered adultery, which can't be condoned.

However, the nobility fundamentally have a sense of being different from commoners and possess powerful authority, which makes their moral values relatively lower. As their power increases, this tendency becomes stronger.

For these reasons, high-ranking nobles are aware of their authority and power and engage in immoral actions. The absence of moral values in marital relationships can have very serious consequences.

Adultery is prevalent in noble society for these reasons, and the fact that rumors don't spread widely is also due to this. If someone takes steps to prevent loose talk, that's the end of it.

Of course, when you look at it proportionally, there are many cases where even in arranged marriages, the partners hold each other in high regard. Arranged marriages are often like contractual relationships, so if one party makes a mistake, the consequences can hurt them.

Surprisingly, there are also cases where the wife encourages her husband to take a concubine. It might be because the wife has issues with bearing offspring or perhaps the husband's stamina and affection are so intense that it's difficult to accept it day by day.

While the former might be understandable, the latter may sound somewhat comical, but it happens more often than you might think in this world. Even young Isaac, who had only received basic knight training and had holy power, possessed the strength to overpower Cecily on their first night together.

Even when Marie, who exploded with jealousy over Leona's situation, and Cecily, who had fun watching it, attacked in tandem, it took some effort, but he withstood it.

I made some unnecessary comments for a moment, but the very fact that the jealous Marie couldn't help but feel a little dissatisfied. From the moment she accepted Cecily, it had been quite a journey, and now, because of that darned culture, she had to accept Leona.

Even though she had no sexual knowledge, there was even Kate, who blatantly asked for a child. Instead, she found comfort in the fact that her human relationships had collapsed in a different sense.

However, as Isaac's first lover and the person who would become his first wife in the future, it was only natural to complain. If it were revealed in the distant future that Isaac was Xenon, there might be cases where she 'had to' accept another woman, but that wasn't the case now.

Cecily was content with just being connected to Isaac, but Marie always felt a sense of crisis. With the atmosphere of Adelia, the knight escort, being unsettling enough, she absolutely couldn't accept the idea of another woman coming into the picture.

Receiving Isaac's sincere affection during the day and experiencing the pleasure mixed with affection at night was something she could never forget. As a result, she couldn't tolerate the thought of sharing that with someone else.

At the same time, she felt fortunate. She was the first to learn about Isaac. If someone else had known first, she would have had to take a different approach.

Furthermore, the fact that she was of noble descent as the future Duchess of Requilis added a solid layer of protection. Thanks to that alone, no other woman dared to approach Isaac.

Not to mention, Isaac may not know it, but he was already quite famous within the class. A year ago, he drew attention because of his unique combination of red hair and golden eyes, but now, as he has grown into a charismatic young man, his attractiveness has risen even further.

In fact, he's become the kind of guy that female classmates talk about wanting to date at least once. Isaac, who is busy with his duties as a student assistant, remained oblivious to this fact, and occasional rumors have heightened Marie's stress.

Of course, even that stress disappears like melting snow the moment she sees Isaac's face. But sometimes, she lightly pinches Isaac's cheek for this very reason.

"…So, how many wives does this make?"

“It’s not like that.”

But she had not expected a new student at all. Marie looked at Cherry, the girl with pink hair standing beside Isaac, and asked in a resigned voice.

Isaac insisted it was all a misunderstanding, that he just wanted to introduce a junior he liked, and there was no ulterior motive. But Marie, as well as Cecily and Rina, who were watching, had skeptical expressions.

There was another difference here. Cecily, in a situation similar to Marie’s, couldn’t help but force a smile in an awkward situation. However, Rina, being a third party, found it interesting and watched. She had always thought that watching a fire across the river was the most fun, and that was exactly the situation she was in now.

In the meantime, Marie, full of complaints, clenched her fist and looked up and down at Cherry, who was hesitating. Her height was average, but… her chest was noticeably large, to the point of being striking.

When she glanced at Cecily’s chest next to her, it was almost the same. Both of them were vehemently demanding that they be saved from their uniforms.

Marie’s chest was by no means small and was larger than average, but these two were truly beyond comparison. What could make them grow so big?

Even Leona, who confidently declared herself as a wife, seemed, at first glance, to be about the same size as herself. Thanks to this newfound realization, Marie asked Isaac straightforwardly.

“Does Isaac like women with big breasts?”

“Why is that question suddenly coming up?”

“Just answer first.”

“…I do like them.”

Once again, he couldn’t lie. Well, now that everything’s out in the open, he probably won’t.

Marie looked at Isaac, who blushed slightly and answered, and she chuckled. She always liked that about him, his honesty. The face was just an accessory.

The question about how many wives he will have just asked was just a joke anyway, a kind of revenge. Given that he had been involved with so many women lately, partly due to jealousy, she decided to tease him a little.

However, except for Cherry's slightly unusual condition, Marie couldn't help but notice. She shifted her gaze from Isaac, who was scratching his cheek uncomfortably, to Cherry.

If you looked at her pink hair and eyes, it was clear that the Roseberry family, known as a philosophical lineage even within the Minerva Empire, had a unique style. If the Requilis family was known for their snow-white hair, the Roseberry family was all about pink.

But, there was something, or rather, something was lacking in her eyes. Whether it was a lack of vitality or a lack of enthusiasm, her eyes looked gloomy. Marie, who didn't know Cherry's situation, wondered if she had always been like that.

"Did you say your name is Cherry? Are you a freshman?"

"Y-yes…"

Her voice was beautiful, just like her appearance, but there was no enthusiasm in it. Marie, as well as the others, wore expressions of curiosity as if they had noticed something strange about her.

However, not knowing her situation well, Marie considered it as an aspect of her personality. After all, Isaac had introduced her, and they needed to find a place to sit first.

"Let's move to another spot for now. Are we going to our usual place?"

"That sounds good. Cherry?"

"Yes…"

In response to Isaac's call, Cherry cautiously watched their reactions and waited for them to move first. It seemed like she intended to follow them rather than taking the lead. Even though there was a creed of equality within the academy, authority still held its place. Marie was the daughter of the Duke of Requilis, Rina was a princess, and Cecily was the princess of Helium.

Marie would have liked to invite Cherry to walk alongside them, but now there was Rina. In a situation where she didn't know anything about Cherry, it would be

disrespectful to stand beside her without good reason.

The result was that Cherry followed the group, trotting along behind them. Occasionally, she spoke, not ignoring Rina, but there was something slightly unusual about it.

It was the fact that she followed only Isaac, just like a baby bird. She hadn't even kept her distance; she had approached so closely that it could become intimate. She seemed to want to touch Isaac's long hair and her hands even fidgeted.

It was a suspicious sight to anyone, and not only Marie but Cecily also looked at it strangely. Isaac and Rina were in the middle of a conversation, completely unaware of Cherry's close approach.

So, without saying a word, Marie and Cecily simultaneously looked at each other. They didn't speak, but they understood what each other was thinking.

That girl, Cherry, undoubtedly had romantic feelings for Isaac. They were women who loved the same man, so it was strange not to know.

Right now, they needed Isaac's introduction, so they would remain silent for now, but if the opportunity arose, they would inquire. With such thoughts in mind, the two women moved on to the restaurant they frequented.

After a while, they arrived at the restaurant, and just before opening the door and entering, Marie took the lead in what appeared to be some sort of operation(?).

"Ah, right. Isaac. Can I ask you for a favor?"

"What's the favor?"

"I think I left my pen in the classroom. If you go with Rina, she'll know which one it is."

At the same time, Marie subtly signaled Rina as well. Although Rina was suddenly singled out, she quickly understood the situation and nodded her head.

"You mean that? Alright, I'll go with Isaac to look for it. I'll come back if it's not there."

"It's a relief if it's not there. You mentioned your name is Cherry, right? You can wait with us."

"Oh, uh…"

Perhaps she was anxious about the sudden situation of having to separate from Isaac. Cherry hesitated, glancing between Marie and Isaac. Her pink eyes, trembling like an earthquake, looked quite pitiful. However, the situation seemed to have taken a turn since meeting Isaac. Isaac pondered what to do and quietly replied.

"…Alright."

"Great. Then we'll go in first."

"Okay. I'll be back quickly."

Time had passed. As Marie watched, Isaac and Rina walked away into the distance and waved them goodbye. Then, she looked at Cherry with a bright smile and urged her.

"Shall we go inside?"

"Yes…"

Although she appeared somewhat uneasy, she followed Marie's lead. They followed their usual routine and found a soundproof room before taking their seats.

Marie and Cecily sat side by side, leaving an empty space in the middle, across where Cherry ended up sitting. Cherry's self-esteem seemed to take a hit as she realized she wasn't sitting next to Isaac, and her head drooped.

Marie gave her a puzzled look, and Cecily simply stared at her in silence. From their first impression, it was clear that Cherry had no self-confidence.

Marie began to wonder what circumstances could lead a person like her to act as if she depended on Isaac. Growing more curious, Marie softly spoke up.

"Your name is Cherry, right? Cherry Blossom Roseberry. I've heard of the Roseberry family. They're famous for their philosophy."

"Uh, yes."

When Marie mentioned her family, Cherry responded with a tremble in her body. Her two hands lowered down, tightly grasping the hem of her skirt.

Even from a distance, Marie could tell that Cherry was putting in effort to stay calm, so she stared at her without a word. In the past, she had met with Viscount Roseberry, who had come as an author, but he seemed like an ordinary nobleman one might encounter anywhere.

He had the pride of a nobleman, but he was a unique man who tried to infuse his philosophy into everything. However, if Cherry's reaction was so intense, it seemed like his qualifications as a father weren't that great.

"How did you get to know Isaac?"

"…A letter."

"Huh?"

"The letter… there was a red hair…"

At first, Marry couldn't understand what that meant when she heard it, but soon realized its meaning. It must be a story about red hair being found in the letter. And during winter break, when she briefly stayed at Isaac's mansion, they read the stack of fan letters piled high together. The same goes for Cecily, who was next to her.

Among those letters was a letter sent by Cherry, the one with the pink envelope. Isaac said she was one of the fans who sent him letters regularly. He wrote a reply to her, but, given his clumsy nature, it seems the hair got in there at the time. It's not entirely impossible, but it was a bit absurd.

"Do you know who Isaac is, by any chance?"

In response to Mary's bewildered question, Cherry simply nodded her head. Marie and Cecily exchanged looks of astonishment upon Cherry's affirmation. Expressions filled with mixed doubt as to how were reflected in their eyes. Being certain that a single strand of hair appeared on a letter was insufficient evidence, no matter how you look at it.

"Only with a single strand of hair? That doesn't make sense. Wait, did you keep that hair?"

"Yes."

The more they delved into it, the more discomfort they felt about the girl named Cherry. It's definitely not normal to keep a strand of hair when you would typically discard it.

Unless you were a real stalker, it's impossible. Marie, sounding somewhat urgent, continued with her questions.

"Recognizing it with just that is not enough, right?"

"…Handwriting."

"Handwriting?"

"The handwriting on the letter was exactly the same as Mr. Isaac's…"

Isaac's handwriting was elegant like that of a noble and meticulous like that of a writer. Each word was clear, and even if he wrote hastily, it still exuded grace.

But this couldn't be considered entirely normal either. How can someone have such confidence in recognizing just their handwriting when there are so many people in the world?

The moment Marie realized that Cherry was quite different from the norm, she couldn't help but be stunned.

Cherry, who had been fidgeting with her hands under the table, lifted her head to face the two women. In her distinctive, somber voice, she said.

"Isaac had partly approved. He found my manuscript interesting and said he would help."

"Huh? Manuscript? What does that mean?"

"Were you a writer too?"

When the word "manuscript" was mentioned, not only Marie but also Cecily showed their curiosity. It seemed like this was probably the reason he wanted to introduce Cherry this time.

Cherry, observing the curious expressions on the two women's faces, seemed hesitant to meet their gaze and lowered her head. Nevertheless, she wanted to speak and opened her mouth with a hesitant tone as if she wanted to be heard.

"My father… He tore my manuscript to shreds without even looking at it, and he stomped on it. But I kept holding on with the determination to somehow piece it back together and show it to Mr. Xenon…"

"…Wait a moment. You kept holding on?"

"Yes… If it weren't for Isaac being Mr. Xenon, then perhaps…"

She didn't finish her sentence, but Marie and Cecily could sense what she meant. Her voice, devoid of energy, and the deeply shadowed pupils in her eyes served as evidence of that.

The girl was in worse condition than they thought. Isaac revealing his identity is the reason for it happening here. If Isaac had avoided Cherry, wouldn't there have been a sinister rumor spreading about a cold corpse in the dorm? Revealing his identity was equivalent to saving a person, given that context.

"…I see. That makes sense."

"If that's the case, there's nothing we can do."

And that explains why Cherry was attracted to Isaac. Not only did he try to fix the dreams shattered by her family, but he also supported her and offered help.

Furthermore, Marie suddenly became curious about how much persecution Cherry must have endured in her family to become so broken. To make a person like a puppet, there must have been an unimaginable amount of pressure.

Marie felt a certain emotion from her, but that was one thing, and this was another. No matter what, she didn't want her to become Isaac's woman. There were already too many.

In any case, she should ask for her opinion. Marie stared at Cherry with a perplexed expression and asked subtly.

"So, do you want to become Isaac's wife or something like that?"

Cherry slowly raised her head in response to the question. Then, her eyes blinked slowly, and she cocked her head.

Following that, her previously tightly sealed lips opened.

"Me?"

As if she wondered why she would ask such a question.

"Dare to?"

Her self-esteem, which had hit rock bottom, was glaringly exposed. Marie could only be taken aback at hearing the answer. 'Dare to?' How little does she value herself to not

even think of such a thing? Honestly, she could have aspirations, but something was amiss with her.

Just as Marie was starting to feel a little apprehensive, Cecily, who had been watching from the side, spoke in her characteristic seductive voice, as if sensing something.

“Hey. Wasn’t the one who had been following Isaac until now you?”

“Yes. That’s right.”

She freely confessed that she stalked without any intention to hide it. However, there was no trace of guilt on her face.

A heart that was completely shattered and barely mended can never return to normal. That was an utterly natural fact.

Cecily, after listening to Cherry’s answer, thought deeply and then asked another question.

“What about the gift? Lately, Isaac has been smelling like cherry blossoms. Was that your doing?”

“I gave him cherry blossom extract from our family.”

“But you did it without any feelings?”

“Someone like me?”

Once again, her self-esteem was laid bare. Cherry stared into Cecily’s red eyes and slowly spoke each word.

“I’m just happy with the fact that Isaac is here. His hair, scent, voice, face, warmth, and so on. I’m happy with just seeing, hearing, and feeling him.”

“… …”

“But I can’t have him, can I? Even though I adopted the pseudonym Mary, it’s impossible for it to truly continue. I’m just happy with him knowing of my existence.”

“Umm…”

Cecily looked at Cherry as if she had made a terrifying and insane statement. Marie was slowly retreating her chair, as if she were afraid.

Cecily shifted her gaze once more from Cherry and muttered inwardly.

'...I think I get it.'

She had received salvation far too late.

*****

Meanwhile, as Isaac and Rina headed to the classroom as per Marie's request, they walked comfortably, exchanging words without feeling awkward with each other through their improved relations.

Superficially, it appeared to be a conversation between the Baron's son and the princess, so some passing people gave them strange looks. However, they could easily brush off this level of attention.

Isaac was also pleased that Rina had become more comfortable with him, and Rina, too, felt at ease knowing that her relationship with Isaac had improved.

However, when relationships improve, personal questions tend to arise. Rina gazed at Isaac, who had grown into a well-built young man, and curiously asked.

"By the way, Isaac, is your back okay? Last time, you and Marie and Cecily went together, right?"

"Ah, that's fine… wait a moment."

Isaac briefly recalled the past after hearing Rina's question. Before Marie and Cecily teamed up, it was not Leona but Rina who was there. Rina didn't mind mentioning his and her friends' sexual life, as they often talked about it, so it wasn't embarrassing, unlike in the past. However, asking a question like that was a bit peculiar. It was as if she knew everything about my sex life.

With a blink of his eye, Isaac looked at Rina with a questioning expression and asked.

"How do you know that?"

"Uh, what?"

"Back then, you weren't there. It was Leona, not you. Didn't you step out for a moment?"

"Uh, well, you see…"

Perhaps because it was an unexpected question, Rina began to ramble. Moreover, her face turned as red as a tomato.

Isaac raised one of his eyes to see the reaction, and then asked vaguely in an expectant voice.

“Rina. Are you…”

“No! I didn’t see it! It’s true! I’m not a pervert!”

“… …”

There’s a saying that strong negation is strong affirmation. I didn’t even finish my question.

Still, as she said, Rina wasn’t a pervert and she wasn’t the type of person to spy on him, so he should just move on.

“Whew…”

Beside him, Rina let out her sigh of relief, but let’s ignore this too.

Translators note:

Them bitches crazy

Chapter 221: New Star (3)

Originally, I had plans to introduce Cherry to my friends, but it seems that the introductions have concluded during Rina's and mine brief visit to the classroom.

However, even though I didn't know what exactly was discussed, their expressions were different. Marie had a somewhat hesitant expression, Cecily had a sympathetic expression, and Cherry had a somewhat grim smile.

Observing that, I was momentarily puzzled, but since I hadn't yet told Rina what I planned to say, I continued with the remaining part of the conversation. Rina, after being momentarily surprised when I introduced Cherry, thought for a while and then asked me a question.

"So, when is Young Lady's Roseberry book going to be published?"

"It should be published soon, right? By now, they should have finalized the contract."

Cherry's debut work, "Once Again, the Red Sunset," was entrusted to my father for another contract. Ideally, Cherry should have visited in person, but due to certain circumstances, there was no other choice.

The CEO of the publishing company is the first person I've met in relation to Xenon's Biography, so there should be no problems in handling the contract. Since the CEO will keep silent about our identities thanks to the contracts, there's no need to worry.

If the CEO quotes an unusual amount, I can pressure him. The position of the top-ranked author, as long as Xenon's Biography is going crazy, will always be mine. Therefore, Cherry's work will be thoroughly protected under my name. Now, all that's left is to wait for it to grow and bloom like a flower.

"I'm looking forward to it. Since you said it's interesting, the quality of the work is guaranteed."

"Can you tell me what it's about?"

Cecily asked with interest about Cherry's work. For reference, Rina was sitting beside Cherry, and I was sitting between Marie and Cecily.

I pondered for a moment on how to explain her question and then spoke. I decided not to mention the time travel setting.

"First of all, it's a romance genre, so I think you guys will really like it. However, it's better to see the story for yourselves, don't you think? I was impressed when I first read it."

"The book that the author of Xenon's Biography was impressed with… makes us even more excited, right? Young Lady Roseberry?"

"Ye-yes?!"

Cherry, who had been hesitating at Rina's call, suddenly perked up and lifted her head in surprise. It seems that even someone like Cherry couldn't help but be tense in the presence of Princess Rina's authority.

Perhaps, living with me has made her emotions a bit richer. Before meeting me, Cherry was truly lifeless, as if she were a walking corpse.

"I will visit the Roseberry family soon. The Roseberry family is famous for their philosophy, so it might not be a bad idea to have a conversation with them."

"Ah…"

As soon as Rina mentioned the family, Cherry's pink eyes sank deep like an abyss. I couldn't help but be terrified as soon as I heard Rina mention the family.

For Cherry, 'family' was like a forbidden land that should not even be mentioned. But Lina seemed completely unaware of this and spoke as if it were nothing.

When Rina saw Cherry's gaze suddenly darken, she seemed to realize that something was wrong and had a bewildered expression. Then, as if to convey that she wondered what had happened, she shifted her gaze to me.

Only after explaining Cherry's family situation did she realize her mistake and hurriedly apologized.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know about your circumstances…"

"Princess, there's no need to apologize. Everything is fine now…"

It wasn't really okay. Because of the trauma deeply ingrained in her heart, not only her voice but even her hands were trembling.

Rina seemed to have noticed this, as she didn't ask any more related questions. Instead, she changed the topic to something more direct, praising Cherry herself in place of her family.

"Anyway, as the Minerva Empire, we're in for a real stroke of luck. Xenon's Biography author and the author he praises have emerged here. Maybe we can really surpass the Ters Kingdom."

"I haven't even said I'm bound to the Minerva Empire."

"Well, if you marry Marie, it's pretty much the same as being bound to the Minerva Empire. There's no reason to go over to the Ters Kingdom, is there?"

"I have no intention of going over there."

The Ters Kingdom is a country of art and culture. At first glance, many artists have impressive titles. However, it seems like just empty words when you look at Adelia's unfortunate family history.

Perhaps, as Rina says, it might be the same to be bound to the Minerva Empire, just writing works under their protection. Moreover, Rina must also know that I am in a position that cannot be easily disturbed. It was just a playful expression of intimacy.

"And starting with Cherry, many writers will emerge in other countries as well. Honestly, it's not difficult if you have the material, and the grammar I use is easy to copy."

"That's true, but who would dare to imitate you? People might even say you're tarnishing your reputation. Cherry is your precious friend, but other writers are different."

"In anticipation of that, I've already told the publishing house. I told them not to be afraid of following me and to express themselves freely."

"Hmm… Is that so? It's a bit regrettable, but if that's how you feel, there's nothing to be done."

Of course, commonly known copycats might also appear. In that case, the publishing house will have to filter them out. Moreover, if the story is almost a carbon copy, I've

made it clear that they need to scrutinize it closely. If I say I'm uncomfortable, they don't have to wait for me to step in, those around will handle it on their own.

So, I just need to quietly enjoy it from the perspective of an observer. It can be a little ambitious, but the grammar of Xenon's Biography is so easy that a little practice is enough to follow along.

It's better to lay it all out from the beginning, as there may be complaints later.

"They'll create books for me to read myself, too."

Most satisfying of all is that there will be an increase in books that are enjoyable to read. The reason for writing Xenon's Biography in the first place was that there were hardly any books worth reading, except for history books and adventurer biographies.

In my past life, genre novels poured out like a flood, and there were many enjoyable novels as well, but it's not the same in this world. People's enthusiasm for Xenon's Biography is also due to this.

While there may initially be a lot of trash at first, there are also sprouts in this world that wither away without ever revealing their talents. Just like the sprout in front of me, which will eventually blossom like a cherry tree, and when more talents bloom beside it, it will create a beautiful garden called "culture."

"Isaac, I think I know what you're thinking. But it's going to take longer than you expect."

Marie, who was next to me, voiced her opinion cautiously. It was somewhat surprising that this came from Marie, not Rina. When I looked at her, Marie brought out her thoughts.

"If you say that, then undoubtedly countless aspiring writers will be compelled to write. However, that will also harm some people. For example, the moment Xenon's Biography came out, a lot of troublesome things happened, right?"

"You mean established writers?"

"Yeah."

The novels of this world are filled with very obscure sentences and words. It's so difficult that some even say you need to use an encyclopedia to understand the story.

Nobles, after reading some novels, might end up discussing them, making it feel like an English exam for no reason.

At least until the era of Xenon's Biography, this was the prevailing trend. Authors would proudly write, showcasing their philosophy and intellectual qualities, and if readers didn't understand, they would accuse them of being ignorant.

But since the advent of Xenon's Biography, the landscape and public opinion have completely reversed. People now wonder why they should bother reading those when there are other novels with simple and straightforward sentences with easy-to-understand stories. They just call it dirty and avoid reading it.

Naturally, established authors criticized and slandered Xenon's Biography, but it remained unscathed. Some writers praised it for its depth, but they were in the minority.

Of course, over time, there were people who started taking an interest in books themselves rather than just Xenon's Biography, and it resulted in some considerable benefits. You can see this from the fact that the number of literary newcomers has tripled in just one year.

"It's because you're in such a high position. The influence of established authors is much stronger than you think. The publishing house that signed Xenon's Biography can ignore it because you're involved, but it'll be tough for publishers in other countries. It won't be resolved as quickly as you think."

"Hmm. I didn't think of that. But it's not entirely impossible, right?"

"No."

"That's enough then."

If time can resolve it, I can wait indefinitely. Until then, I can write Xenon's Biography and the next work, waiting for the readers' reactions. After that, I'll finish by writing another work casually.

In the meantime, I should read Cherry's books so she won't feel left out.

"Well, I think a bit differently, you know? Maybe it won't ever happen."

However, Cecily's opinion seemed a bit different from Marie's. I looked at Cecily with a puzzled expression and asked.

“What do you mean by that?”

In response to my question, Cecily smiled cryptically. Her smile was always beautiful and captivating, no matter when I saw it.

As I was staring blankly at that smile, Cecily pointed at me with her long index finger and spoke.

“Xenon’s Biography, and because you’re in such a high position.”

“…?”

It had a similar yet different tone.

******

Creation is a very demanding task. The creative process itself is challenging, and when you present your creation to the world, it’s equally demanding. That’s because people tend to judge creative works based on the ‘outcome’ rather than the process. No matter how much someone has suffered or how much effort they’ve put in, people only focus on the final result.

Some may praise the outcome, while others may criticize it. Creators can draw strength or despair from these results. In this way, art, which is the act of creation itself, is a difficult and arduous endeavor. However, even this is a story of significance when it receives attention, as there are countless works of art that have withered away unnoticed by the world.

In this sense, Cherry’s debut work, ‘Once Again, the Red Sunset,’ can be considered quite fortunate. She happened to meet me, the author of Xenon’s Biography and received praise for her writing being interesting. To support her dream entirely, we used Xenon’s reputation to lead to publication. However, just because I find it interesting doesn’t mean everyone does, as everyone has their own tastes.

“Shall we take a look now?”

“Ye-yes…!”

A week after Cherry’s first work was published, Cherry and I arrived at the cafe to check the reaction. The way to confirm the reaction was very simple. All we had to do was to check what news was in today’s newspaper.

You might think it's possible to check the newspaper that was available on the day it was published, but that's only possible in my past life on Earth, where there was the internet.

Even if the books start selling at the publisher, it takes a considerable amount of time for them to move to other places. It takes at least a month to arrive in Alvenheim, the farthest country from the Minerva Empire.

However, this is just the story before the appearance of the 12th volume. I heard that even the elves found it hard to thumb through the pages after the 12th volume, so they requested it directly from Arwen. In response, Arwen readily lowered the tariffs and even provided teleportation facilities.

It didn't even take a few days to establish the facility for transporting only the Xenon series. Because it was the work of the elven magic experts, the work progressed at a fast pace.

Anyway, it's been a week now, and it's the moment when the evaluation of Cherry's work was expected to explode. It's already reached the maximum interest level because it's a work written by the child I cherish.

The only thing left is whether the readers found it enjoyable. I glanced at Cherry, who was tense and rigid due to expectation and anxiety.

The light returned a little to the eyes that were dark and gloomy when we first met.

Slowly, I unfolded the newspaper, and Cherry and I started examining the news that was boldly highlighted without deciding who would go first.

[Another major debut? Xenon protegee's, Mary's 'Red Sunset', is on sale with great enthusiasm!]

[Just the story of traveling from the future to the past is noteworthy in itself.]

[Similar to the Xenon series, yet with a different style. Each emotional and warm sentence touches the heart.]

[This book, which is exploding in popularity among women…]

And as expected, it was receiving tremendous praise from its first work. Regression stories are inherently a popular theme, and when combined with Cherry's unique writing style, it's no wonder it's a hit.

Moreover, I even personally said it's enjoyable, leveraging Xenon's reputation. They can't criticize it because of my name? That's a funny statement. Even when Xenon's Biography was at its peak of popularity, there were critics.

Initially, most of the criticism came from established writers' jealousy, but as time passed, more conventional criticism followed.

[Since it's a romance, it focuses more on people's psychology than events. Immersion is sufficient, but it's slightly challenging to understand how the events unfold. However, it will gradually develop.]

[I wish they would provide a more detailed explanation of what happened in the future.]

The format was as described above. However, it wasn't just malicious criticism, as I had also entertained similar thoughts, so I nodded in agreement.

But what mattered most was Cherry. How would she react? I glanced at Cherry while reading the newspaper, and I couldn't help but be surprised.

"……"

Cherry was clearly reading the newspaper, but tears were streaming down her rosy cheeks.

Could it be that all the pent-up emotions in her heart had finally been released? Perhaps even she wasn't aware of it, as she didn't make a sound and just let the tears flow endlessly.

This might be a moment when the dream, which had been ruthlessly trampled before it had a chance to sprout, was blossoming. I gazed at her with an expression of bewilderment and quietly spoke.

"Cherry."

"Yes?"

"How do you feel? Your dream has come true, hasn't it?"

She stared blankly at the question for a while and then shifted her gaze back to the newspaper. The news was full of praise for her work. The question of when the next volume would be released echoed loudly.

Cherry stared at the news with a vacant look in her eyes, but soon her lips, which had been horizontal, slowly turned up. Not only her lips, but the tears in her eyes, too, gradually disappeared.

After a while, a ‘happy smile’ that had not been seen until then bloomed like her own work, and she quietly said.

“I’m happy…”

“Really?”

“Yes. I’m so… so happy… it feels like a dream…”

She didn’t seem to realize she was still crying, and tears began to fall from her cheeks, drop by drop. I wordlessly took out a handkerchief and wiped away her tears.

At that, Cherry looked at me in surprise. It was then that she seemed to realize that she was crying and fumbled nervously.

“Um, I… I…”

“Use this until you stop crying.”

“…Thank you.”

It was as if the faucet of tears had broken, and she couldn’t stop crying. Eventually, she reached for my handkerchief. While she wiped away her tears, I looked at other news.

I turned the pages of the newspaper, but there was nothing else except news related to Cherry’s work. This meant it was just as big a hit as the Xenon series.

Due to its romantic nature, it was gaining immense popularity among women. However, due to its unique setting as a regression story, even men were reading it.

Whether this was a bubble or not, it all depends on Cherry from now on. According to her, she has already planned the ending, so all she has to do is write it. We just have to wait patiently.

‘But, isn’t there any news about new authors or something?’

I had informed the publishing company about it, but it didn’t seem to show up strangely. With doubts in my mind, as I flipped through the pages, I came across a strange passage.

[Xenon said it was okay to copy his writing style, but that is simply not possible.]

What's this all about? I squinted my eyes and brought my face closer to the noticeably strange text.

[If you want your work to be recognized, you have to gain Xenon's approval first. If you don't, it's an insult to Xenon.]

Ah, right.

[Don't sully Xenon's honor! Who dares to besmirch Xenon's honor! He may say it doesn't matter, but we will not forgive!]

This era was like that. Damn it.

"Hmm… Cherry."

"Yes… sniff…"

With a heavy heart, I gently stroked Cherry's head and said resignedly,

"…Give me the next volume a bit earlier."

"Even if I have to risk my life, I'll give it to you early…"

"You don't need to do that…"

It seems like it will take a long time for a worthy book to come out.

Chapter 222: A Welcome Face (1)

As you may have expected it, it was the Holy Empire of Xavier, or the Luminous Order, who shut down any imitating authors.

If I were just an ordinary high-ranking person, they might have let it slide, but I was a ‘saint’ acknowledged even by the Luminous Order, so they couldn’t possibly allow for my honor to be tarnished, or something like that.

In my view, it’s a mind-boggling and bewildering situation, but the current era places a significant emphasis on honor. Those who live and die for honor are widespread in this world.

In the end, even the publishing company had to give up on the competing authors with tears in their eyes, and I, too, found myself in a ridiculously surreal situation, but it was postponed for later.

Can’t I just send a letter and explain? If that were possible, I wouldn’t even be hearing the words “regressor” or whatever. It’s like talking to a brick wall.

Even if I were to ask Luminous directly, it wouldn’t mean much. Luminous bestows oracles as a ‘deity,’ not as a messenger to convey someone else’s requests.

The gods only offer guidance and suggestions closely related to the future to mortals, without directly interfering. If direct interference were possible, why would there be criminals and people committing sins in the world?

I was so annoyed that I even thought about hitting someone during my break, but everyone seemed to accept it, so I held back for a moment. It’s better to take things slowly with the contest and focus on writing for now.

Furthermore, the break might cause inconvenience to my colleagues. I have to endure it. Sometimes, I feel sorry for causing trouble with my mistakes, but I do my best to make amends.

‘I need to write quickly for a better future.’

In my dorm after finishing all my work, I thought about writing volume 17. With the increase in literature students and the growing number of people to meet, my second year was getting busier.

As a result, I have significantly less time for writing, but I'm trying to squeeze in every available moment. If I don't, my future is quite bleak, so I have to.

In order to receive more divine power, now that Leona has been confirmed as my wife, I need to put more effort into writing Xenon's Biography. Otherwise, there might be a distant future where I become as emaciated as a mummy.

Up to Marie and Cecily, it's fine. The genes inherited from my father were getting stronger day by day, boosting my stamina and strength.

However, it will get increasingly difficult from the third person onward. Moreover, I need to consider not only Leona but also Adelia, so the burden becomes even heavier.

Furthermore, if Cecily's evil cycle and Leona's estrus cycle overlap, I might have to engage in a life threatening battle, so it's better to be prepared in advance. The saying 'A wise man makes his preparations' isn't just for show.

'...But the number of women keeps increasing. Am I really a playboy?'

Originally, once was difficult, but two or three times not anymore. I agonized a lot when accepting Cecily, but after that, it strangely became easy.

I don't know if I'm gradually adapting to the mindset of this world, or if I naturally have a playboy disposition.

Even if Marie complained whenever I had more women in my life, but as long as there was a good reason, she accepted them all. Of course, Marie always emphasized that she is the first.

I, too, always pour my affection generously on her as she is my first. Of course, Cecily can feel a bit jealous, so I need to divide it appropriately.

'Humans, demons, and even beastmen… I have almost every race. I wonder if even elves will get involved at some point?'

Such a pointless thought. Cecily is one thing, but I only met Leona purely by chance. If that hadn't happened, we wouldn't have known each other.

Elves are the same. Besides the four I know – Arwen, Elena, Cindy, and Siris – there aren't many. The fact that they are all female is a bit concerning, but none was a romantic relationship.

'Come to think of it, I haven't been in touch with Arwen lately.'

I paused my writing for a moment and thought of Arwen. Since winter break, we haven't been in touch, not even exchanging messages with each other.

Arwen is unavoidably busy in her own way, as the Council of Elders that had upheld Alvenheim for centuries has vanished into history. Even if she had ten bodies, it wouldn't be enough.

Furthermore, there are those who are discontent with Arwen's rule, and she's the only known link to Xenon externally. She must balance both domestic pressures and international politics, and it must be enough to make her head explode. Although I'd like to help, she has remained silent until now.

'I should write a letter soon.'

No matter how busy I am, I shouldn't neglect communication. Especially during tough times like these, a warm word of comfort can make a big difference. Arwen has trusted very few until now, so even a single letter would be a great source of solace. I've kept my distance for too long.

Nonetheless, I should keep writing consistently. I wrote "Letter to Arwen" in the notes where I organize the plot, just in case I forget. Then, I refocused.

'Starting from volume 17, I should switch to Jin and Lily.'

Volume 17's content will focus on Jin and Lily's story, not Xenon. It's planned to showcase their sweet romance and at the same time evoke a sense of nostalgia.

The protagonist's performance always stands out, but the supporting characters' popularity is equally essential. Furthermore, the touching story of Jin and Lily has garnered support from many readers.

The story of a member of the discriminated race, a Demon, and the Saintess protected by the gods. With this premise alone, you can churn out several volumes of romance novels. And I'm incorporating that into Xenon's Biography.

‘The beastmen part was almost three volumes long, so… I should write the church part in a similar length. It shouldn’t be too long.’

By the way, the ending of volume 17 will drive readers crazy. It was a situation that could occasionally occur between lovers. It’s during a festival, and too many guests flood the inn, leaving only ‘one’ room available. In that room, Jin and Lily end up sleeping together.

Naturally, both of them know each other’s feelings, but they find themselves in an awkward situation, unable to confess. The two individuals, both sharing a room with the opposite sex for the first time, react entirely normally.

Jin can’t bear it any longer and tries to get up to sleep outside the room when Lily gently grabs his arm.

When flustered Jin looked at Lily, she blushed deeply but didn’t avoid his gaze, and confidently said.

‘Don’t forget the duty of a guardian knight.’

The readers of Jin and Lily’s story, including my mother, will love it to death. However, as I mentioned earlier, I plan to include this only at the very end.

They found themselves in a situation where they ended up spending the first night together by chance. If things continued this way, the story would turn into a romance. I’ll say it again, Xenon’s Biography is an adventure, meaning danger can strike anytime, anywhere.

As the atmosphere became strange, and their faces got closer, an unexpected attack occurred. The process was great, but the ending was a complete mess.

Volume 17 ends with clues about the identity of the attackers. It signifies that the roots have rotted to the extent where they would openly attack the saintess of the Church.

‘Because the Church still discriminates against the demons.’

This wouldn’t represent reality, but only what’s happening in the book. No matter how much Sakran might have shown a heroic image of demons, it’s only in the eyes of the readers, not within the story.

Fortunately, Jin had been living with Lily since childhood, so the looks he receives are less judgmental, but that doesn’t mean it was all good. Especially since one of the

priests openly insulted Jin. It's safe to say he had a lot to say about him.

'But that senior priest was a true clergyman, in fact, the priest who supported Jin is the one who conspired with the devil.'

While they may have a discriminating view towards demons, there are genuine clergy who sincerely worship the gods, and the pretenders who perform clerical acts while hiding behind a mask. By confusing these two, I plan to provide readers with a twist.

When all the events are over, even the senior priest who disliked Jin will acknowledge his own mistakes and come to trust him completely. He will also join the Union. Furthermore, I will throw the hint of Jin's true identity, as the child of Gluttony.

'But is there someone similar in reality?'

The content from Volume 17 to Volume 18 is roughly like this, but the real problem is the present. Even I am confused now, and it's a story that is truly "possible." In the Xenon's Biography, the situation is so serious that there are senior priests conspiring with demons.

One might wonder how the demons could creep into a country founded under the protection of the gods, or how senior priests could conspire with demons.

However, what you need to know is that, unless it's a special case, the gods cannot directly interfere. If those senior priests don't pray to the gods, that's the end of it.

Honestly, it was constructed to the extent that one could take the position of a cardinal without arousing suspicion. Moreover, the more power and authority increase, the easier it is to become corrupt. It might be a sudden and unexpected twist, so I plan to insert subplots here and there. For example, there might be situations like recently being too busy to even pray or showing signs of doubting the gods from time to time.

If you're truly a faithful clergy, you should never neglect prayer to the divine and never entertain doubt. But the position of a cardinal conceals all of that.

'...But I'm from another country, and I don't really know much about being a cardinal.'

I've heard that the people's way of life is similar in other countries, but I don't really know much about the internal affairs of the Holy Kingdom.

I went to the temple and got advice from a few people, but that's about the temple, and it's almost unrelated to the Holy Kingdom.

There is at least one person I can turn to for advice. It's Kate, the cardinal who begged me for seeds the last time.

I should ask her, but I'm afraid she will ask for seed again.

'For better quality, I guess I have to ask for a favor.'

As I mentioned before, I want to be thorough about authenticity, even though I may not know much about battles. I have the willingness to overlook the seed request, which will probably end with just a few questions.

I momentarily paused from writing, having completed over half, and shifted my gaze to the clock. The current time was around 3:30. Today, Elena was busy, so I had returned to my dorm as soon as the classes ended, leaving me with plenty of free time.

I thought about going to see Kate as it was, but I put that idea on hold. Kate's whereabouts and activities were unknown to me, and she was also busy with her current relief work.

Unlike when she urged me to give her the seed, she was now a diligent missionary. Despite her occasional eccentricities, she never forgot her true calling as a dedicated missionary. I had sometimes wondered if her "mission" had a different meaning, but now it seemed different.

Knock Knock Knock

While I was staring at the clock endlessly, someone knocked on the door to the dorm. I averted my gaze from the clock and looked toward the door. I had been thinking about Kate just moments ago, so I couldn't help but wonder if it could really be her. That thought crossed my mind, but for now, confirmation was the priority.

"Yes, come in."

I rose from my seat and slowly walked towards the door. There would be very few people coming to my residence at this time, so I was curious.

Could it really be Kate? If so, I would have to set the seed story aside and ask for her help.

Creak…

“Who’s there… huh?”

As soon as I opened the door, I couldn’t help but be taken aback by the face that met her gaze. She wore a black uniform cap, but her brilliant golden eyes were far more striking. Also, the navy-blue hair, which had grown down to her waist, was now cut short to the neck.

She didn’t tie it into a ponytail, as she usually did, which briefly confused me, but even so, it was a face I could recognize instantly.

“Noona?”

“Hello, Isaac.”

My older sister, who is also a swordsman and who left for the navy knights entrance test a month ago.

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

Nicole welcomed me with her characteristic bright smile.

“I’ve been fine! But…”

I could only make a gloomy expression right after welcoming her with a bright smile.

It’s no wonder because I could see the state of her arm when I lowered my gaze.

Nicole seemed to notice where my gaze was directed and opened her mouth with an awkward smile.

“Don’t worry. I expected this level of injury.”

She had a brace on her right arm.

Chapter 223: A Welcome Face (2)

There's a saying that goes, 'There's nothing as heartbreaking as getting injured in the military.' This statement is partly true and partly false.

For a soldier, their body is almost their entire asset. Especially if they sustain injuries in areas like the arms or legs, it significantly affects their daily life and combat effectiveness. So, if someone gets injured among the troops, they should be protected, and every effort should be made for their recovery. If they insist on working in that condition? You should stop them, even if you have to scold them.

Going into combat while already injured not only increases the likelihood of more severe injuries but also results in a significant loss of overall combat capability. So, it's normal to wait and focus on recovery to return to the original state, and it's abnormal to continue under such circumstances.

Unless the situation is the absolute worst of the worst, injured personnel are not sent to the front lines. However, I've witnessed numerous instances in my past life where they couldn't even do this simple thing and created various rumors.

In that regard, the Minerva Empire's military, especially special units like the Navy Knights, can be considered exceptional. I heard from Nicole that she got injured towards the end of her entrance test, but the instructor just let her pass and exempted her from the test.

In fact, the reason for the injury was something the instructor found acceptable. Nicole had preserved her stamina until the end of the test, while other trainees were complaining and she was helping her peers, which led to her injury.

"It was really just an accident. During our march, we were suddenly ambushed by a group of orcs. Thankfully, it's a place known for frequent monster appearances, so the instructors were prepared, but there were just too many of them. That's how it happened."

Nicole explained in a nonchalant voice as she lightly tapped her injured right arm with her left hand. While she might genuinely be okay, my worry as a brother couldn't help but manifest.

It's not like it's any other part, it's her arm. For a knight, it's one of the most critical places to get injured.

She was lucky she received immediate medical attention, as initially, her bone had broken in half. Any worse, and she might have lived with a lifelong disability.

Did she figure out what I was thinking? Nicole chuckled and gently reached out, lightly pinching my cheek.

"Don't make that kind of expression. Even though I'm a trainee, now I am also a knight. Knights should be prepared for unexpected situations anytime, anywhere. A mere injury like this is nothing. Just the fact that I received an injury is far from what it means."

"Noona, the human body is much weaker than other species."

"I know that. Still, don't worry too much."

To ease my worries even a bit, Nicole put on a bright smile. Maybe thanks to that, I found myself lifting the corners of my mouth into a warm smile.

In one way or another, she is strong. Not only did she perform her duties as an assistant alongside Adelia at the academy, but she also inherited remarkable talent from our father.

Although she got injured, she easily passed the Navy Special Warfare entrance test, so if she stays cautious, she shouldn't suffer any further injuries.

"If that's what noona says, then okay. Did you visit the mansion before coming?"

"Yeah. There have been quite interesting things going on during that time, right? Starting with the Demon Princess and ending with the Elf incident. It hasn't even been a month, but a lot of incidents happened."

"You've heard it all."

It seems like she heard everything about the events that happened while she was taking the entrance test. There doesn't seem to be a need for a separate explanation.

“But you seem to have changed a lot during that time, haven’t you? Your hair has grown longer, and you seem taller. Did you put on perfume or something?”

“It’s not perfume. I received divine power at the temple, and the fragrance started emanating from me since then.”

“Really? Then it must be the scent of lilacs. Luminous’s favored disciples emit the scent of lilacs, or so I heard.”

Nicole mentioned the incidents that she heard about at the mansion so far, but I have no idea about her current situation. Soon after, various stories from both of us poured out.

Thanks to her, I heard about what kind of entrance tests the Navy Knights go through and how tough they are. Just hearing about it was enough to make my teeth chatter. Plus, there was also talk related to my older brother, Dave, who was the first to head to the Navy Knights. It’s natural to be curious when there’s absolutely no news.

“Dave oppa has already shed his trainee badge. They have high hopes for his future within the Knights, and they’re pushing him forward. Of course, having our father’s influence also helps, but he’s working hard consistently.”

“I see. But why isn’t he taking a vacation? Let him know that the youngest sibling will be upset when he comes back later.”

“He… I’ll pass on the message, but taking a vacation is difficult for him. The Navy Knights are so elite that each member is crucial.”

As I listened to the explanation, I briefly looked Nicole up and down. As Navy Knights who can proudly call themself the best in the Minerva Empire, their uniform was impeccable. Furthermore, the navy-blue uniform that matched her hair color made her look even more stunning. With just that uniform, she looked impressive enough to have a reason to join the Navy Knights.

“But, seriously, your uniform is incredibly cool. Don’t people admire it whenever they pass by?”

“A little bit?”

Nicole proudly puffed out her chest. It’s no wonder she was proud of herself; being in the Navy Knights would undoubtedly instill a great sense of pride.

And Nicole had every right to feel that way. From her days as a cadet, she was a standout among the most skilled, comparable to a knight.

While looking at Nicole with admiration, I subtly shifted my gaze towards the clock. Time had swiftly passed, over 30 minutes had flown by, and it was already past 4 o'clock.

Staying in the dorm like this wasn't ideal, but it was too early for dinner. Nevertheless, wanting to spend some quality time with my dear older sister, whom I hadn't seen for a long time, we planned to have dinner together.

"Are you planning to stay for a few days?"

"I'll probably head back in about three days. It's quite a journey from the capital to the border area."

"Good to hear. Let's have dinner together tonight then. I'll let the others know."

"No, I'll just have dinner with some acquaintances today. I'll have time tomorrow too. Before that…"

Nicole started to speak hesitantly, glancing at me with a slightly cloudy expression. It was evident that she was torn between whether to say something or not, and her hesitation was palpable.

At first, I was bewildered, not understanding why she was behaving this way. However, what she said next clarified everything for me.

"Well… how is Adelia? Is she doing well in her role as a bodyguard?"

"Ah."

The topic was about Adelia, her close friend and my personal bodyguard. Judging by her reaction, it seemed that Nicole was aware of Adelia's feelings towards me.

Nicole might be the most emotionally conflicted person in this situation. Currently, I had not only Marie but also Cecily by my side. Furthermore, Leona had boldly declared herself as my wife. If Nicole were to find out, she might sigh in resignation or even grab the back of her own neck.

Nevertheless, I was planning to accept Adelia next, so I was waiting quietly for the right moment. I wasn't sure when I would reveal my true identity, but as long as we

continued like this, there wouldn't be any issues.

"…is carrying her duties out well."

"Well, that's a relief. Even though she can be a bit clumsy, she has skills…"

"She even confessed her feelings."

"Confes… What?!"

Nicole, awkwardly trying to continue the conversation with a forced smile, suddenly exclaimed in surprise. Her flushed face and widened eyes reflected her emotions.

I, startled by her reaction, nervously scratched my cheek while trying to force a smile. Following the confrontation with Hiriya, Adelia, who I had comforted, directly expressed her own feelings.

Even though I couldn't respond appropriately given the circumstances, the fact that she confessed her feelings itself transcended the boundaries of a normal relationship.

During our weekend workouts together, there was an increase in physical contact, and she began showing sides of her femininity that she hadn't displayed before. We were walking a fine line, not crossing the last boundary.

"She-she confessed?"

"Yeah."

"Oh my. How should I…"

Nicole made a rather shocked sound as she covered her face with one hand, perhaps thinking that Adelia might have crossed a line. Nicole's reaction indicated that she had some understanding of Adelia's situation, and I had a hunch that the conversation would progress smoothly.

I waited quietly while Nicole was lost in thought, giving her time to sort out her feelings. She must have had her own complexities to deal with.

After a while, Nicole slowly raised her head and looked directly at me with her sparkling golden eyes. Various emotions were etched in her eyes.

"So, what are you going to do in a situation?"

“What do you think, noona?”

“You might not know, but that girl is willing to become a concubine. But I’m not sure if you would treat her as such, given your personality… Before that, do those two even know?”

“More or less.”

Marie has always had exceptional intuition, so it didn’t take her long to notice that something unusual was in the air between me and Adelia. Sometimes, she would casually ask about Adelia’s well-being and that’s it.

Cecily… She had a nonchalant attitude. She was okay with the fact that a new woman was added to my life, no matter what. She even proposed the idea of giving my seed to Kate and establishing a connection with her. Although there were political reasons involved, she didn’t mind me having another woman by my side.

“But, noona, you know it too. If I connect with Adelia, I naturally have to reveal my true identity. Noona, you know that Adelia is a bastard of the Ters royal family, right?”

“…Ters Kingdom? Wasn’t she just a common noble?”

Nicole asked with wide eyes. It seemed she didn’t know this much.

“You only knew half of it.”

“No. Is she really a bastard of the Ters royal family? Of the romantic king who only has eyes for the queen without even keeping mistresses?”

Nicole asked me with a slightly anxious voice. King Friedrich of the Ters Kingdom is well-known as a romanticist, even to the general public. Furthermore, he has been implementing good policies, so from the perspective of Ters Kingdom citizens, he has a positive image.

But, whether he is truly a romanticist or not, we can say that he is disqualified as a father. Seeing the deep trauma that Adelia carries, it is highly likely that he not only didn’t intervene but also simply watched.

As I nodded calmly, Nicole sighed and then let out a bitter laugh. She continued in a voice that had lost its strength, shaking her head as if in despair.

"…In that case, it will be even more troublesome. If you reveal your true identity, it will surely have an impact on that child as well. Maybe they'll even try to use you. No, they will definitely use you."

"Right. That's why it's difficult to accept."

"Ugh… Frustrating, so frustrating."

The current situation was so frustrating that Nicole's heart pounded as if it were going to explode. I, too, felt frustrated about my relationship with Adelia, but there was no clear solution.

First and foremost, I had to talk to Marie, and eventually, I had to reveal the truth. It was an uphill battle from the start, with progress in my relationship with Adelia moving at a snail's pace.

"So, I'm taking the stance that we should wait a bit. After all…"

"Wait, even after confessing? Are you crazy?"

I ended up trying to rationalize it and ended up receiving only insults. When I glanced at Nicole, who was giving me a fierce look, I shut my mouth in embarrassment.

Afterward, she stared at me, as if I were a mute who had just eaten honey. She then took a deep breath and got up from her seat.

I didn't know what she was up to, and I must have had a puzzled expression on my face when she asked me what she was doing.

"Isaac, as your older sister and Adelia's friend, I have one serious question for you. I hope you'll answer it properly."

"Uh? Uh, what's the question?"

"Do you want to remain as a scoundrel who takes a concubine without your wife's consent, or do you want to be a fool who accepts many women's hearts?"

No matter what I choose, both are the worst, aren't they? Nicole looked at me with an incredulous gaze and said in a stern voice.

"Answer. My actions will depend on your answer."

"No. Aren't both of them hurting people's hearts?"

“You won’t be able to push away someone who comes unnecessarily kind. At times like this, don’t hesitate indecisively; push forward decisively. Become a fool who accepts all the women who like you, or become trash who takes them as you please. What will you choose?”

“Um, wouldn’t being a fool be better?”

Nicole’s pressure was so intense that it created an atmosphere where there was no room for argument. Listening quietly, it seemed like being a fool might be better than being trash.

With my hesitant response, Nicole, with her cold, golden eyes, stared at me and soon gave an order.

“Guide me.”

“Uh, huh? Where, where to?”

“Guide me to Adele. Since we’ve come this far, we have to see it through to the end.”

I can’t figure out exactly what her plan is. I got up from my seat, momentarily taken aback, and began to follow her instructions.

Before I knew it, I found myself outside the dorm, but I still couldn’t discern Nicole’s intentions. She just followed behind me, emitting a chilly atmosphere.

‘But if Leona is revealed…’

I can’t bring myself to say that. It’s not just empty words, Nicole might snap at me.

No matter how much she loves her younger brother, she is the one who corrects things directly. I don’t know what she’s trying to correct, though.

I walked for a while with a heavy heart. Finally, we arrived right in front of Adelia’s residence. The gaze I felt from behind intensified as we reached the accommodation.

Under some sort of pressure to open the door, I cleared my throat and lightly knocked. Adelia should be waiting inside the dorm until I call her.

How much time passed?

Coming out~

I heard the voice, then the sound of Adelia approaching the door. For some reason, my heart raced nervously as she came closer.

Creak—

“Who’s there… Oh! Cutie?”

When I opened the door, Adelia, wearing a white shirt and shorts, greeted me with a bright smile. It seemed like she had just finished exercising.

“What’s going on all of a sudden… Huh?”

Adelia, with a look of surprise and delight in her sky-blue eyes, seemed to have noticed Nicole standing behind me. It was as if she had met a close friend after a long time. Adelia’s smile was brighter than before as she walked slowly from her accommodation to meet Nicole.

“Nicole! How long has it been? But your arm…”

“Isaac.”

“Uh, yeah?”

Nicole called my name without acknowledging Adelia’s greeting. Her voice was somewhat low and seemed to be irritated for some reason.

Adelia also seemed to sense this subtle atmosphere, and while initially concerned about Nicole’s injury, she started to roll her eyes with a worried expression, trying to understand the situation.

Push-

Then Nicole forcefully pushed me from behind. It was a strong push, and I had no choice but to collide with Adelia.

Fortunately, Adelia accepted me, but I couldn’t help feeling bewildered by the sudden close contact. Just as Adelia and I were left speechless, Nicole spoke in a sharp voice.

“Now both of you come inside.”

“Noona? Can you explain what’s going on…”

“Yeah, Nicole. What’s the sudden idea?”

Adelia, also taken aback by the abrupt situation, asked with a puzzled expression. Perhaps sensing an unusual atmosphere, she held me tightly to protect me.

“Sigh…”

Whether she liked it or not, Nicole looked at the two of us in turn and let out a deep sigh as if the weight of the world was on her shoulders. Then, she pulled her uniform cap down low and spoke quietly.

It was a tone and voice mixed with various complex emotions that couldn’t be easily explained in words.

“I can’t stand to watch this anymore. Really…”

After saying that, Nicole turned her back and gradually walked away.

“You guys decide whether you’re going to kiss or have sex or whatever.”

She added one last sentence.

“I’ll go knock some sense into my sisters-in-law.”

Adelia and I could only stare blankly at Nicole’s retreating figure.

Translators note:

Chapter 224: A Happy Face (1)

Adelia and I ended up alone in a room, thanks to Nicole pushing us in without warning. Being in the same room as her wasn't a big deal, as it happened often, but the problem was the situation.

Nicole's words before leaving lingered in our minds. 'Decide quickly, whether you have a kiss or fuck.' She also said she was going to scold her sisters-in-law.

In the sudden and unexpected situation, I had no idea what decision to make. But now that I calmed down, it seems like I know. To ensure there's no further interference in Adelia's and my relationship, I decided to take matters into my own hands.

"Why is she acting like this all of a sudden?"

"…Well, I don't know."

Adelia, too, initially had an expression of not understanding the situation at all. Unlike me, who had a deep(?) conversation with Nicole, for her, it was like a bolt out of the blue.

However, as time passed and the atmosphere between us became more subtle, it seemed like she noticed something.

The situation was one where, to connect her best friend with her own younger sibling, she pushed them together into one room. Not only that, but she left words behind to build 'certainty.'

While I was silently sighing deeply, Adelia hesitated to open her mouth while glancing at my face. I waited in silence until she spoke first.

It would only make the situation awkward if I opened my mouth first, so Adelia had to initiate the conversation.

"…Did you tell Nicole?"

When a quiet silence settled in, Adelia cautiously asked me with a careful voice. After a long time, she took the initiative to start the conversation.

I realized the meaning contained in her question and nodded my head silently. What's the point of saying it? The situation already speaks for itself.

Adelia nodded in acknowledgment of my affirmation, then made a face as if she herself didn't know what to say.

Usually, it was normal for her to playfully tease with her characteristic lively smile, but the situation was as complicated as it can be.

"Right, Nicole has a mischievous side too. I didn't know this well…"

"…"

"Cutie, do you think the same? You know it well, don't you? How strict she normally is."

Nevertheless, she was making an effort to lighten the mood somehow. I remained silent, just listening to her talk.

Adelia forced an awkward laugh, scratching her cheek and then started speaking incoherently.

"Su-suddenly asking for a kiss. What was it again? S-sex…"

But when the word she couldn't bring herself to say finally came out, she tightly sealed her lips. The faint blush rising on her fair skin vividly expressed her emotions.

Watching Adelia's neck gradually turning redder, I let out a bitter smile. It seemed increasingly difficult for her to speak.

If that's the case, there's only one thing for me to do. I need to bring out the words she wants to say.

"It seems Nicole noona must be quite frustrated. Perhaps she brought me here because handling the situation is beyond her."

"Bu-but you have an engagement… Nicole should know about it, so why…"

"I said that. But she asked me whether I want to be remembered as a scoundrel who took a mistress without his wife's permission or as a trash who freely played with a

woman's feelings. I chose the first option, and that's how it turned out."

"…"

Adelia's face turned noticeably red. Choosing the first option essentially meant accepting her completely, or at least that's how it could be interpreted.

After her duel with Hiriya last time, she confessed her feelings to me. However, given the circumstances, I couldn't accept her at that time.

The situation seemed frustrating from Nicole's perspective. While she seemed to understand the complexities of my situation, she still considered accepting someone's feelings different. So, she indirectly appealed that playing with a woman's feelings is what trash do. Moreover, she even said to me, 'You're unnecessarily kind, aren't you? If someone is coming to you, just boldly accept them. Why hesitate?'

'If this was my past life, I'd really be trash.'

Even in a society where some polygamy is tolerated, I'd have nothing to say if I received insults in my past life. I suppose I've adapted well enough to the social culture of this world by now. However, despite becoming accustomed, me being indecisive was a fact. It's not like I can see through people's hearts; I can just straightforwardly clarify things.

Upon careful thought, I can understand why Nicole said those words to me. Thanks to her, I was able to engage in sufficient self-reflection.

Let's sincerely be grateful for being born in this world. And at least show some sincerity to the woman who likes me.

"Adelia-noona."

"Uh, yeah?"

"What do you like about me?"

"… …"

Adelia's sky-blue eyes widened at my direct question, and she flinched noticeably. In addition to that, her already red face deepened in color, as it would burst at the slightest touch and her lips trembled like ripples.

Adelia, who was usually carefree and confident, looked genuinely cute when she reacted like this. It felt strange that despite being older than me, she seemed younger.

'In terms of age, I guess I am older.'

That's a story from my past life; let's move on since now I'm a lively 18-year-old. People are creatures of adaptation, and after reincarnation, behaving according to that age naturally affected my way of thinking.

Anyway, putting aside unnecessary talk, Adelia remained silent for a while in response to my question, avoiding eye contact. Her short hair, which reached her shoulders, covered her face like a curtain.

Nevertheless, her distinctive sharp nose and, especially, her sky-blue eyes peeking through the strands of hair were vivid. Even from the side, her appearance was undeniably beautiful.

"…because you're warm."

"Warm?"

When I was carefully scrutinizing Adelia's appearance, she spoke in a whispery voice, as if crawling. It was so soft that it was barely audible.

So, I leaned my face forward a bit, and only then did her words start to reach my ears.

"Because you're warm… even though you know I'm a bastard, you treat me normally and without discrimination. Even though you're a noble…"

Adeleia, who had spoken so, slowly, very slowly turned her head to look me straight in the eyes. Her face, reddened like the sunset, and a closed mouth, but the sky-blue eyes conveyed her upright determination.

How clear and transparent must her eyes be to reflect my face like a mirror? They seemed to express her clean conscience.

"The reasons I like you are countless, but the warm affection I feel from you is the best."

"… …"

"You don't have to do exactly as Nicole said. I'm just happy to convey my feelings."

Adeleia, with her hand on her chest, spoke with determination.

A knight-like resolute decision. However, a spirit firmly blocked both front and back. Her feelings toward me are more sincere than anyone else's, but because of that, it's a heartbreaking love that declares she won't approach any further. She declared that she won't demand anything more and will be satisfied with the current situation.

Did she take my silence as acceptance? Adeleia chuckled, showing a faint smile, and made a slight request.

For Adeleia, it was almost like a final plea.

"I'm content with just occasionally being hugged or holding hands. If I unnecessarily intervene, it will only make things difficult for you. There won't be anything crossing the line here anymore."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah. So…"

Before Adelia could even respond, I grabbed her face with both hands. She looked at me in surprise.

Receiving one-sided love from just one side is not fair. At least, that's what I think.

I stared at her dumbfounded expression, raised the corners of my mouth, and smiled gently. Then, as if making a declaration, I spoke.

"Well, I guess I'll just have to cross the line first. How about that?"

"What, what?"

"It's unfair for me to be the only one receiving love. You should be loved fairly too."

I won't hesitate indecisively. Living as a scoundrel is more comfortable for both of us than me living as trash.

Of course, I don't mean living as a literal scoundrel. It's not about getting permission from every woman before messing around.

Just Adelia, let's make an exception for Adelia. There was no more hesitation in the yard where Nicole had already put nose in.

Moreover, Adelia revealed my feelings even though she doesn't know that I am Xenon. A political problem arising? Tell them to go to hell. I will give her 'support' so that Adelia won't even think about going back to such a family.

In the distant future, when I reveal that I am Xenon, I hope she can 'choose' me without any hesitation.

'Why didn't I know such a simple solution?'

It seems that people truly need to confront things directly to make the right judgment. As I was thinking this inwardly, Adelia, who had been hesitating, tightly shut her mouth.

Her not being able to meet my gaze was truly charming. The freshness of a maiden nervously experiencing her first encounter was evident. However, I wouldn't rush into a confession immediately. There were facts I needed to disclose to her, and above all, I wasn't even properly prepared.

I should at least show her some courtesy so that it will become an unforgettable memory. I looked gently at the shy Adelia and spoke in a low voice.

"I will also confess here, noona. I'll make it so that in the future, it's me that you choose, not those people. I'll become your true family, not by blood but by choice."

"Ah…"

Adelia made a soft sound, covering her face with both hands. However, I removed her hands one by one, preventing her from hiding her face. Despite her efforts to cover her face each time, she soon gave up as I continued to remove her hands.

The flushed skin, wandering eyes, and wavering lips came into view. Without realizing it, she had already knelt down with her knees.

Afterward, Adelia, who had blushed for a while and peeked at me with a red face, lightly scratched her cheek with her index finger.

"Well… just a kiss… okay?"

"If you want, it can be more than that."

"Ugh…"

Adelia collapsed forward with a troubled sound at my mischievous joke. According to Nicole, she claimed to have never been in a relationship, and it seemed to be true.

Still, thanks to that, I discovered new aspects of her that I had never known. I thought she was a reliable and sturdy noona, but the reality was completely the opposite.

Meanwhile, Adelia, leaning forward, groaned for a while before slowly raising her upper body. After giving me a glance, she closed her eyes tightly and then slowly extended her face.

It was a gesture indicating that she wanted me to come forward and kiss her. It was awkward, but that made it even cuter.

Swoosh—

Instead of kissing her as she wished, I reached out my hand and gently embraced the back of her head. With my other hand, I softly brushed her cheek.

With each of these actions, Adelia's body trembled slightly. Due to having her eyes closed, her heightened senses naturally led to such reactions.

However, I didn't immediately kiss her. Like a predator waiting for its prey, I patiently waited for the right moment.

Adelia seemed to sense something was amiss and slowly began to open her eyes, filled with confusion. Then, with an expression of puzzlement, she opened her tightly sealed lips.

"Why, why… ugh!"

Before she could fully express her confusion, I brought my face close, and our lips collided in a surprise kiss. Adelia's body stiffened at the sudden kiss.

Originally, her lips were closed like a fortress, but due to carelessness, they were slightly open. Moreover, what I wanted was not a light kiss but a deep and intense kiss suitable for lovers.

My tongue invaded Adelia's mouth, making contact with her hesitant tongue, conveying taste and fragrance without direction.

"Um. Mmm."

At first, Adelia was tense, but as the kiss continued deeply, she gradually surrendered to instinct.

The initially awkward tongue play became more skilled, and her once rigid body gradually relaxed. She went further, wrapping her arms around my neck. There was no longer any shy maiden; only one lovely woman remained.

“Hoo.”

“Haah… Haah…”

After the long and deep kiss, neither of us hesitated to pull away simultaneously. The silver thread that had extended between our lips was abruptly severed.

I was relatively composed, while Adelia gasped as if she might lose consciousness any moment. Her upright sky-blue eyes became hazy, and her trembling lips revealed her agitation.

In my heart, I wanted to conclude things here, but I exercised as much patience as possible. I had planned to give her intense memories that could cover up her unfortunate family circumstances.

“Was it good?”

“…I feel like I might get addicted.”

Adelia pulled back while still holding my neck. By crossing the line first, she no longer needed to conceal her true feelings.

With a smile, I carefully pulled her towards me and embraced her. Adelia, nestled against my chest, seemed to want to feel the warmth and hugged me tightly.

“Isaac.”

“Yeah. What is it?”

“I love you.”

It was the second confession, but the feeling was quite different. It wasn’t a confession of one-sided love but rather a confession as lovers.

I gently replied, stroking Adelia’s head.

“I love you too, Noona.”

“Will you… not abandon me?”

Adelia asked me with an anxious voice, perhaps haunted by the memory of being rejected directly by her family.

To quell that anxiety and to overlay those memories with happy ones, I sincerely reassured her.

“Absolutely, that will never happen.”

“Ah…”

A sigh containing various complex emotions. At the same time, my heart began to moisten.

It was hard to read her expression buried in my chest, but I silently brushed away her back. As I did, her grip on me became stronger.

“I’m relieved…”

“…”

“Really… phew. I’m so relieved…”

Adelia was undoubtedly sobbing. But when I lowered my gaze…

“I’m truly happy…”

I could see that she was smiling.

Translators note:

Chapter 225: A Happy Face (2)

We reached the point of no return. The only thing left is revealing my identity as Xenon to Adelia. Since the manuscript happened to be in my room, proving it won't take long. However, I have no intention of disclosing it right now. Even if we've became lovers, it will take time for her to fully fall for me.

I need to wait until I'm sure she will choose me without any hesitation after I reveal myself as Xenon. To ensure not to make a mistake in a moment's choice, not to hold any lingering regrets.

Look at the present moment. Despite having just experienced the deep, intense first kiss moments ago, she was still wearing an uneasy expression. With an anxious look in her eyes, she repeatedly asked confirming questions, as if she couldn't believe the current situation.

I responded to those questions with a warm smile, and in a low, soothing voice, I opened my mouth.

"If it's too unbelievable, should I give you another kiss?"

"… …"

As soon as I said that, Adelia's face turned as red as a volcano about to erupt. Her lips trembled like the waves, expressing her feelings in an instant.

As I mentioned before, Adelia was starving for "affection." Being born as an illegitimate child, her family environment was truly the worst, and during the exhibition, she even faced worse.

So, instead of playing pranks, giving Adelia warmth would be better. But there's one thing that I can't quite understand.

"Noona, why did it have to be me? There are plenty of guys with affection like mine in the world."

As I said, there are many men in the world similar to me. Rather than a man like me with many women around, it would have been better for Adelia to meet a man who only had eyes for her.

In response to my question, Adelia blinked her sky-blue eyes and then replied with a complex smile.

“Even if I revealed that I’m illegitimate, would they really treat me like you?”

“…”

“Illegitimate children are treated much worse than you think. Among nobles, they are seen as a threat to power or as cause for discord in the family, tainted with impure blood. The commoners treat illegitimate children as nobles. It’s a status that’s neither here nor there.”

The treatment of illegitimate children is indeed as Adelia described: not good at all. It could lead to significant discord within families and is entrenched with strong negative biases.

Above all, there’s a clear distinction between “legitimate children” and “illegitimate children.” Legitimate children, even if they are born from concubines, receive a certain level of noble treatment. However, illegitimate children are born from relationships outside the family. There inevitably exists a difference.

The reason Adelia calls herself an illegitimate child rather than a legitimate child is also because of this. If she isn’t acknowledged as part of the family, she would have to label herself as an illegitimate child rather than a legitimate one.

I reached out and gently stroked Adelia’s head as she stood there, lost in melancholy. Startled, she slowly lifted her head to look at me with surprised eyes.

“…Isaac?”

“You don’t have to blame yourself anymore. I’ll make sure you forget everything about being an illegitimate child. Understand?”

“… …”

At my words, Adelia bit her lip hard, tears welling up in her eyes. Soon enough, she leaned into me. Just looking at her like this, she seemed so tearful and fragile. They say people who laugh a lot often carry many inner wounds, and it seems to be true.

I intend to cherish Adelia until all those wounds are healed, and I'm willing to provide her with ample affection as a remedy. The scars might remain from deep wounds, but the healing itself will be sufficient.

"…Isaac."

"Yeah, noona?"

"Do we really have to meet them now? Will they even allow it?"

She's probably referring to Marie and Cecily. Normally, she would have referred to them as 'those kids,' but now she spoke of them in a more elevated manner as 'them.'

Even though the line has been crossed, permission is still necessary. Adelia herself being of illegitimate birth makes it even more daunting.

Even if Nicole were to go and insist, the moment she faces rejection, Adelia's heart will quickly burn down like a piece of paper on fire. And once again, new wounds will be etched.

I'll do whatever it takes to stop it. I'm already prepared to take several hits.

"Don't worry. I'll try my best."

"…Can I trust you on that?"

"Yes."

I said affectionately while gently stroking Adelia's head to reassure her worries.

"I might get scolded a lot, but it'll be okay."

Knock knock.

As soon as I said that, the sound of someone knocking on my door reached my ears. Adelia and I immediately turned our gaze towards the door upon hearing the sound.

'They've come.'

Checking the clock, it's already half-past five. The last class ended around 4:30, so we must have talked for an hour before they came.

I said it would be fine, but I couldn't help feeling nervous. I stroked Adelia's head once again and got up from my seat, walking towards the door.

"Yes. I'll go."

It's a tense moment. I took a deep breath, lowered the doorknob, and slowly opened the door.

It's probably just a misconception that it feels like the gates of hell are opening. While briefly having an unnecessary thought, I checked the person who knocked.

As soon as I opened the door, I saw very familiar faces. Not only Nicole in a uniform, but also Marie and Cecily standing beside her.

I could roughly guess why they had come. My intuition about the Gates of Hell was precisely accurate. Awkwardly, I chuckled, but feeling the chilly yet intense aura, I couldn't help but shudder.

The source of that energy was none other than Nicole, who had knocked. She gazed at me with cold, sunken golden eyes.

"Uh… you're here? Did you… talk?"

Something was dangerous. My instincts were screaming. As I awkwardly chuckled, Nicole slightly lifted the corner of her mouth. However, the problem was that while her mouth was smiling, her eyes were not.

It was an unmistakably eerie atmosphere and vibe. I slowly stepped back in unease, but…

"Hey, you…"

Nicole widened her eyes and then exclaimed.

"You rascal!!!"

She kicked me right in the chest, a very precise and clear kick that could have appeared alongside a roaring battle cry in a movie from a past life.

It's a flaw that I took that kick. Naturally, due to the strong pain I felt in my abdomen, I couldn't help but roll backward.

Fortunately, she hadn't kicked me hard enough to cause serious harm, but it was painful nonetheless. As I've not encountered many opponents since reincarnation, the pain feels even sharper.

"W-What?!"

"N-Nicole!"

Suddenly, everyone was startled by Nicole's abrupt kick and hurriedly approached. Whether I said anything or not, Nicole relentlessly stomped on me while I lay collapsed on the ground.

She seemed to be controlling her strength to some extent, but I could sense intense anger with each kick.

"I thought there was only Adele, but there's one more?! And she's even a beastwoman, not to mention the chieftain's daughter?! You're quite the princess collector, huh?"

"No-noona, just a moment…! Let me explain…"

"What explanation! That elf you claimed to be friendly with… seems like you've gotten quite close! No, maybe you're already beyond 'close'! If you collect one person from each race, you'll go down in history as the greatest playboy, just like that! Xenon is said to be a pure lover who only cares about one person, but he's being a damned playboy!"

18 years passed after my reincarnation.

"Ouch! Ahh!"

"Noona, hold on! Isaac might die like this!"

"Let go of this, Marie! We have to do something about that guy's lower body first! Otherwise, it'll only get worse, and as a sister, I can't let that happen!"

"No, don't! Leave the face and below as they are and just do it in other places…"

For the first time in my life, I was beaten like a dog by my elder sister.

*****

When people feel pain, their minds suddenly sharpen. It's not just a superstition that getting hit brings you to your senses for no reason. Because you don't want to get hit, you do whatever it takes to snap out of it and escape.

I'm the same way. When I was kicked by Nicole, my mind cleared up instantly. Although it's shocking to have been hit by my close sister for the first time in my life, I could understand, given my situation.

But pain is pain. She aimed for places where it wouldn't cause much harm even if I got hurt, but it's inevitable that it stings. I just have to endure it.

"Ouch…"

"All right, it's settled after all that fuss."

When I was rubbing the part that was stinging, Nicole warned me in a sharp voice. She even crossed her arms, indicating that she was still not over it.

Though her terrifying warning made me shudder, since I was at fault, I couldn't say anything. I just stayed put, trying to read the atmosphere.

"Thank you.I don't care about anything else, don't touch Isaac's face, below, or his hands. Other than that, he can be like a corpse."

Cecily, sitting on the right, gently stroked my head while teasingly saying. Marie, sitting on the left, nodded in complete agreement.

I wanted to retort, but I bit my tongue, fearing it might just invite more insults. I'm a sinner and a troublemaker, after all.

Yet, even with Cecily's joke, the tension didn't ease. If anything, it only increased.

I'm already feeling nervous but I wonder how Adelia feels. She's sitting opposite me, knees pulled up, visibly tense.

It may kinda be a marriage interview, amusingly enough, but for her, it's probably the most nerve-wracking moment in the world.

"All right then… Adelia, was it?"

"Yes, yes!"

Adelia replied stiffly to Marie's question, visibly tense to anyone observing.

"Please speak comfortably. We've all heard from Nicole. You can relax."

"I, I feel uncomfortable doing that… I'm sorry."

“If you’re uncomfortable, there’s nothing to be done.”

Marie shrugged as if she didn’t particularly care. Then, she pinched my cheek and pulled it out teasingly.

“Ow, that hurts. Marie.”

“Good that it hurts. Anyway, Adelia, Isaac’s…”

Marie paused mid-sentence and glanced at me briefly. It was a question asking if I had disclosed my identity.

Recognizing that, I gently shook my head. It wasn’t yet time to tell Adelia.

She nodded once, smoothly continuing her sentence.

“It’s because of your kindness, right? Even as an orphan, you see yourself without any judgment.”

“Y-yeah.”

Slap!

As soon as Adelia finished her sentence, Marie lightly slapped my cheek. It stung a bit but oddly refreshed my mind.

In the meantime, Marie glanced at the nervous Adelia and, folding her arms, spoke her mind.

“Actually, I don’t really like it.”

“Excuse me?”

“Marie?”

I was immediately faced with an obstacle. I wanted to plead and somehow convince her due to certain circumstances, but I couldn’t in the current atmosphere.

This had to be resolved between Marie and Adelia. However, right from the start, there was a discord.

As everyone waited for Marie to speak, she glanced at me once, then released her arms and subtly took my hand.

Facing Adelia's surprised expression, Marie began to explain the reason.

"If Adelia-unnie had come because of Isaac's status, he might have rejected it from Isaac's side. But Adelia-unnie fell for Isaac himself. She held love for Isaac in her heart. She said she only had a pure love for him. Nicole-unnie noticed that and pushed Isaac."

"…Yes."

"That's why Nicole-unnie apologized fervently earlier, even hitting her head on the ground. She pushed Isaac without knowing Leona was there too."

As she spoke, Nicole glared fiercely at me. I couldn't gather the courage to meet her eyes and focused my gaze on Adelia as much as possible.

Adelia's expression stiffened more and more as Marie continued speaking. However, seeing her sky-blue eyes occasionally wavering, I could tell she was conflicted.

The two fists placed on top of her thighs repeated opening and closing, and her trembling breath resonated in my ears.

"I'm similar to you, Unnie. My status isn't an issue, and I love Isaac as a person, just like you."

"Then, what about the princess…"

Adelia paused, shifting her gaze to Cecily, who was in close contact with me. Crimson and blue sky-like irises exchanged glances.

Sensing those looks, Cecily linked arms with me, displaying affection. Outwardly, it seemed like I had two beautiful maidens on either side. But the reality was close to hell. But this was undoubtedly my fault.

"I'm the same. Despite the reduction in discrimination against demons thanks to Xenon's Biography, it hasn't been completely eliminated. And when I'm with Isaac, I feel like a human, not a demon. Warm affection, a kind attitude, and even stam- energy comparable to a demon… there's nothing lacking."

Trying to say 'stamina' but switching to 'energy' in a hurry, Cecily diverted the conversation. It's very much like her. I chuckled bitterly.

She also had a liking for me from the beginning. However, it was only a liking, and it fell short of being considered rational in terms of emotions.

First of all, the difference in lifespan was clear. It was because she realized that I was Xenon and didn't even consider things like lifespan, and if it wasn't for that, it's unknown whether she would have connected with me.

Therefore, it can be said that Marie was the one who truly loved me from the beginning. The current Adelia is the same.

"See? That's why it's unsettling. Both of us fell in love with the person Isaac, but you came barging in here. Of course, Isaac probably won't have such profound concerns, but our position could become precarious."

"T-That will never happen!"

Perhaps she was afraid that Marie might refuse. Adelia cried urgently but abruptly stopped herself with both hands covering her mouth.

No matter how urgent it was, shouting face-to-face was clearly against etiquette. That's how urgent it was.

However, Marie smiled casually and opened her mouth.

"Don't worry. I might be a little grumpy, but we're not rejecting you, Unnie. Cecily has similar thoughts."

"Yes? Then…"

"Instead, there's a condition."

At the mention of a condition, Adelia restrained her expression instead of being moved. She must know well that the condition is the most important.

Then, Marie, holding hands with me, showed a kind smile and spoke.

"Unnie should also understand that 'officially' marrying is only between me and Isaac for now. Cecily is still 'unofficial.'"

"Marie?"

"Why? It's true, isn't it?"

“Do you have to emphasize it like that?”

It seemed Cecily was upset when the word “unofficial” was mentioned. However, Marie pushed forward diligently, not wishing to be deprived of the title of the first because Cecily didn’t have any desire for it in the first place.

“Anyway, I don’t know which of us will inherit the title, but it’ll probably be Isaac who receives it from his father. Or the royal family might confer a separate title. If that happens, you might become Isaac’s concubine.”

“Yes, that’s true.”

“But if you become a concubine, there’s a high chance of constant surveillance from the Ters Kingdom. Even if you renounce them, there might be things that could be traced back to you.”

“Ah…”

Adelia sighed at the somewhat realistic conversation. It clearly meant that she was officially designated as a ‘concubine.’

The situation would become complicated if the Ters Kingdom recognizes Adelia not as a bastard but as a ‘child’ in the future. Even if the Minerva Empire and Adelia refuse vehemently, ‘lineage’ holds immense power in society nowadays.

In other words, it’s difficult to accept Adelia even as a concubine. That damn lineage continued to torment her like a shackle.

Around the time when even Adelia and perhaps I felt a sense of pity, Mari unexpectedly made a proposal.

“So, I have a suggestion, Unnie. How about becoming a personal maid instead of a guard knight?”

“A personal… maid?”

“Yes, a maid. Not just an ordinary servant but a personal maid who attends to Isaac and me.”

A maid and a servant mean the same thing. However, a personal maid performs a role similar to a ‘secretary.’

Managing the employer's schedule is basic, but they also act as an assistant, following around and fulfilling the duties of an attendant.

When you first glance at it, it may seem similar to being a maid, but a personal maid is undoubtedly a noble. One common misconception is that a personal maid is not a servant but has rather a companion-like relationship with a high-ranking noble. Adelia is certainly qualified to become a concubine, but it might be easier for her to become a personal maid rather than risking trouble with the Ters Kingdom.

Just as everyone was astonished by the proposal that could be considered cunning, Marie continued confidently.

"In the mansion, you'll play the role of a maid, and when you go outside, you'll return to being a knight escort. That way, you can be close to Isaac and even receive love as you wish. How about it? Does it sound good?"

"Well, becoming a maid is not exactly… I don't dislike it, but I'm not sure if I can do well…"

"It doesn't matter if you do well or not. Knowing Isaac's personality, he'll do his own tasks. It's the same for me. What do you think?"

"… … "

Adelia hesitated at Marie's proposal, then shifted her gaze to me. It was an indication of whether it was acceptable to be appointed as a personal maid. In response, I nodded my head.

Honestly, I'm curious. The always carefree Adelia, welcoming me in a neat maid outfit. In various ways, my thoughts were drawn to that side.

When I nodded my head, Adelia opened her mouth with a surprised expression.

"…Alright. I'll accept it."

"Great. I'll give you the necessary books, so study hard in your spare time. Oh, and…"

Marie paused for a moment, then reached out her empty hand and grabbed Adelia's hand. Adelia, momentarily startled by Marie holding her hand, looked at her with a puzzled expression.

Then, with warm eyes fixed on Adelia, Marie spoke with a voice filled with sincerity.

“Welcome to the family, Adelia-unnie.”

“…”

“Now, don’t suffer anymore and live happily. You’re worth that, unnie.”

Perhaps that one sentence struck a chord in Adelia’s heart. She initially had a vacant expression, then her lips trembled slightly before she slowly nodded her head.

Finally, placing her other hand over Marie’s hand that held hers, Adelia spoke with a choked voice,

“Thank you… really… thank you…”

“Yes, unnie.”

“I will definitely… sniff… I will definitely protect you.”

She really was someone who sheds tears easily. It’s probably because she has been through a lot of pain.

As a warm atmosphere began to settle, Marie slowly stood up. Adelia looked at her with a tear-stained expression, puzzled. I felt the same way.

In the midst of this, Marie ignored those looks and called out to Cecily.

“Cecily?”

“I’m coming.”

Did they synchronize their movements in advance? At the call from Marie, Cecily rose from her seat without any hesitation.

By the way, Marie held my hand, and since Cecily had linked arms with me, my two arms involuntarily lifted upwards.

As the bewildering situation continued, Marie looked down at me and spoke coldly.

“What are you doing? Aren’t you getting up?”

“Uh, what?”

“If you have any sense, wouldn’t you get up?”

What on earth is happening? I really have no idea.

However, I could understand the situation from Cecily's subsequent words.

"Isaac."

"Ye-yeah?"

The chill in Cecily's voice was far colder than the freezing wind.

"Did you really think we would just move on like this?"

It was much colder than the northern winter.

Chapter 226: Book 17 (1)

I've always thought about it, but I feel grateful that my father's genes have manifested, albeit late. If that hadn't happened, my back would have been broken a long time ago.

However, a bigger issue remained: the changed attitudes of Marie and Cecily. It's not that they were distant or have lost affection towards me, but rather it has deepened even more than before.

To the point where the intensity has become so strong.

Originally, we used to compromise with each other, but starting with Adelia, it seems like they've developed a new preference of conspiring together.

Rather than waiting for their turn, it seems they took to staying by my side. Surprisingly, Marie was more proactive than Cecily, and her jealousy seems to be increasing day by day, always trying to keep me by her side.

In her heart, she even wanted us to share a dorm like a married couple. Thanks to that, I could understand how much she loves me.

As time goes by, more women gather around me, but still, I will prioritize Marie and love her passionately.

She was the first to notice me and confess her love, so I couldn't do anything less.

'Oh, by the way, it's almost our 1-year anniversary.'

I remember the exact day when Marie and I officially started dating. I have a habit from my past life of diligently commemorating anniversaries and such.

In this world, apart from birthdays, there's no culture of commemorating special days. Even with engagements or marriages, it ends there.

So, wouldn't she be moved if I remembered our anniversary? Since I've caused Marie some emotional turmoil, I plan to give back as much as I can.

Of course, Cecily was the same. Even if she pretends not to mind if I only take care of Marie, she'll feel disappointed inside.

'But what could be a good gift…'

It was a dilemma thinking about what would be an appropriate gift here, cosmetics or an expensive perfume would be the safest, but asking other women would still be the best.

So, I planned to send a letter to my mother soon and ask her. Or maybe subtly ask Marie so she doesn't catch on.

Becoming a good-for-nothing, this is the best expression of goodwill and apology I can do. Since this might not be enough, I'll make sure to commemorate the special days diligently to soothe their hearts.

Anyway, since the Adelia incident, my life has been divided into assistant duties, writing, and sweet dates with my lovers, as usual. There's nothing else to do than things that require attention one by one, but recently, I've been concentrating on writing.

I've become accustomed to the assistant life, so helping Elena and Cindy is a breeze, and as for the dates… let's just pass over that.

However, during the weekend, Adelia's face bloomed with a bright smile, and that made me very satisfied. Not a smile to hide the wounds but a genuinely happy one. Just that alone is worth sacrificing my waist for.

Although we briefly deviated to another topic, let's get back to the issue of Volume 17. As everyone knows, Volume 17 focuses on Jin and Lily, and it depicts the events unfolding in the 'Holy Church,' which can be considered the 'Church' episode of Xenon's Biography, centered around Xavier like country.

… Let's not complain that I chose the name 'Holy' too casually. I just named it like this because I couldn't think of a better name.

Anyway, the development is that a priest associated with devils threatens Jin and Lily in the Holy Church. This story was also rather realistic.

The world realized the contamination level of the World Tree's roots as soon as they saw my book. But how corrupt can clergy members be? Especially in the case of the Luminous Order, there is a distant past where they turned fanatical and slaughtered demons.

Given the considerable time that has passed since then, the likelihood of internal decay once again spreading is high. Hence, though hesitant to write about it when faced with the thought of opposition, I had no choice but to proceed, for fear the plot might stagnate if I made amendments.

More than anything, it was transformed to the extent of creating something that doesn't exist, unlike Animers previously. If I were to exaggerate a bit and write that dung can turn into gold, there are those who might take it at face value.

With this in mind, while the story continues as it is, I'll ask Luminous directly. Are there truly corrupt clergy members within Xavier?

[There are.]

'Crazy.'

And a positive response came back from Luminous. I couldn't believe it even though I had hoped. Hearing a definitive answer from the god overseeing the world was more than shocking.

I felt my head ringing. However, cursing during a conversation with a god was an obvious blasphemy, so I immediately apologized.

No matter how much Luminous may favor me, a god is a god. Even a slight slip of the tongue in jest is a serious matter.

'I'm sorry, I'm sorry. How could I…'

[I'm fine. I can understand your feelings. But it's truly fascinating. Cultural differences aside, the extent of these outcomes is unexpected. It's quite severe, but interesting, isn't it?]

Luminous seemed to be in a daze now. Although I poked to check, they probably didn't expect it to actually exist.

No, he may not directly interfere, but he's observing. Even though he knew that Xavier was rotting from inside, he probably couldn't come up with a proper plan.

Not informing about the widespread devil worshippers was similar to this. Since no one raised questions, the gods must have been frustrated. Even if they warned through oracles, it would have been misinterpreted, leading to frustration.

Or maybe those interpreting the prophecy became corrupted. That's not an impossible possibility.

[…We, gods, always end up owning you. Thanks to you, the future of the world is becoming brighter.]

'Should I thank the devil worshippers who summoned me here?'

[No. Because of those bastards, innocent souls ended up in a completely different place. From the gods' perspective, they might be insignificant, but life is always precious. That's what our mother used to say.]

The mother of gods. Luminous and Mora inherited their compassionate nature from Harte, the goddess of life and nature.

It feels proud in a corner of my heart that this world is developing under the protection of such compassionate and loving gods.

On the other hand, I wondered why the devils would invade this world. They are known for destruction and slaughter, but there must be a leader giving them 'orders.'

Perhaps the goal of that leader is the destruction of this world. Since there was no clear explanation in the myth, I became slightly curious. Still, I didn't ask Luminous directly. Instead, I moved on to another question.

'Can you tell me who in Xavier is making a pact with devils?'

[Sorry, I can't do that. It's a future that would shake the entire world, too much for your sanctity to handle even now. Such a great calamity requires an immense force to occur.]

How severe could it be that even my sanctity is insufficient? It seems like it will bring about a wave as significant as the contamination of the World Tree's roots, which was a major crisis.

And they'll probably label me as the cause. Now, they will get even more certain with their theories. I dread how severe the aftermath will be once I reveal that I am Xenon. I hope for the safety of those around me, even if I'm unsure about anything else. But things in this world aren't that simple.

I'll try to come up with a plan somehow, but I'm not the protagonist in a novel like Xenon, and dealing with the immense power of the world is almost impossible.

Sigh–

Amidst the perplexing situation, just as I exhaled deeply, I felt a gentle touch caressing my head. A touch that felt kind and sacred, such warmth. It's the first time I've felt this while conversing with Luminous.

The god of light and hope, Luminous, gently stroked my head, and simultaneously, a clear sanctity entered my body, soothing my complex emotions.

God doesn't often lay hands on the heads of believers, comforting them as if soothing them, except for the Pope and the Cardinals, I heard.

'...Luminous?'

[Don't worry too much, child. At least, there won't be any dark clouds looming in your near future. The same goes for the women and family you love.]

Luminous reassured me with his gentle tone. Feeling his touch, I couldn't help but feel relieved. I feel like I understand why people adore Luminous and love the gods of this world. Offering warmth not just to their families but to everyone, who wouldn't admire such a deity?

Conversely, despite being established for such a god, the Luminous Order's clergy, which made a pact with devils, became repulsive. Specifically, I'm referring to a minority of clergy.

Surely, most are devout, but it's because of this minority that Luminous's name is being tarnished. Just as Luminous bestowed love and grace upon me, I feel I should repay him in some way.

…Kate, who once asked for my seed, flashed through my mind but swiftly dismissed. There might be a separate favor to ask of her later anyway.

'Thank you. I'll try to finish the book as quickly as possible. It won't take more than ten days to complete the writing. And the story I've told isn't in 17 volumes but in 18. It's a long way to go yet.'

[Don't push yourself too hard. Work is important, but taking it easy is just as crucial…]

'Otherwise, I might be by Luminous's side soon.'

[… …]

Even if I abruptly interrupted midway, Luminous maintained silence. Luminous probably knew well the situation I was facing at the moment. Curiosity arose with the conversation. It was a half-joking comment, but I wondered what would actually happen if I engaged in nighttime activities without receiving sanctity.

If Luminous had said something, I wouldn't have been sure, but staying silent without uttering a word made me truly wonder.

'...Is such a future really possible?'

[Under the assumption of you not receiving sanctity. That future ceased to exist because you have received sanctity. Don't worry too much.]

'Can you tell me what kind of future it is?'

[Sometimes not knowing is a form of protection.]

I wondered how sad and dreadful a future would have to be for Luminous to outright reject it. I became more curious, but there were situations where not knowing was better.

Moreover, since I consistently received sanctity, that kind of future ceased to exist, so it's not something I need to worry about. As always, I should continuously serve and care for my beloved ones.

As long as I continue receiving both physical training and sanctity, there shouldn't be any major issues if I keep training.

'Understood. Then, until next time.'

[Oh, before that, ask Cecily to visit Helium once. Mora insists on seeing you.]

Come to think of it, I haven't visited Mora since the winter vacation. I was too engrossed in academics and writing, not even having the chance to visit Helium.

Though I wish to visit Mora if my heart had its way, I'm currently holding off because I don't know what prank she might pull. My hair has grown long since winter vacation, and no matter how much I cut it, it seems to grow back overnight. I've almost given up. My friends and family say it suits me well and encourage me to continue, but I'm terribly uncomfortable.

The weight of the hair alone is no joke, and it's incredibly difficult to manage when it tangles every day during washing. I sought advice from Cecily, whose hair is much longer than mine. Thankfully, she offered some guidance, otherwise, I would have struggled alone.

'Please tell her that I'll go on the condition that she doesn't play any pranks like last time.'

[Really? Ah, she apologizes.]

It seems Mora was next to Luminous. That means she heard our entire conversation. With her mischievous nature, I'm not sure what she'll say, but I hope it's nothing strange.

[Hmm… It's probably better to go as soon as possible.]

'Why?'

Luminous replied. After hesitating for a moment, he cautiously conveyed Mora's intentions with a careful tone.

[Otherwise, she insists she'll turn you into a girl for a month…]

'…'

[It seems she's suggesting that if it's not Cecily, you could ask Gartz, the demon, for help.]

I should probably hurry. I may not know about other things, but I must avoid turning into a woman. Daily life itself might not be too much of a challenge, but it's as clear as day what kind of reaction my lovely lovers would have. Just imagining it gives me goosebumps.

'...Please say I don't have to go through that transformation. If not, I really won't go.'

[They say they'll give until the end of the week. After a week passes, they say a month will be added with each passing day…]

'Haha…'

I let out a bitter laugh. She's a goddess who's difficult to deal with in many ways.

Even so, she's as compassionate and kind as Luminous, so her followers will likely faithfully obey, even if they're groaning. You can tell her character from her dedication to the demons and dark elves who were persecuted from the start.

She might play pranks on the children she likes. But I've heard that she's played pranks on herself too, at Cecily's behest.

She got rid of everything that could be considered pride. It was comfortable, but then she became so depressed that Mora hastily returned her to her original state.

'I'll go as soon as possible. I'm busy too, trying to make time.'

[No need to rush too much.]

'Understood. Then, I'll take my leave now.'

[Go ahead. I hope there will be light in your future.]

With those words, Luminous's voice disappeared completely. I slowly opened my closed eyes and lifted my head.

A statue depicting Luminous stood before my eyes. If Luminous was here, a faint aura would have enveloped the statue, but seeing its absence confirms their departure.

I rose from my spot and loosened my stiffened body. My knees were a bit numb from kneeling for so long, but it was bearable.

'I should head to Helium as soon as possible.'

It's been a while since I met Mora, and I don't want to transform into a woman. I should avoid it at all costs this time. I'll ask Cecily for help this time, and in the future, I can ask Gartz for assistance to visit regularly.

I bowed my head sincerely to Luminous, who has been very accommodating, and stepped outside. As soon as I stepped out, I unexpectedly encountered someone.

"Saint Isaac?"

"Yes?"

"Did you come to pray to Luminous?"

It was Kate, the Cardinal of Xavier's Church and the Grand Inquisitor. Her forest-green eyes seemed indifferent but held a hint of delight.

I've heard she stays in this temple before, so it didn't surprise me, but what stood out the most was her attire. Instead of the nun's habit she usually wore, she was clad in armor that covered her entire body.

Given her usual habit, it was natural to question.

"Hello, Miss Kate. I just finished offering my prayers a moment ago. But about that armor…"

"I'm planning to go exterminate devil worshippers who defile Luminous's name."

As expected. As my gaze shifted to her waist, there hung a mace that seemed too heavy to wield with just one hand.

She, with a pure face like a country girl, goes around smashing the skulls of devil worshippers. It felt strange, not aligning with her usual demeanor.

It clearly shows that judging people solely by appearances is wrong. I chuckled at the notion of devil worshippers in the capital and asked.

"Are there devil worshippers in the capital?"

"There are rumors that they reside underground. It's a fitting place for vermin like them. Those creatures need to be crushed thoroughly and incinerated then resurrection should become impossible."

I learned during my conversation with Kate that she has quite a sharp tongue. Only when it comes to devil worshippers, though.

Her faith in Luminous must be that strong, indicating sincerity. Despite some missing screws in common sense, she's not a bad person.

Sometimes, her faith goes overboard, causing some disturbances. But recently, through small talk, she seems to be gradually changing.

"I see. Take care. Don't get hurt unnecessarily by being too reckless."

"Thank you for your concern."

"Um…"

I looked at Kate with an indifferent expression. As I stared, she blinked her green eyes and grinned.

“Do you have something to say?”

“No, just…”

Kate is fervently devoted to Luminous. Does that mean her feelings toward Xavier, her hometown and sanctuary, are the same? It feels uneasy to leave things this way after directly receiving that information from Luminous.

If the 18th volume comes out, it might reveal everything, but by then, it could be too late. However, it’s not something that can be directly disclosed. There’s a risk that revealing it might cause significant trouble for Kate, who is still quite inexperienced.

Certainly, she’s established herself as a skilled individual in terms of combat and has risen to the position of a Cardinal through that. However, there are matters that cannot be resolved by force alone. After pondering repeatedly, I recalled an appropriate proverb and subtly conveyed it to her.

“Do you happen to know the saying, ‘The darkest place is under the candle’?”

“I’ve never heard of that. Is it a directive from Luminous?”

“Not exactly.”

“Hmm…”

Kate cast her gaze downward, blinked a few times, and replied in her characteristic blunt tone.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t quite understand.”

“I see… Alright.”

“Still, I will engrave Isaac’s words in my heart, thank you for that.”

“Thank you. May there be a path of hope for you.”

I bowed slightly, uttering the farewell often shared by clergy of the Luminous order. Kate returned the gesture, offering the same salutation.

“May there be a path of light for you.”

After sixteen volumes and precisely a fortnight later, the 17th volume made its appearance in the world. And…

“Kate has returned to the Holy Kingdom?”

“Yeah, it seems like something urgent came up.”

Exactly two days later, Kate returned to her hometown.

Translators note:

Chapter 227: Book 17 (2)

The 17th volume portrays the intimate romance between Jin and Lily, while unfolding events occurring within the Holy Kingdom. Although the Holy Kingdom was originally favorable to the alliance's establishment, upon hearing the news of having to unite with demons, they refused. The reason is simple and clear: demons can turn into devils at any moment.

(TL: Clarification, Holy Kingdom in the book and Holy Kingdom Xavier in Isaacs world are spelled differently and it would be more accurate to call Xavier a 'Theocracy' but I don't want to change it now. Thus I will try to use Xavier instead of 'Holy Kingdom' Xavier when possible to avoid confusion.)

As mentioned before, even if the readers knew, the characters in the book didn't directly witness Sakran's noble sacrifice. Only a few priests who witnessed his final moments treat demons as humans, the upper echelons remain unchanged. Even Jin, who had served as Lily's guardian knight since childhood, finds himself in a situation of suspicion. While Jin himself was accustomed to such discrimination, the circumstances make it frustrating.

Moreover, the veterans tend to grow stagnant, and unfortunately, the cardinals, all of whom were aged elders, further slowed down progress.

Afterward, Jin and Lily postponed the formation of the Allied Forces and headed to an inn for the night… Only to be attacked without doing anything. The clues regarding the mastermind behind the attackers are found thereafter, concluding Volume 17.

Because hints and clues about the mastermind have been scattered throughout, someone with good deduction skills could easily realize who the culprit is. Anyway, all truths will be revealed in Volume 18, so there's no issue.

[Xavier's Holy See assures that the contents are unrelated to Xenon's Biography under the name of Luminous.]

This was the ‘declaration’ released by Xavier’s Holy See as soon as Volume 17 emerged.

Yeah, it’s nothing but a declaration. Since they were the first ones to claim that Xenon’s Biography is a prophecy, that Xenon is a ‘regressor’ or something, it’s natural they’d be rattled.

Amidst the diminishing discriminatory views towards demons, Helium now possessed enough power from the perspective of other nations to make them drool.

Not only exceptional in dwarf-level item crafting ability but also possessing a force with each individual demon comparable to tactical weaponry.

Each of these aspects was a sweet fruit, and since the nation of Helium possesses them all, it’d result in significant loss if anyone were to view it unfavorably.

However, due to its characteristic as a ‘Holy Nation,’ even if criticized from within Helium, it might not suffer significant damage. But from the perspective of other nations, they’d need to tread cautiously.

[Demonkind in the book is still discriminated against. That’s why the emotions are more poignant.]

[An attack on the Saintess, especially an attack within the Holy See, is by no means normal.]

[Is there a secret battle happening within the Holy See?]

(TL: I just learned the Holy See is a thing.)

Readers began to question and analyze the part about them being attacked. After all, the Saintess should receive as much favor within the Church as the Pope himself, so the attack raised doubts. Consequently, Xavier found itself in a precarious situation. They not only had to provide explanations, but they also emphatically stated that such a thing could never happen under the name of Luminous.

Even though this scandal involving the church exploded to the point where readers were quite skeptical, it’s a nation established for the sake of the ‘god,’ so they chose to overlook it, at least temporarily.

Certainly, for the clergy, forming pacts with devils while evading the eyes of the gods was an unimaginable act. Even though there might be followers of the World Tree and

devil worshipers, these incidents wouldn't occur within the sacred nation.

Originally, to receive an oracle, one must undergo strict scrutiny and obtain permission from Luminous, so they firmly deny any such events. Of course, receiving an oracle might be difficult, but it's even easy to fall into corruption afterward. As power increases, morality tends to diminish, and one becomes more susceptible to desires.

In the 18th volume, explanations about this will be provided, and as Luminous mentioned, the world will turn upside down.

[Though the attack disrupted things for a night, hope still remains.]

[They practically confessed their mutual feelings. Damn those attackers…]

[I believe it will continue in the 18th volume.]

The progress between Jin and Lily, the couple, has also garnered much attention. As mentioned before, Jin and Lily are just as popular as the main characters, Xenon and Mary.

In fact, even my mother was more drawn to Jin and Lily than the main characters, indicating how high their popularity truly is.

So far, they have never directly revealed their hearts to each other. Jin was genuinely hiding his feelings, while Lily noticed Jin's emotions but quietly waited. However, starting from Volume 17, Lily couldn't hold back and confessed to Jin first, which must have been earth-shattering for the readers.

The ambush disrupted their night together? That doesn't matter. What's most important is that they didn't hide their feelings. If things continue like this, it's obvious what will happen next—the ending will see the birth of a lovely child between them.

'That's impossible.'

Jin is the final boss. That's an unchanging fact, and he will consistently move towards that fate. Original works usually end tragically to deeply imprint on readers' minds. Just like Sakran, he will sacrifice himself to protect the one he loves.

I might receive some criticism and scolding from my mother, but I have no intention of changing it. If it gets too severe, I can release a spin-off. Until then, I'll sprinkle foreshadowing and clues for the readers, injecting a sense of foreboding. It will be an introduction of a very famous cliche, the 'death flag,' in Xenon's Biography.

‘But why did Kate leave? Did she understand what I said and leave because of it?’

While writing Volume 18, I pondered over Kate’s whereabouts. She returned to Xavier within just two days after the release of Volume 17 of Xenon’s Biography. Perhaps she sensed something, as the saying goes, ‘it’s darkest under the candle.’

Yet, from what I’ve observed, Kate is out of touch with common sense and her social skills in human relationships are very underdeveloped, almost lacking.

It’s a bit strange that someone like that sensed something off and went back to Xavier. Or maybe there’s an aspect of her that I’m unaware of.

‘She’ll figure it out on her own.’

From my perspective, it’s a decent situation since the priestess that occasionally sought my seed is gone. Even Marie seemed relieved upon hearing the news of Kate’s return.

My current tasks are to write Volume 18 and prepare for the anniversary. I subtly asked Marie what she wanted most.

‘But when it comes to that gift…’

Thinking about what Marie might want the most as a ‘gift,’ I smirked. She doesn’t need anything except for me to be there.

As a noble, Marie has grown without lacking anything, so if she needs anything, she can rely on the family’s power or something like that.

It’s me who’s in trouble. How can I satisfy Marie? I’ve already purchased top-tier cosmetics with my mother’s help, but that doesn’t change the fact that I’m the top priority gift.

Lately, with more women around me, I’ve become possessive. In any case, I need to come up with a solution.

‘...Should I at least make a wish ticket and give it to her?’

It might sound crazy, but surprisingly, it could be a good gift… or not? I don’t know. If it was my past life, I would search the internet for a suitable gift, but here, it’s quite limited.

I’ll just give cosmetics as an anniversary gift and offer the wish ticket as an extra. I’ll also write a heartfelt letter while I’m at it.

If it was my past life, upon receiving a handwritten letter, one might have grumbled about it being old-fashioned and told your partner not to bother with such gifts. But this isn't Earth. It's a time filled with emotions and romance, the late modern to early contemporary era.

'Let's see. There's about ten days left until the anniversary… I'll have to go see Mora soon.'

As for going to see Mora, I've already asked Cecily to do that for me. By the way, it's not Gartz but she herself who plans to bring me to Helium.

Originally, I had planned to ask Gartz instead, but she insisted on personally bringing me as part of our date. Since I didn't really mind, I easily agreed. I absolutely have to arrive on time, as I must avoid transforming into a woman at all costs.

'But considering Mora's personality, she might pull some prank again…'

If she jokes around, I should say I won't come again. She might grumble a bit, but if she understands my sincerity, she'll reluctantly accept. For now, let's focus on writing. I need to hurry and finish Volume 18; otherwise, the bugs hiding in Xavier will run away.

'Ah, right. I should expect a letter from Arwen soon.'

There's just too much to do, even though there's already too much.

*****

Inside a carriage returning to the Xavier, at a similar time.

Kate, the inquisitor of the Church—or rather, Grand Inquisitor Kate—sat with her eyes closed inside the carriage. Clad in white armor, her closed eyes lent her an aura of sanctity and beauty, almost befitting a saint. Her hair, reminiscent of golden fields, was tied neatly, while her long eyelashes exuded a mysterious air, painting a scene akin to a picture of a 'saintly' figure.

Her face, with its characteristic impassiveness, seemed distant from any torment. Sitting across from her, a priestess quietly spoke up.

"Inquisitor Kate."

"… … "

At the priestess's call, Kate slowly opened her closed eyes, meeting her gaze. Her emerald-green irises, resembling leaves, seemed to harbor a resolute determination.

She then smiled gently, a bright smile adorning her face, before speaking softly.

"Yes, Priestess Aisha. What is it?"

"I… I'm curious as to why you're returning to the homeland. Have you completed your pilgrimage, perhaps…?"

The priestess, Aisha, cautiously inquired about the reason for Kate's return. She knew to some extent that Kate had embarked on the pilgrimage path to find Xenon. However, returning to Xavier before completing the pilgrimage seemed contradictory. The pilgrimage held great significance for clergy.

Unless under extraordinary circumstances, returning without fulfilling this duty was enough to raise questioning and suspicion.

"Surely, you haven't found Xenon…"

"No, that's not it."

Kate responded firmly, nodding her head slowly at Aisha's questioning. Xenon, well, she did find Isaac, but she fulfilled his request and didn't disclose it to the world. Besides, something more urgent than Xenon has arisen, so she must return.

Kate glanced at Aisha's puzzled expression and chuckled before subtly asking,

"Aisha,, what comes to mind when you hear the saying, 'It's darkest under the lamp'?"

Kate, having absorbed Isaac's advice, delivered it word for word. Aisha blinked, then smiled and replied.

"Well, I don't even know why it's darkest under the lamp…"

Kate received the expected response and, with a wider smile than before, slowly closed her eyes. Aisha couldn't fathom why Kate had said such a thing and looked baffled, but Kate remained silent.

Meanwhile, Kate mentally revisited Isaac's advice and the recent Xenon incident that had emerged.

'If the stories in the book are true…'

Though lacking in human relationships and common sense, Kate possessed an exceptional level of analytical and observational skills. She was the one who had originally uncovered the devil worshippers hidden in the Minerva Empire's capital. She tracked them by gathering rumors, information, and meticulously tracing each clue.

The position of the Cardinal and the Grand Inquisitor is not something easily obtained by chance.

'The mastermind is undoubtedly someone lacking in faith, probably someone who hasn't prayed recently. Cloaked in the authority of a Cardinal, hiding behind a mask with a smile.'

She already precisely saw through who the person behind was. In other words, it means she can predict exactly how Volume 18 will unfold.

When Volume 18 comes out, there will surely be chaos even in the Xavier. It's probable that someone has made a pact with a devil, and it's among the ranks of the Cardinal.

And Kate will uncover such individuals and deliver punishment. Of course, if she were to immediately punish them, it would cause her significant harm as well, so she planned to proceed slowly with her work.

There's at least a fortnight remaining. She must pull them out of hiding like insects before Xenon's Biography Volume 18 comes out.

'So that's why you only told me. Surely, he must have trusted me.'

Isaac predicted such an event and informed her. He gave instructions to find those who tarnish the name of Luminous and crush their skulls.

If Volume 18 comes out and they just start searching, it will be too late. Therefore, it was a roundabout way of saying to quickly return to her home country and start the operation.

'Sir Isaac is undoubtedly someone from the future. That's why he couldn't directly say it.'

Not only that, but Kate had another conviction. Until now, people have speculated that Isaac couldn't reveal his true identity because of the "constraints" imposed by God.

Things that will happen in the future are events humans can't handle alone, and they're revealed through the "book." The contamination of the roots of the World Tree and the

worshipers of devils were examples of this.

Above all, Isaac himself gave her advice that sounded like a proverb: ‘It’s darkest under the lamp.’ It indirectly expresses that there is a fallen clergyman in Xavier. Therefore, the conclusion is clear. Isaac is certainly someone who has returned from the future and cannot speak directly due to constraints set by God.

He is the ‘chosen one’ by ‘God,’ blessed as a ‘saint,’ and finally, a ‘hero’ to save the tainted world. The titles that would startle Isaac if he were to hear them continued one after another, but at least Kate thinks so.

‘I dared to seek the seed of such a person…’

She still fell far too short. Kate hugged her belly hidden under the armor.

At least to receive his seed, she needs to further refine her faith more than now and eliminate all the dirty things. Otherwise, it would be a disrespect and insult to the saint chosen by God.

So, the foremost task is the ‘purification’ of Xavier. They are secretly defiling Luminous’s name while under his banner. Unforgivable. Kate’s subtle anger surged briefly in her heart, but when she thought of Isaac again, her mind calmed down.

‘Please wait, Isaac. I will follow your instructions.’

Following Isaac’s words was akin to following the words of Luminous.

‘And someday, your seed…’

A ‘pure madness’ began to take root in Kate’s mind.

Translators note:

Chapter 228: Book 17 (3)

The goddess of darkness and rest, Mora, unlike her twin brother Luminous, has a strong mischievous side in addition to being headstrong. Sometimes she teases her followers or plays pranks, and if someone among her followers scolds her sternly, she might sulk.

Because of this, there are doubts not only about whether she is truly a goddess but also whether she has spent an unimaginable amount of time as a transcendent being.

Luminous, on the other hand, presents a more genuinely divine demeanor. However, the skepticism isn't malicious. It's merely a desire for her to maintain her dignity as a deity.

Moreover, Mora's behavior may seem mischievous, but she is a benevolent deity, showing a different kind of compassion and kindness to her followers compared to Lumine.

[You're late! Do you have any idea how long I've been waiting?]

'Sorry.'

[You might as well have been an hour later! Then I could have turned you into a woman!]

Her playful nature is a bit excessive, but I breathed a sigh of relief internally, hearing Mora's tantrum.

I could tolerate having long hair. Although it was uncomfortable, it didn't interfere much with daily life. However, changing genders was something I needed to prevent at all costs. Imagining the awkwardness of losing what was below and gaining what was above made me shudder.

'I'd appreciate it if you didn't make such horrifying comments.'

[Oh! Horrifying? Sure, your shoulders might be a bit stiff, and you might feel a bit empty down there, but it won't be that bad.]

‘If you’re going to joke like that, I’ll leave.’

[Sorry.]

When I earnestly declined, Mora seemed puzzled but immediately apologized. For some reason, Mora’s face, awkwardly smiling and sticking out her tongue appeared in my mind.

Dealing with her was draining in many ways, but I couldn’t help but feel she’s human. That thought alone eased my mind.

Though she displays childlike behavior, it’s oddly endearing. It’s as if I’m interacting with an ordinary person, not a deity.

‘By the way, do you have something to say?’

[No, not really? Just wanted some company, that’s all.]

‘But there are other gods.’

[They’re themselves, and you are you. You’re a soul from a different dimension, truly special.]

Initially, I wanted to retort, questioning what she meant. Yet, Luminous showed similar behavior. He even patted my head last time.

Being a soul from another dimension, Mora’s interest in me must naturally be high. Thanks to that, my feelings were rather peculiar.

‘If Cecily knew, she’d probably be upset.’

[That child isn’t a soul from another dimension like you. And to me, all children are special. You’re just exceptional.]

‘Um… Okay, I understand.’

Even if she seems unreliable, Mora was still a goddess. Despite her playful manner, sincerity was woven into every word she spoke.

I pondered what words might please Mora and decided to bring up any topic. Since she mentioned being bored, I figured I’d go with the flow.

‘Mora, you mentioned offering protection to demons and dark elves. Are there no other races?’

[Not really. Humans and elves mostly believe in Luminous, while dwarves and giants believe in our mother.]

‘When you say ‘mother,’ you mean the goddess Harte, right?’

[Yeah.]

Harte was the goddess of life, nature, and the mother of the twin gods. I’ve heard many stories, but unlike the twin gods, I’ve never spoken directly with her.

According to Leona, rather than building ‘temples’ like Luminous or Mora, they commune with her through a kind of ‘ritual.’ She explained that by offering appropriate offerings and performing the ritual, one can converse with her without needing to build a temple.

For this reason, the races who worship Harte possess a unique power called ‘sorcery,’ not ‘magic.’

Sorcery was a different power from magic and scrolls, a force used by both giants and humans in the distant past. Even now, in undeveloped civilizations, there are primitives who use sorcery.

While magic operates like programming to derive results, sorcery was an inexplicable and mystical ability. The prime example is the ‘rain dance,’ and sometimes, in drought-stricken areas, they invite sorcerers.

‘I’ve never met Goddess Harte before. There’s a temple of Harte in the Makina Kingdom, right?’

[Yeah. Want to meet her later?]

‘Don’t you think I should see her once? So far, I’ve only met Luminous and Mora.’

[Got it. Wait a moment. Mom! Can I ask you one thing?]

Mora’s voice gradually faded away. Listening to that, I sensed a very familiar memory from my past life. The situation of requesting to switch to someone else during a call.

Thinking back to Luminous and the last time, I suddenly became curious about the form in which the gods live. Are there ‘angels,’ the ancestors of elves, there too? According

to myth, those who wronged the gods lost their wings and fell to the earth, but it wasn't explicitly stated if it was one person or many.

Furthermore, there are documents mentioning that the one who delivered the seed of the World Tree during the Devil War was an angel. From this, it can be inferred that angels are not just one, but multiple individuals.

As I pondered these irrelevant thoughts for a moment, the call with Mora, which had been interrupted in the middle, reconnected.

[My mom said it's up to you. But since you seem busy lately, it's not necessary for you to come. Or you could ask that kid, Leona.]

'Ask Leona?'

[Yeah. Just convey what you want to say by possessing that child. Of course, only in the situations you desire. She insisted that there's no hurry, as we have plenty of time.]

'Understood.'

I wonder if Leona can also use sorcery. I had no idea about that at all.

Indeed, even though she was the third wife's daughter, she must have learned a considerable amount as the chieftain's daughter.

'Do you perhaps have something to ask of me, Mora-nim?'

[If I had to, turn you into a woman…]

'Except for that.'

[Ah~ Why~ just once. Can't you close your eyes and do it just once? You're so pretty like this.]

The phrase 'You're so pretty like this' somehow irritated me. As soon as I heard those words, I widened my eyes in shock.

However, there was no change in my body. The lower garment was still sturdy, and my chest had not changed.

Then what could it be? With doubts in my mind, I asked Mora while keeping my eyes tightly closed.

‘What do you mean by pretty? Nothing has changed.’

[Open your eyes again and take a look in the mirror.]

Mirror? Come to think of it, there was a full-length mirror in the private worship room of the Helium Temple.

It was placed there as a suggestion to tidy up before praying to Mora. This was not only Mora’s temple but also the same in the Luminous Temple.

With that in mind, I opened my eyes and shifted my gaze to the full-length mirror placed right beside me. After blinking for a while, I slowly stood up and checked my reflection in the mirror.

‘…Oh, please.’

The reflection in the mirror was truly that of a heavenly woman. The hair that was originally tied up was now flowing like a waterfall down to my waist, for some reason.

My face naturally resembled my mother’s, boasting a radiant beauty, but it became more refined than before, and my physique completely changed. Shoulders and waist narrowed, while the hips widened to boast graceful curves. Even that alone was shocking, but what stands out the most was undoubtedly my chest.

HUGE. There was a presence that defied simple description, a giant mass that hung on my chest.

I’m currently wearing a school uniform but the buttons were about to pop! Even though it’s a male uniform! What kind of unfair body is this? Not just me, but even Nicole, Cecily, and Cherry couldn’t possibly have this. To put it bluntly, it’s like walking around with explicit material.

Damn it. Can’t help but swear. I covered my face with my hands and cursed. The beauty in the mirror mirrored my actions.

Absolutely, absolutely not. Rather than being like this, I’d rather bite my tongue and commit suicide.

With a body like that, even daily life itself would become uncomfortable. I knelt down again, feeling defeated.

[How is it? Pretty, right? Living like this for at least one day…]

‘Mora-nim.’

[Not bad… huh?]

‘If you continue like this, I’ll describe you as an evil spirit in my book.’

[Hng…]

Realizing the sincerity in my words, Mora responded with a sulky expression. Even if an image of a puppy soaked in a downpour came to my mind, some things just shouldn’t happen.

However, even though she was a self-proclaimed goddess, she seemed so depressed that I felt a little sorry. I sighed and, with a hint of apology, quietly spoke up.

‘...But isn’t it a bit too much to inject your personal preferences?’

[Huh? What are you talking about? If you were a girl, you’d be exactly like that.]

‘This is insane.’

I couldn’t help but curse inwardly. Sure, Nicole exercised and had a good body, but why did I look like that? Not even my mother looked like that.

Maybe Morah overheard those doubts because she kindly explained.

[That’s because it’s not from your mother; it’s the potential that’s stored in your father. Was it Lily? That child will probably grow up to be just like that. Appearance might be a bit different though.]

‘...My younger sibling will grow up like that?’

[Yes.]

The moment I heard that confirmation, one thought came to my mind simultaneously: The bugs are going to be a real mess. I must definitely protect my younger sister.

By the way, Father really has exceptional physical talent. Thanks to that, I learned about our family’s true potential.

‘Haah… Mora-nim.’

[Why are you like that?]

‘Firstly, I’m sorry for cursing. It’s just too shocking…’

[No, it’s okay. I can be quite mischievous. Instead, I’ll sprinkle plenty of sanctity on you today. Don’t you have any other questions?]

The situation almost became a bit awkward, but thankfully it was somehow resolved. I listened to Mora’s question and pondered for a while before speaking up.

‘Could you please tell me a few things I should be careful about in the future? I meant to ask Luminous, but I forgot.’

[Things to be careful about… Even though my brother already mentioned it, at least in the near future, there won’t be any looming dark clouds. Something slightly troublesome might arise, though.]

‘Troublesome?’

[Yes.]

At my puzzled question, Mora gave a cryptic answer.

[In the future, the content of the 18 volumes you will write. The world will come to know that content. And it’ll happen soon.]

‘…?’

At that time, I couldn’t grasp the meaning.

*****

Around a similar time, in Xavier.

“Oh! Welcome back, Kate, the Chosen One!”

“I hope you’ve been well, Lord Deimos.”

Kate, equipped with a pure zeal in her heart, returned to Xavier’s territory.

Translators note:

Chapter 229: Spoilers (1)

Xavier, founded to worship only Luminous, the deity of light and hope.

The establishment of Xavier occurred just after the end of the Devil War, when humans erected Xavier in honor of Luminous, who had saved them. During the Devil War, there were also Mora and Harte, but they couldn't perform as remarkably as Luminous.

To elaborate further, Luminous bestowed blessings upon those at the frontline, Mora concealed the sight of fleeing refugees with a veil, and finally, Harte gifted the seed of the World Tree to the Elves.

Due to these circumstances, Luminous's actions stood out even more, and particularly, the feeble humans had no choice but to worship him. Luminous was the deity who bestowed divine power upon them while they were fighting devils bare-handedly in dire situations.

Heroes emerge in turbulent times. And under Luminous's protection during the Devil War, numerous heroes were born, many of whom perished gloriously without even leaving their names. At the end of this sequence was founded the nation known as the holy kingdom of Xavier.

Any civilization established in the name of a deity tends to demonstrate immense power.

Moreover, unlike Earth, the gods of this world not only exist but also continue to wield significant influence to this day. Until the societal culture in Xavier developed as it is today, they became intoxicated with their power and committed dreadful atrocities.

They unilaterally categorized demons as evil beings and massacred them, suppressing neighboring nations under the guise of a 'holy war.' Those who didn't believe in Luminous were persecuted under absurd pretexts, being labeled as heretics.

However, it seemed Luminous found this unacceptable and swiftly stopped it through divine intervention. If ignored, he graciously bestowed 'divine punishment.'

Thanks to his support, the Xavier Kingdom was able to barely hold onto its faltering path and has now risen to be a powerful nation while maintaining a neutral stance. Because most people believe in Luminous, there wasn't a place in any country where temples weren't built, and receiving support funds made the country wealthy.

However, due to the necessity of maintaining strict neutrality, there was little interference in international affairs unless absolutely necessary. This was because unlike in the past, there was no need felt to meddle in the affairs of other weaker nations.

At least until Xenon's Biography and the appearance of devil worshippers.

"So, Cardinal Kate. May I ask what you've summoned us for?"

Around a round table adorned with the symbol of the Xavier and the Luminous, representing the sun, four people were seated in the cardinal directions.

The elderly man seated in the east, Deimos, directed the question to Kate, who was seated opposite him. His eyebrows were almost completely covered by thick hair, and his impressive beard was striking. The others, apart from Kate, shifted their gaze to her with curious expressions. One was a middle-aged man, the other a middle-aged woman.

You might have already inferred, but these people summoned by Kate were the cardinals of Xavier. In other words, they hold power and authority just below the Pope. Despite their individual busy schedules, the fact that Kate was able to gather them in one place hints at her considerable influence.

Unlike other cardinals, she even holds the position of Grand Inquisitor, positioning her one step higher than them in terms of hierarchy, considering roles alone.

Kate didn't have much interest in politics, but if she had put her mind to it, she could have become a real influential figure. Thankfully, she could somewhat let go of her feelings, considering her distorted common sense in human relationships.

"Everyone's here. How long has it been since we gathered like this?"

Kate responded to Deimos, the bearded cardinal, with a kind smile. She was known for her beautiful looks, and when she smiled, it seemed as if the surroundings brightened with an illusion.

Seeing her smile, Deimos chuckled softly, while the other middle-aged man cleared his throat, unable to look directly at the strikingly beautiful smile.

Except for one person, the middle-aged woman. She smiled mysteriously at Kate and spoke in a flustering tone.

“You still have that beautiful smile, Cardinal Kate. Seeing how much more beautiful you’ve become, I wonder if something good happened during your pilgrimage?”

The middle-aged woman emitting strong displeasure was named Hera. She might have had quite a beautiful appearance in the past, but now she was nothing but a wrinkled middle-aged woman.

While others showed discomfort at her sarcastic tone, Kate, upon hearing her words, nodded positively.

“Yes, that’s right, Cardinal Hera. Something good happened, so I hurriedly returned here.”

“Something good? Surely not…”

Hera widened her eyes at Kate’s answer, trailing off in her remarks. Not only her but others as well.

The reason why Kate embarked on the pilgrimage path was already publicly known. It was solely to meet with Xenon. So her return meant she met Xenon.

“No, I didn’t meet Xenon. I simply realized what I have to do.”

But Kate shook her head vigorously, shattering their expectations. While it was true that she had met Xenon, or rather Isaac, it was a fact that needed to be concealed somehow.

Hera responded with a skeptical face. However, a middle-aged man soon addressed Kate.

With a well-groomed beard and a continuous gaze, the middle-aged man exuded a handsome aura despite his age.

“What do you mean by ‘what you have to do’? Could you tell us?”

“Of course. But before that, Cardinal Bark?”

“Yes. Go ahead.”

“How long has it been since Cardinal Bark prayed to Luminous?”

After asking that question, Kate looked around at others and posed the same question.

“The others too. I’m curious how long it’s been since you all prayed to Luminous.”

“I did it before Cardinal Kate arrived.”

Hera was the first to respond. She still had an uncomfortable expression, but she continued to answer the questions diligently.

“I did the same. If you don’t offer prayers even for a day, Luminous might feel neglected.”

Next, Deimos, with his distinctive caterpillar-like eyebrows, answered. Despite his intimidating appearance, he seemed devout, matching his outward appearance of kindness.

The last person remaining was Bark. Kate turned her gaze away from Deimos and looked at Bark. As Bark’s gaze met Kate’s green eyes, he hesitated for a moment, then slowly replied with a bitter smile.

“Uh… I haven’t been able to pray recently. I’ve been busy.”

“I see.”

“You know that too right, Cardinal Hera?”

Perhaps the fact that he hadn’t prayed bothered him a bit. Bark quickly sought Hera’s agreement.

Hera looked at him somewhat reservedly, blushed shyly, and quietly spoke.

“…Cardinal Bark has been very busy lately, so he hasn’t had time to pray. I can vouch for that.”

“I understand. If you’re busy with work, there’s nothing you can do. In that case, Cardinal Bark.”

“Yes?”

“Have you read the new volume of Xenon’s Biography that was recently released?”

Seemingly an odd question at first glance, but as everyone knows, the world almost treats Xenon’s Biography as a prophecy. It brought to the surface the truth about the

contamination of the world tree's roots and the worshipers of devils, and even opened up the possibility of advancing technology with the magical engine.

By now, it would be strange not to believe that, especially for someone closely related to the divine, like a clergy member.

Bark blinked at Kate's question and soon nodded with a somber voice.

"Yes, well… I did read it."

"I see. What about the others?"

"I read it too."

Unlike Deimos, who answered with a gentle tone, Hera just nodded. Kate confirmed these reactions and smiled even more brightly.

It was a smile similar to the one from earlier but somehow seemed more eerie. Other disciples felt that peculiar vibe and couldn't help but be taken aback. Meanwhile, Kate slowly looked around before bringing up another question.

"So, everyone. Do you know the proverb 'It's darkest under the lamp'?"

"Under the lamp…"

"Darkest?"

"I can't make sense of the words you're saying."

As expected, the responses came back indicating they had no idea. Kate nodded in response to the expected reactions.

Even she couldn't understand the meaning behind those words when she heard it from Isaac. She kept it in her heart, busy with the task of eliminating devil worshippers. However, after much contemplation over time, she realized the significance of those words. It became clear with the release of Volume 17 of Xenon's Biography.

It's darkest under the lamp. Just hearing the words raised questions about what that could imply.

It's darkest underneath the lamp due to its own shadow. While the surroundings are brightly lit, an unidentifiable darkness also emerges.

“It’s darkest under the lamp. Just by listening, you wouldn’t understand its meaning. Surprisingly, the lamp, which illuminates the surroundings, is covered in deep darkness underneath. It’s a phrase used when the cause is closest but one wanders elsewhere.”

“Interesting. ‘It’s darkest under the lamp’… Is this the enlightenment you gained on this pilgrimage?”

Daimos spoke as he gently stroked his full beard, as if in a dignified manner. Most clergy on pilgrimage often attain enlightenment through physical and mental suffering.

It seems Kate had a similar experience. While she may not have experienced physical pain, she assumes she struggled mentally while dealing with devil worshippers.

However, his assumption was entirely off. Kate, while nodding in apparent agreement with Daimos’ words as a positive notion, harbored a shocking statement.

“Yes. That’s why I’m telling you all this fact. Xavier is no different.”

“What?”

“What on earth…!”

“…”

The shocking nature of her statement varied in its impact on each person, but they all looked at Kate with expressions of astonishment.

To claim that the Xavier, established for Luminous, is no different from being ‘underneath the lamp’ was a dangerously blasphemous statement that could lead to charges of sacrilege.

No matter how highly Kate was regarded as a cleric, blasphemy against Luminous was never to be tolerated.

However, Kate herself, seemingly unfazed, maintained a smile while keeping her calm. Instead, she seemed to up the ante here.

“Xavier is an enormous lantern unlike anything else. Such a colossal shadow looms beneath it. Even the devil worshippers, less than insects, hide under the name of Xavier.”

“How can you be so sure about that? Despite being a Cardinal, your statement is extremely risky. Can you handle it?”

Hera, who usually detested Kate, seemed to think this was going too far and urgently tried to dissuade her. Not only her, but others felt the same way.

However, Kate was adamant. She faced the gazes directed at her and, in her unique gentle voice, spoke up.

“Xenon’s Biography.”

“Pardon?”

“The reason I am certain. It’s convenient that everyone has read the story. The identity of the one who attacked Jin and Lily in the end is a high-ranking clergyman of the Holy Kingdom.”

As soon as Kate said this, a silent hush fell upon the room. Even Deimos, and notably Hera, had expressions indicating they didn’t know how to react.

It was a conversation that flowed from the darkness beneath the lantern to Xenon’s Biography.

Except for one person, Bark. Upon hearing Kate’s revelation, he initially trembled, then burst into laughter.

“Hahaha!”

“… …”

Suddenly, all eyes were on Bark as he burst into laughter. Deimos and Hera still had expressions of confusion, but only Kate remained calm.

While holding his stomach, Bark wiped away tears forming at the corners of his eyes. It was comical how farcical the situation was, even leading to tears.

Then, while chuckling, he looked at Kate. Kate’s face remained almost expressionless.

“I was wondering what story you’d tell… Cardinal Kate.”

“Yes, Cardinal Bark.”

“It’s quite an amusing story. Seems like on the pilgrimage, you’ve even developed a sense of humor.”

Kate just grinned at Bark's words. Due to her lack of common sense in many aspects, she couldn't grasp Bark's words.

Meanwhile, Bark, looking at her, wagged his tongue as if consoling a child, speaking softly.

"Cardinal Kate, I am well aware of the significance of Xenon's Biography as a prophecy. I also know that due to certain constraints, Xenon cannot easily reveal their identity."

"… …"

"However, it's too speculative. Xavier is a nation established under the protection of Luminous. It's a place where even shadows cannot exist."

Words expressing deep trust in Luminous. Since Bark's words were all accurate, the other elders could only nod in agreement.

Honestly, what Kate brought up was simply too difficult to accept, and it was just a 'prediction' after all.

Not only was her statement sacrilegious, but it could also bring great confusion to Xavier.

"It seems that Cardinal Kate is the one doubting Luminous. Could it be that you don't believe in Luminous's light and hence harbors such thoughts?"

"… …"

"Still, it would be wise to be cautious as Cardinal Kate suggests. Let me look into it once…"

"Cardinal Bark."

"Yes?"

Bark had no choice but to stop speaking in the middle of his words. Clearly, Kate's voice, which had been gentle just a moment ago, had become infinitely lower.

Moreover, a terrifying momentum was emanating from her. She couldn't control her emotions, and a deep resentment was slowly seeping out.

As everyone turned their gaze to Kate, swallowing all their saliva, Bark could clearly confirm it.

“How dare you…”

The face of a fanatic filled with anger.

“How dare you doubt?”

Above all, innocence.

“His words?”

Madness.

Translators note:

Chapter 230: Spoilers (2)

Kate was making a name for herself in various ways within the Xavier's Church.

She is a priestess who has received grace from Luminous, yet she mercilessly wielded her authority as an inquisitor against those who oppose the meaning of Luminous.

One could say she was staunch in her faith, but at the same time, she was someone who could easily become an extremist.

Receiving grace, possessing a tremendous amount of sacred power, she ascended to the position of a cardinal before even turning 20, simultaneously assuming the role of a grand inquisitor.

While regular priests are strong in sacred power but weak in physical prowess, and knights are strong in physical prowess but weak in sacred power, Kate fulfills both criteria.

Truly one chosen by the divine, a woman deserving the title of 'saint,' revered by the clergy within Xavier.

Indeed, it's not just respect but 'awe.' They respect her while also fearing her.

Already displaying exceptional potential at a young age to become a cardinal, she also possessed formidable physical strength.

In other words, if she decided, she could expand her influence and swallow up Xavier's politics in a gulp. Considering the number of people following her, this was quite a plausible story.

Thankfully, she solely focused on Luminous and doesn't even consider her social standing. She only follows the will of Luminous.

Conversely, if she decides with a 'will,' no one can stop her from achieving it. Even if the target was the Pope.

If one were to become a fanatic, the most dangerous individual would be the one with a firmly secured ‘leash’ like a Luminous – merciful and gentle clergyman. That would be Kate Louise Angelica, a time bomb in a different sense from demons.

“His words?”

And back to the present. Signs indicated that the firmly tethered leash was gradually loosening.

Normally, mentioning Luminous should result in silence and for things to remain normal. But today, for reasons unknown, there was visible agitation.

Not only does Kate exude a suffocating aura, but her beautiful green eyes now held a hint of crimson. The rage in Kate, unseen until now, begins to swirl with a ferocious energy.

“… …”

Bark couldn’t utter a single word due to the terror of feeling like his entire body would tear apart if he misspoke.

Dangerous. It’s not just dangerous. It was an instinctual alarm sounding to the extent that his whole body was trembling.

Even a single additional word here might mean a lost life. The woman before him was in a state of madness.

A blend of madness and faith, a fanatic(??).

The most terrifying aspect of such fanaticism is its ‘authenticity.’ It follows and believes in it without an iota of doubt, steadfast in its convictions.

Not only Bark but other cardinals also felt the danger and hurried to stop her. Hera was the first.

“Cardinal Kate. Even if we don’t know what you felt while on the pilgrimage, your current heart is very dangerous. Hurry and pray to Luminous…”

“I also share the same thoughts as Cardinal Hera. Currently, Cardinal Kate is very dangerous.”

The country of Xavier has a terrible history in the distant past, harboring fanaticism in their hearts, slaughtering demons, and suppressing surrounding countries.

Using that history as a contrast, they now boast a strong influence, but nonetheless, fanatics are continuously being expelled.

Whatever the case, if taken to extremes, it will eat away at one's life. To break away from the image of the past, Xavier vehemently rejects fanatics.

For these reasons, in the eyes of the cardinals, Kate could be seen as having reached a dangerous state. If she falls into fanaticism, it might become inevitable to banish her.

"Ah… I understand. I got a little excited."

Kate also reassured them of her concerns. It seemed she had gotten excited without even realizing it.

Other cardinals wiped their faces in relief, and Bark, who had particularly received Kate's anger, wiped off his sweat.

It seemed to have been resolved amicably, but Kate's fanaticism didn't end there.

She looked around, then smiled mysteriously and spoke in her characteristic gentle voice.

"Then, it wouldn't be bad to pray to Luminous as you advised."

"What?"

In Kate's words, the cardinals all shivered in unison, looking at her. Kate wore a merciful yet radiant smile. It felt impossible for such a beautiful smile to be frightening unless one commits 'evil'.

Only one person. Except for Bark, who had just borne the brunt of Kate's anger a moment ago. He realized that the target of that smile was himself and stiffened as he understood he had to brace himself.

Certainly, this place was filled with bright light, yet for some reason, it felt as if his surroundings were engulfed in darkness. An oppressive feeling as if only Kate and he were left alone. Is this what prey caught tightly in the noose trap feels like?

He felt like prey. In the midst of pressing his head more towards the giant maw of fanaticism.

"Cardinal."

"…"

"Bark, Cardinal Bark?"

"Yes, yes?"

Bark, oppressed and overwhelmed by fear, hastily snapped back to reality upon hearing the voice in his ear.

When he turned in the direction of the voice, Hera was staring at him with a puzzled expression.

"Why aren't you getting up? What are you doing? We should hurry for prayers."

"P-Prayers?"

"Yes. Cardinal Bark, you haven't been able to pray recently because of work, so I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to do it now."

Hera smiled warmly, a smile she hadn't shown to Kate before, and attempted to persuade Bark. As soon as Bark heard her words, he turned his head so swiftly it made a noise.

In the direction he turned, he caught sight of Kate, looking at him with a bright smile. That smile felt truly repulsive to him.

However, going to pray like this might lead to some trouble with those fanatics. So, Bark awkwardly smiled and politely expressed his refusal.

"Um… I'm sorry. Actually, I still have some work to do…"

"Surely even five minutes isn't too much to spare, Cardinal Bark."

Just as he was about to refuse, Kate interjected. Her words pierced Bark's ears like arrows.

When he looked at Kate, she was wearing a gentle smile.

"For a Cardinal, not dedicating even five minutes for Lumineers is disappointing."

"Cardinal Kate."

"Or…"

Kate lowered the corners of her raised lips and slowly licked her lips. A look that seemed to glare, unmatched hostility. It was a gaze that couldn't be considered friendly even with empty words, filled with hostility instead.

"Using the title of a 'Cardinal' like a mask while supporting devil worshippers in secret? Just like in Xenon's Biography."

Bark was startled, almost feeling thorns prickling at the chilling question. It was so frightening that he almost took a step back unconsciously.

Fortunately, he managed to restrain himself from stepping back, but he couldn't help the tightening feeling in his chest.

"Cardinal Kate! If you continue like this, I will report to His Holiness! No matter how high-ranked you are, this behavior will not be tolerated!"

"… …"

While Hera reprimanded Kate with a stern voice, Deimos quietly watched with an inscrutable expression.

Having lived longer than others, perhaps having sensed something, Deimos refrained from stepping forward and observed the situation from a third-party perspective.

Kate, hearing Hera's warning, slowly turned her head to face her. Even meeting Hera's cool green eyes, Kate stood her ground without flinching.

Was that sight pleasing? Kate raised the corners of her mouth that had drooped and bowed her head slightly in apology.

"I apologize, Cardinal Hera. It seems I may have been a bit excessive."

"That's understandable. And while I genuinely express my concern, Cardinal Kate, make sure to pray consistently to Luminous for a while. You seem genuinely alarming to anyone."

"Thank you for the advice. I suppose heading to the chapel would be wise for now."

Even as Kate spoke, she didn't forget to glance at Bark. Bark once again felt a shiver down his spine at that look.

The conversation flowed so naturally that they didn't realize it, but Kate was currently wearing white armor and had Mace strapped to her waist. She's fully armed and

prepared. She's not functioning as a cardinal but as an "inquisitor" at the moment. And the target of her "mace" is…

"Ugh!"

"Wh-what? Cardinal Bark! Where are you headed?"

Without a second thought, Bark fled as when his mind had just passed that point. Hera called out in a fluster from behind, but he ignored everything.

Continuing like this would inevitably lead to the chapel without any chance to escape. Then, inevitably, he'd have to pray to Luminous. Luminous grants holy power to the faithful and, conversely, unleashes lightning bolts or punishments equivalent to them upon the unfaithful. And he's certain that he'll unleash his full wrath, not just mere bolts. He's committed such grave sins.

'It can't be. How can it not be? Is it really an oracle…?'

The question nestled in his heart as he fled, but it didn't take long before…

Whack!

"Ugh!"

"Where do you think you're going?"

Kate, who had suddenly caught up, viciously grabbed Bark by the scruff with one hand. Despite the considerable time Bark had been running, Kate swiftly caught up with her fearsome physical prowess.

Bark felt a momentary throbbing pain in his head, realizing that Kate had grabbed onto him, he urgently shouted. It was a desperate struggle to survive.

"Let go of this! Cardinal Kate! What, what are you trying to do right now?!"

"You know very well. I'm trying to punish those who oppose the will of Luminous and hide in the shadows."

"Ugh…! Over here! Is there anyone?"

Bark called out to the people residing within the Holy See with his final act of resistance. Already, due to the commotion, people were coming in, and Bark's outcry attracted even more.

“What’s happening…! Cardinal Kate?!”

“Cardinal Kate! What on earth is going on?!”

Kate looked around at the people, full of shock and surprise, and then shifted her gaze to Bark.

Bark, in the throes of pain as if all his hair would be pulled out, was holding onto his arm with a strained expression. It seemed like he was trying to create witnesses to escape somehow, but it only seemed to satisfy Kate.

It was an immediate opportunity to expose the sins of this person to the world. Despite the objections from those around her, she dragged Bark away without any regard.

“Aaah! Aaah! Let go of me! I said let go!”

“What, what should we do with this?”

“Why is Cardinal Kate doing this to Cardinal Bark?”

“What’s happening?”

The people from the Holy See who were trailing behind Kate as she dragged Bark like a dog didn’t even dare to consider stopping her. And no wonder—Kate was known for her unwavering faith even within the ranks of Xavier. Moreover, she had been bestowed with grace.

There were even priests who confidently asserted that her will was synonymous with the will of Luminous.

Eventually, as everyone followed along helplessly, Kate and Bark finally arrived at the chapel. Unlike the temple’s chapel, this was the Holy See’s chapel, which could be considered the headquarters.

In the center stood the meticulously crafted statue of Luminous, surrounded by a magnificent chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

Swish!

“Ack!”

Kate threw Bark beneath the statue of Luminous as if he were a sack of goods. Her hand clenched Bark’s hair tightly, showcasing her immense strength.

After roughly pulling out those strands of hair, Kate, with Bark's head on the ground, commanded the groaning Bark in a tone of authority.

"Cardinal Bark. It's time to pray."

"Ughhh…"

"If you have even an ounce of shame, pray to Lord Luminous."

As her hand wound around his head, Kate's cold voice pierced through Bark's ears. Bark, droplets of saliva escaping, slowly opened his eyes.

As he did, he found Kate looking down at him, with people gathered behind her, murmuring and crowding around.

It's nearing the end. Bark shouted as if succumbing to a dreadful intuition piercing his chest.

"What, what do you think will come out of this?! Cardinal Kate! Committing violence within the sacred Holy See! What would Luminous think if he saw this!"

"…What?"

As Bark mentioned Luminous, Kate's eyes twitched underneath, her hands tensing.

Perhaps oblivious to Kate's feelings, Bark shook off her hand and slowly stood up. Then, with an audacious face, he snapped at Kate.

"Even if Kate, blessed by Luminous, has crossed the line! Pray? Originally, prayers shouldn't be enforced by someone. What Cardinal Kate is doing now is no different from our distant past, when our Xavier Church fell into fanaticism!"

"… …"

Was this his final outburst? Using the situation, witnessed by many, Bark pinned Kate.

In reality, to someone unaware of the circumstances, Kate's actions are excessive, far beyond acceptable levels. Even if the Xavier Church is considered the worst breeding ground for fanatics, there was no excuse for what Kate was doing.

Bark made good use of this. No matter how much others respect Kate, if the rumors spread, even her safety will be at risk.

“Even if I were to pray and get struck by lightning, that would be the end for Cardinal Kate. There’s a law within the sacred Holy See that prohibits shedding blood. If you don’t want to incur divine punishment, that’s what should be done.”

“…Divine punishment?”

As soon as the words ‘divine punishment’ were mentioned, a ferocious aura emanated from Kate once again. Her head slightly tilted, the gleam in her eyes slowly faded away.

Observing this in real-time, Bark hesitated and withdrew, passing her straight by. A gut feeling crept in, as if he had pressed the wrong switch.

If things continued this way, his head might explode from that mace. He has completed the political attack, and all that remained was escaping from here.

But was Luminous tired of such shameless and potentially nauseating actions?

As Bark approached the central part where the chandelier was situated.

Thud—.

Not a thunderbolt, nor a dry lightning from the clear sky.

Crash!!

The chandelier, firmly suspended, fell, bringing down the ‘divine punishment.’

“Aaaah!!”

“B-Bark, Cardinal Bark!!”

People revealed their own reactions as they witnessed Bark crushed under the fallen chandelier.

However, even as Bark, lying completely crushed under the chandelier, only writhed his slightly protruding hand and couldn’t even scream, he was already dying.

As blood oozed slowly from his completely crushed body, the holy knights hurried to rush to remove the chandelier, but it was already too late.

Meanwhile, Kate, watching the ‘penalty’ being executed in real-time, slowly turned her back.

Behind her back stood the statue of Luminous. Could it be that Luminous had watched over all of this? Otherwise, there was no way for the penalty to have been delivered.

Thus, she slowly walked towards the statue and knelt down gracefully. Despite the chaos behind her, Kate was anything but calm.

Lastly, after neatly joining her hands together, she softly murmured with a reverent heart.

“Do not doubt…”

Translators note:

Back from family holidays and my hangover is going away, so its time to get back to translating. Hope you had a fun christmas and new year and I wish you a happy 2024.

3 chapters today

1/3

Chapter 231: Spoilers (3)

Everything is a possibility in the world. Although there is no definite evidence, it refers to events or facts that seem to exist somewhere, even if uncertain.

In other words, it's 'Lee Wae-jin.' There are quite a few cases where someone has casually written or spoken words without much thought, and they turn out to be true. The reason for such occurrences is quite simple. The world is vast, the people living in it are diverse, and these people cause various events and incidents.

Especially in a culturally developed world like Earth, where the 'Internet,' a sea of information, has become popular, we often encounter various things. Moreover, media such as 'movies,' 'comics,' and 'novels' stimulate imagination and fulfill fantastical desires.

If people from the distant past were to see what we see now, they would dismiss it as unbelievable, whereas modern individuals think, 'Why not?' instead of 'It can't be.'

The most significant example is the airplane. People in the past would never have thought that they could fly through the sky with their creations. But now, enormous metal structures fly through the sky, and we even have jet planes that travel faster than the speed of sound.

In this way, 'imagination' changes with the development of science and culture, and I, who possesses memories of past lives, can boast of having an imagination that is as outstanding as anyone else.

Just by mentioning a little bit of my past life, others might casually label it as a joke, appearing to them as if I have an extraordinary imagination. However, having witnessed it with my own eyes, I could only smile wryly.

Of course, it's understandable that the era and the less developed state of science might limit understanding. The problem is that such imagination isn't confined solely to 'airplanes.'

The pollution of the World Tree's roots came from my imagination, and the devil worshippers that appeared in Xenon's Biography also emerged from my imagination. The hunters of the devil turned demons also made their appearance from my imagination, as did the forbidden fusion magic.

Movies, games, comics, novels, and so on—my imagination, nurtured through various cultural media from past lives, would be truly astonishing by the standards of this world. It becomes an issue when all of that manifests in reality, though.

Moments when my needlessly vast imagination comes back like a boomerang and strikes me in the back have not been few or far between.

To me, these are purely events and thoughts from my imagination, but this place is a "fantasy world."

Yes, a fantasy world. The fantasy world seen in movies, comics, novels, and games from past lives. I had overlooked the likelihood that crafting stories in such a world could manifest in reality. Thanks to that, the "Prophetic" incidents occurred multiple times.

If it were Earth, it would've been purely fantasy, but in the context of the fantasy universe, one might easily consider it a 'prophecy.' Realizing this, I've become a bit more cautious, little by little.

[The darkness concealed behind the enormous lantern of the Xavier Church has been revealed!]

[The Cardinal of the Luminous Order actually conspired with the cultists…]

[Caught in a whirlpool of shock, the Xavier Church. The person who uncovered the truth is none other than Kate Louise Angelica, this hero is also a Grand Inquisitor…]

However, this time a different meaning of 'Lee Wae-jin' emerged. As seen in the recently published newspaper, there was an actual case of a cardinal in the Holy Church consorting with devil worshippers in Xavier.

It's not that I'm surprised after getting a direct answer from Luminous… but it's incredibly bewildering.

Because this was a situation expected to unfold in Volume 18. It's a story where the mastermind behind the attack on Jin and Lily turns out to be a cardinal of the Holy Church, leading up to a battle, step by step.

But before that story could be revealed to the world, the culprit was apprehended in reality. It's a situation that sounds like a tale as I calmly ate bread in the dorm.

[Cardinal Bark was a faithful clergyman, but blinded by greed, he did things that shouldn't have been done…]

[Currently, the Xavier Church has declared to eliminate all devil worshippers lurking in the shadows.]

[Moreover, devil worshippers are deeply connected to the underworld through drugs, smuggling, human trafficking, etc.]

The contents in the newspaper were truly shocking. Bark, the clergyman, was a figure among the high ranks of devil worshippers, conveying all of Xavier's movements to the devil worshippers.

Originally, due to devil worshippers operating like secret organizations, tracking them was incredibly difficult, but after Bark's identity was revealed, the organizational structure became clear.

Especially noteworthy was the influence devil worshippers have in the underworld. Capturing one of their heads enabled understanding the kind of influence devil worshippers exert.

Just like crimes such as drug trafficking, smuggling, and human trafficking exist in this world, there are also criminal organizations growing through such gains.

However, it has been revealed that there is no place untouched by the sinister influence of devil worshippers within the criminal underworld. The impact they have had on the world, hidden in the shadows for many years, was truly alarming. The problem is that there are some influential individuals associated with these criminal organizations.

While they may not have directly forged alliances with devil worshippers, the fact remains that when connected to a criminal organization, funds inevitably flow towards devil worshippers. In essence, tying them together is reasonable.

[Xavier: "We hereby declare the commencement of the 'Holy War'."]

Realizing the situation is far more serious than anticipated, Xavier has initiated the 'Holy War.' This war, in the name of religion, was different in meaning this time.

For Xavier, the fact that a high-ranking clergyman entered into an alliance with devil worshippers must have been extremely embarrassing. Some high-ranking clergy members are reported to have left the church, disappointed, according to the newspapers.

Hence, this is not a declaration against a nation but specifically against devil worshippers, revealing a determination to uproot them entirely.

To prevent such incidents, not only high-ranking clergy but also ordinary clergy have started a familiar 'Mass' culture, where they pray together.

However, whether it's a Holy War, Mass, or prophecies from Xenon's Biography, none of it holds any meaning for me at the moment. There's something else more urgent.

[The prophecy regarding this event was already foreseen in Volume 17 of Xenon's Biography! Cardinal Kate remarks that 'the darkest place is under the lamp'…]

[It will likely be a gentle cardinal, not the one who uttered harsh words toward the truth.]

[If someone who usually doesn't pray and harbors doubts towards God starts doing so, it's certain.]

[Will the events unfold in Volume 18 similarly to reality?]

As it turns out, Kate had actually apprehended Cardinal Bark. It was a case of being darkest under the lamp, as he said, and the contents of volume 17. Currently, she's imprisoned within the Holy See for committing violence, but the newspapers stated that her merits will soon be acknowledged, and she'll be released.

However, I find myself unable to ignore the situation where the content of Xenon's Biography Volume 18 has not just been 'leaked' but 'exposed'. It's enough to make my head spin.

It's a predicament – on one hand, I'm worried that I might be in the red again, caught up in fervor over the prophecy, and on the other hand, if I change the storyline, it might ruin the structure I've built.

It's truly a desperate situation. I feel the newspapers are subtly waiting to see my reaction.

"Sigh…"

I exhaled deeply, closing the newspaper. It felt like getting a strong blow to the head with a hammer. I can't grasp what to do next.

It might be better to start with an explanation, but I'm doubtful if people will believe it. I won't change the story for now. My resolve was firm.

It's probably better to keep pushing forward as is; there'll be less confusion, and most importantly, people will naturally come to understand.

Whooom

"Hmm?"

With a heavy heart, I sat on the bed and felt a faint mana wave. It was such a familiar sensation that I didn't even feel the need to be on guard. I had felt this wave every time Siris teleported to my dormitory.

And sure enough, with a gentle breeze, Siris appeared in my room. She still wore the revealing bikini armor that never failed to delight the eyes.

Quietly, as Siris swayed in with her white hair flowing, I opened my mouth.

"You're here?"

"Hello. Isaac."

Siris politely bowed her head in greeting. I asked her while still sitting on the bed, wanting to know her reaction to the letter I had sent to Arwen earlier.

"What did Arwen say?"

"She mentioned that there have been many difficult things recently, but thanks to them, her strength has increased."

Well, Arwen was the only one externally connected to Xenon. When Fieren made his final move, spreading strange rumors about our romantic relationship, there was nothing I could do. From her perspective, despite the fatigue, having a connection to me had its advantages.

It seemed that she had managed to establish a foundation for solidifying the 'connections' she had struggled with even after becoming a queen. For politicians like Arwen, connections were more valuable than gold. However, she was still going

through difficulties due to the aftermath. That's why I had sent her a letter of encouragement last time.

"Here's the queen's response."

"Thank you."

I received a letter from Siris and immediately unfolded it. It was written on a scroll, subtly girlish in its style, if that description fits a rolled up paper.

As I opened the letter, I was greeted by a graceful handwriting befitting a queen's position. It filled a page with care and dedication.

[Dear Isaac, I have read your letter. It gives me strength, like a downpour in a parched land. I've been through some tough times lately, but thanks to you, everything feels alleviated.]

A content smile graced my lips. Even just reading the words, I felt as though I could hear Arwen's voice.

…Wait a second. Can I really hear a voice? What's this?

"It's an audio storage spell."

"…Really?"

I pondered whether there was a need for magic when the letter itself sufficed. Despite feeling a bit unnerved, I slowly continued reading the letter.

I can't fathom the principles behind it, but as I read the letter with my eyes, Arwen's voice played in my mind.

Perhaps it's apt to call it magic after all. Astonishing things abound. Arwen being an elf might make this possible; for a human, it would be an ability beyond dreams.

[Due to work commitments, confined to the office, I long to see your face. I know, as a queen, I shouldn't feel this way, but there's no one else I feel this comfortable with. Please bear with my longing a little longer.]

How difficult must work be to lament about it even in a letter? Since ancient times, regardless of the region, a hardworking king boasts of an incredibly heavy workload. Just the stack of documents piled up in my father's office was mountainous, so Queen Arwen wouldn't have exaggerated if she said it was severe.

Moreover, even though she ascended to the queen's position, she struggled to implement even a single policy due to pressure from the council, and there were hardly any trustworthy individuals. Before meeting me, there was no one she could call a 'friend,' so one could say her life was a bit challenging.

[Thanks to meeting you, many things have changed. We prevented the contamination of the World Tree in advance, and even the council, hindering the progress of Alvenheim, has vanished into the sidelines of history. Even our relations with the Dark Elves are gradually improving. Without you… I wouldn't have been able to do anything. I want to express my gratitude somehow, but there's nothing I can adequately do. You have everything a man can possess.]

Arwen's voice suddenly faded away. It's a bit awkward for me to say, but I'm someone who lacks very little now.

Power, wealth, fame, and finally, beautiful women. To anyone's eyes, I must seem like someone who lacks nothing.

[However, my pride doesn't allow me to step back like this. If there's anything you desire, please tell me, and I'll grant it without any hesitation. Don't even think about replacing it with giving you books from the Sanctuary, it wouldn't suffice to repay the favor I received from you.]

At that moment, I couldn't help but flinch. Perhaps it's not as sincere as it sounds—maybe it's just a token of gratitude. But even so, seeing Arwen go as far as saying such things indicates a profound sense of gratitude towards me.

[It seems the story has grown long. If the opportunity arises, come to Alvenheim. It feels like even the strength I didn't have would emerge upon seeing your face. Or if you permit, I might set aside some tasks and make my way there. You might think it childish, but I hope you'll indulge this whim just a bit. A day for an elf is likely very short, yet after meeting you, a day feels like a week. With that, I'll take my leave, wishing for Luminous's protection upon you.]

[Oh, and there's no need to reply. Just let Siris know when you might come to Alvenheim.]

With that, Arwen's voice faded away. I smiled while reading the childish content despite the graceful handwriting. I've been busy lately, hardly having the chance to meet face-to-face, but visiting during this vacation might not be a bad idea after all.

It’s true that relationships tend to grow stronger when you see each other’s faces. The farther the distance, the more the hearts tend to drift apart.

“I’ve read the letter. Please convey my thanks to Arwen.”

“Understood. Oh, before that… The Queen wanted to ask you something.”

“Hmm? What is it?”

Siris, with his usual poker face, relayed Arwen’s question.

“Regarding the recent events in Xavier, people are starting to firmly believe that Sir Isaac is a prophet or someone from the future.”

“I’m already trying to put that idea to rest. Even if I say otherwise, they won’t believe it.”

“So, Arwen wanted me to ask you this: Are you truly a prophet or someone from the future?”

No, that’s not it. It seems like Arwen even suspects me now. But I have no intention of revealing to anyone that I am a reincarnator. There’s nothing to gain by disclosing it, and it will only cause confusion.

“It’s not like that. Tell her that all of this is just a coincidence.”

I’m just in a fantasy world.

“There are no constraints set by the gods or anything like that.”

Writing something that could happen in a fantasy world.

“I’m just an ordinary writer writing a plausible novel.”

A writer who writes novels.

Really.

Translators note:

Chapter 232: Spoilers (4)

Who suffers the most when the world inadvertently spoils your story? Is it the writer who lost the story they were yet to write? Or is it the devil worshiper struck by a bolt from the blue? Or perhaps the nation of Xavier struck by a scandal?

None of these.

Among those who have suffered the most from real world spoilers are the ‘readers.’ Those ordinary readers who have a significant interest in worldly affairs but do not actively engage. It’s like being spoiled in reality because, due to the ending of Volume 17, they are dying to know the rest of the story.

In addition, in this world, even without the internet, the art of publication has developed so that one can access news through newspapers. At least, each household subscribes to one newspaper, making it easy to keep up with the news of the world.

Especially Xenon’s Biography, a book that almost no one does not read. Even if rumors spread, you can’t help but overhear them.

[It’s good to purify evil, but the taste for anticipation of what comes next has disappeared.]

[Readers feel both anger and frustration. It can be understood given the situation, but it’s still regrettable.]

[Will Volume 18 unfold just like reality?]

It was enough to shock the whole world that none other than Xavier had devil worshippers hidden within, even more so a Cardinal.

So, readers also had no choice but to take a somewhat ambiguous stance. No matter how important Xenon’s Biography was, there was nothing as important as reality.

Above all, since Xenon’s Biography is being treated as a prophecy, it’s a position that something happening in reality based on that prophecy is not unusual.

People who only worship Xenon's Biography shed tears, passing it off casually, excluding all of this. However, expectations for Volume 18 were somewhat shaken…

[Readers. It's frustrating, so I hope Volume 18 comes out quickly…]

[Since we already know the story, it would be nice if Volume 19 also came out together…]

…Instead of diminishing, it rather soared. They wanted to confirm the events in Xavier and the contents of Volume 18 as soon as possible, even if it was just for a day.

If the content of Volume 18 aligns astonishingly with real-world events, the value of Xenon's Biography will skyrocket. Otherwise, doubt will creep in. No, not even doubt.

The world is weaving absurd speculations about me being under some 'constraint.' There's a ridiculous notion that, even to avoid constraints, I could modify the content of Volume 18. Hence, a mood has formed where even if the content diverges, it wouldn't disperse the suspicion.

Doubts directed at me could lead to doubts aimed at the divine, as some priests have suggested. Kate has done something quite amusing.

So, what should I, as the author, do? Well, I should just write as planned, without any modifications. Even though Volume 18 hasn't been released, I anticipated this situation to some extent through Luminous's confirmation, and it didn't have any adverse effects on me.

Should I issue a statement through a letter? If letters had any effect, I would have sent more than a hundred a day. According to my father, the situation at the publishing company is even worse than chaotic.

Originally, people from the upper class, including nobles, came to connect with me, but now even clergy were approaching. They were even threatening me, demanding information about me urgently, stating that Xenon's assistance is crucial in initiating the 'Holy War.' Fortunately, such individuals were soon apprehended by other clergymen and faced severe punishment.

Anyway, it's an ambiguous situation to send a letter. It's probably better to keep quiet since they won't listen to me anyway. The most urgent thing to do now is…

"Prophet, so is the content of Volume 18 really identical to what is happening now?"

“I’m curious too. Can’t you tell us a little? We have a deep connection with the Prophet~”

“… …”

I don’t know what to do about these whimsical lovers who tease me. Whether it’s all a joke or if it’s serious, ever since the incident broke out, they’ve been teasing me, calling me a prophet.

Even before, every time something like this happened, they teased me, calling me a prophet or a regressor. But this time, it was a bit more intense.

“Will the child born between us be a son or a daughter?”

“Me too. Me too. You’re a prophet, so you should be able to predict that much, right?”

They ridicule me with questions like that. I’m not really a prophet, so how could I guess something like that? And on top of that, we haven’t even had the wedding yet, but they’re already planning for parenting, which is just absurd.

Moreover, they keep bombarding me with questions fit for a prophet, making me feel dizzy to the point where I burst into nervous laughter involuntarily.

“Both of you, stop it. Isaac is feeling uncomfortable.”

Luckily, Rina, who was the third person, intervened, putting an end to their teasing. With her reproach, Marie and Cecily, each holding one of my arms, backed away.

I expressed my gratitude to Rina through facial expressions, feeling relieved. Rina shrugged gracefully as if it was nothing and sipped her tea elegantly.

The place we’re currently in is a café I often visit. Originally, it was class time, but because the professor went on a short business trip, it turned into a free period.

That’s why they came to my research lab and called me. Elena allowed it, so I could spare some time.

“Come on, Rina, why don’t you ask too? Maybe you’ll find out who your future husband is, right?”

Cecily, who was always mischievous, asked Rina with a big grin. It seemed like she had no intention of stopping the teasing. Rina, caught off guard by the unexpected

question, had a bewildered expression, her blue eyes blinking rapidly, displaying a mix of astonishment and confusion.

"…What? My husband? All of a sudden?"

"Yeah. Aren't you curious too? What your future self will be like."

"Well… I'm a little curious, but I'm not really drawn to it. It's just something far in the future, so thinking about it now seems meaningless."

It's typically Rina-like. She didn't get caught up in Cecily's joke at all. Instead, she shrugged her shoulders, displaying an air of composure.

Even though we've become close, Rina was still a princess from the empire. Gracefulness emanated from every movement she made.

…Her taste in romance might be somewhat unique though. It's surprising to find hidden subtlety beneath such graceful elegance.

"Well, maybe it's not about the far future. Once you graduate from the academy, your engagement will likely be set, so shouldn't you find a fiancé soon?"

However, there was someone who was unsettling Rina's attitude, none other than Marie. She was smiling faintly, with an air of ease, her lips slightly curled upwards.

When we graduate from the Academy, our age (excluding Cecily) will be precisely 21 years old. It will be an age ripe with possibilities.

Originally, even in the late twenties, one becomes a confirmed bachelor or an old maid. Commoners might be busy with their daily lives, but nobility, especially women, find their 'worth' relatively diminished the longer they postpone marriage.

Unless, like Nicole, one possesses abilities that exceed that worth, nobles, in general, strive to find an engagement and marry early. Whether it's for love or strategic reasons.

Of course, Rina, holding the position of 'Princess,' won't see a decline in her worth. Only one thing, she must endure the gazes pouring in from all around.

"I already have a fiancé, Cecily too. But ironically, there's no suitable match for the 'Princess'?"

"Are we fighting?"

Surprisingly sensitive, Rina, with a narrowed brow, retorted in a low voice to Marie's teasing. It was an evident sign of her being angry.

Marie chuckled lightly before speaking in a half-joking, half-serious tone.

"That's why you should also hurry and find a fiancé. A whole year has passed in the blink of an eye, hasn't it? You should find someone in advance to avoid problems."

"Um…"

Rina seemed to ponder upon those words before briefly glancing in my direction. Perhaps because I was the only man here, it seemed like she was looking at me.

But the ladies didn't miss that. Cecily alternated gazes between Rina and me, then flashed her mischievous smile.

"Could it be Rina's eyeing Isaac too?"

"Wha, w-what?"

Rina was startled not just once, but twice, as surprised as she was. Her eyes widened so much, displaying a remarkable level of astonishment.

And Cecily didn't miss it. She extended her face forward and spoke in a comforting voice.

"Honestly, is there even a more suitable husband than Isaac? The Ters Kingdom will be linked to your brother, and the Belua Kingdom's queen is the first princess of the Ters Kingdom. Isn't there a more fitting groom?"

"… …"

At first, it was meant as a joke, but unexpectedly, Rina was genuinely listening. She had a thoughtful expression, contemplating deeply while pressing her fist against her lips.

This led Cecily to momentarily be taken aback. She might have wanted to see Rina flustered, but the atmosphere had become serious.

Just before a quiet silence settled, Rina lowered her gaze, then lifted it back up. Her gaze was directly fixed on me.

"Is that so?"

“Huh?”

“Come to think of it, there wasn’t a more suitable groom for me than Isaac?”

If Rina had said it playfully like Marie or Cecily, it would have been one thing, but because she was serious, it was a problem. Rina was staring straight at me with her earnestly shining blue eyes.

The confusion and surprise were left to Cecily, Marie, and me. This was a seriousness devoid of even 1% mischief. But Rina didn’t stop there. She nodded as if she had finished thinking something and spoke in her characteristic elegant manner.

“Perhaps marrying Isaac, tying him more securely to the Minerva Empire for protection, isn’t a bad idea. The title of princess is quite modest compared to Xenon. I’m the princess of the Minerva Empire, not a heroic figure like Isaac who saved the world. Instead of Isaac coming to me, I should go to him, which would also solve Marie’s problem.”

“W-Wait, seriously?”

Marie asked, stumbling through her words, apparently quite surprised. I was in a similar state of mind, so I waited for Rina’s response.

Ignoring our stares, Rina calmly raised her teacup. Her composed and elegant demeanor confirmed the sincerity in her words.

“When am I not serious? Perhaps before Volume 17, things might have been different, but the situation has changed. Thanks to Xenon’s Biography, one of the high-ranking devil worshippers has been eliminated, and Isaac’s reputation has soared. If someday Isaac reveals his true identity, I’ll have to go, whether I want to or not.”

“What about my choice? Do I have no say in this?”

“If you dislike it, it won’t matter.”

Well, that’s a relief…

“But I’ll make it so you can’t refuse. Not by threats, but by offering you full support in the Michelle territory you’ll govern, granting authority, and more. The Empire is thirsty for culture. While our military and economy are strong, we lack a unifying cultural aspect. That’s why we’ll spare no expense to keep you somehow attached.”

“Uh… um…”

“Just give up cleanly and marry me. I don’t even desire authority. Let’s just get along well. Understand? Keep the… night activities reasonable.”

The atmosphere, perhaps due to the eloquent yet restrained expressions, or maybe because every word seemed fitting, became strangely distant. Even Marie and Cecily, who were usually playful, were silent, exchanging looks as if wondering how they ended up in this situation.

The content was so serious that no one dared to interrupt. In fact, every word from Rina was precise and chilling. When everyone remained tight-lipped, Rina, after sipping her tea and placing the cup down, looked around at us.

Her expression was filled with a sense of incomprehension, as if asking why we were reacting this way. A face full of questions.

Following that, she, with an ironic tone, opened her mouth.

“Why is everyone so serious? Did you seriously take it to heart?”

“What?”

“What did you say?”

Rina, after confirming our reactions, let out a little laugh and said.

“Can’t I joke too? You guys play so many pranks that I thought I’d join in for once.”

“Ah…that’s all…”

“It was a prank?”

“Yeah, it was all just a prank.”

It was all a joke. I was almost too serious to take it as a joke because you seemed so serious.

It was all a joke. It was so serious that I almost didn’t take it as a joke.

Just when I was starting to feel relieved, Rina explained again to lighten the mood a bit.

“Well, what I said earlier was half serious. Our empire will definitely try to catch you once you reveal your identity, Isaac. Don’t worry, it won’t involve threats or anything like that. Just keep that in mind.”

“Got it. I’m expecting that much.”

“If you’re expecting it, that’s good. And consider that you might actually marry me for real.”

“… …”

In the end, it wasn’t a joke. I looked at Rina, who casually brought up the topic of marriage, with an incredulous expression.

On the other hand, as always, Rina was leisurely lifting her teacup, enjoying the taste of her drink.

However, there was an unexpected complication···

“So, Rina, are you planning to spend the first night with Isaac in advance too?”

“Cough!!”

It was a surprise attack from Marie, who had been silently observing. This caught Rina completely off guard, causing her to spit out her tea rather vigorously, but thankfully, it didn’t hit anyone’s face. Rina just had a violent cough.

“Cough! Cough! Cough! W-What is that bullshit?”

Rina asked urgently, not even thinking about wiping around her mouth, with a face mixed with various questions as she looked at Marie. Marie spoke calmly, as if it didn’t bother her at all.

“Did you know Isaac spent the first night with me before he even got engaged to Cecily? If what you’re saying is true, either confirm it or spend the first night altogether.”

I wanted to ask, “What about my opinion?” but seeing Marie’s mouth shape, I held back for a moment.

Although very subtle, her lips were trembling slightly. She’s definitely joking.

Once I confirmed that, I could relax and observe the situation. Having taken one hit, it seemed like she was planning to feed an even bigger one.

Meanwhile, Rina, wiping the liquid around her mouth with a handkerchief, started to exclaim in embarrassment.

“W-What is…! That’s weird for you guys! Originally, the first night is! After a man and a woman get married! Doing it before marriage, like you guys, is a very rare case…”

“Is it? It was all happening over the inn besides us, wasn’t it? When did that tradition start?”

“No…! That’s…! Ugh…”

It seemed like Rina was about to say something obscene, but she stopped herself. Her face, now intensely red, was a stark contrast to her usually calm demeanor.

Up to this point, it would have been a fatal blow, but Marie wasn’t alone here. Cecily also saw it as an opportunity and chimed in from the side.

“Hey, what if you just watch instead if it embarrasses you? It might even be helpful later, you never know?”

Woah, that’s a bit intense. That comment really hits the mark on Rina’s secret preferences.

Maybe Cecily made that remark because she knows about her sexual inclinations. Cecily, who’s quite perceptive, wouldn’t miss that.

In response to such a pointed comment, Rina’s reaction was…

“…Maybe?”

“Huh?”

Momentarily swayed by desire.

“Ah, no, this isn’t right. I’d rather…”

Desperately trying to regain composure, she once again made us all flustered.

Translators note:

3/3

Chapter 233: Spoilers (5)

Due to an unexpected spoiler, people around me had fun teasing me, but it didn't change my daily life. During the weekdays, I performed the duties of a teaching assistant, essentially being Elena's slave and writing. On weekends, I spend time exercising with Adelia to improve my physical strength.

Especially after the last encounter with Nicole, the time spent with Adelia has increased. She seems happy but also appears burdened by it. She suggested it might be better to spend time with Marie or Cecily instead of herself, saying she's fine just exercising together on weekends, etc. It seems like she still belittles herself.

Of course, I ignored it all. Since Marie and Cecily said they could make concessions over the weekend, I was able to focus on Adelia during the weekends. Thanks to that, Adelia's face became brighter over time, and her characteristic confident smile returned. Every time I looked at her, I couldn't help but think that Adelia's smile warms the hearts of those who see it.

It was because of the pressure, not only from Nicole, that connected Adelia and me, but to say we have fully connected was a stretch. There's still a secret I haven't told her, and those around me advised caution about that matter.

Still, just being by my side, Adelia seemed happy, never losing her smile. I heard women in love are said to become childish, and perhaps reminding me of that, she continued to show cute behaviors one after another.

"Come on! Come on! Just once! Let's do it just once! Be strong!"

"Ughhh!"

Right now, I was doing squats at Adelia's dormitory, receiving vigorous encouragement. On my shoulders, a noticeably heavy barbell was lifted, boasting a weight that required mana reinforcement for the body. Since my body can easily lift a sack weighing 100kg, you can guess how heavy it is by the effort I'm putting in.

Although I consistently train my lower body through squats, for some reason, Adelia was pushing me even more relentlessly than before.

Whether it's because I someday believe I have to contend with my own limits, or perhaps it's due to the increasing number of women around me, I don't know, but it feels like I'm tasting death. Still, it's better than truly dying in the midst of the night job. Moreover, even with the tremendous boost from Luminous, it was still unavoidable.

"Enough now!"

"Huah!"

Kwong!

As soon as the words 'enough' came from Adelia, I threw my weight down as if it were a piece of luggage. It felt as the ground trembled slightly from its weight.

While I rested on the ground, Adelia approached me and took out a white handkerchief from her pocket to wipe away the sweat. It was a very meaningful handkerchief for Adelia, one I had given her when she was lost in despair during the exhibition.

With sky-blue eyes mixed with determination and warmth, she encouraged me as she looked at me.

"You did well. Take a 10-minute break and let's move on to the next."

"…Can't I rest more?"

"No. Your body is in full development right now. Endure it like a warrior until then."

Adelia blushed and acted innocently when teased, but she's strict when it comes to exercise. Although she was somewhat forced onto the path of a knight due to her family environment, her determination was genuine. So much so that even if I begged, she would just brush it off calmly and firmly.

Thanks to her, I've seen a dramatic increase in my stamina every week. While Luminous has bestowed some sacred power upon me, Adelia's support was the most significant. Originally, exercise tends to be doubly effective with someone's assistance. Especially Adelia, according to my father's words, prioritized efficiency and was someone full of vigor.

'So, her body…'

I glanced at Adelia while she wiped my sweat. She was wearing custom-made attire for exercise, all provided by my family. The pants were like what Nicole wore, a tracksuit, while the top was a tank top that revealed her abdomen and arms, designed to keep her cool.

Although I had seen it once by chance before, it still caught my attention. Her body always exuded a healthy beauty. The well-trained abs beyond the level of merely impressive made me want to touch them.

“Where are you looking?”

“Oh.”

Adelia asked me in a somewhat embarrassed tone, seemingly noticing that I was blatantly staring. Only then did I avert my gaze from her abs and look toward her face.

Blushing slightly, she seemed embarrassed and shyly covered her stomach. She must have noticed where my gaze was directed.

Before, I might have turned away in embarrassment and said nothing, but not anymore. What’s there to be embarrassed about when I’ve already accepted her? Soon enough, we’ll be seeing everything about each other.

Above all, I couldn’t help but think she was truly amazing. Really. Despite women naturally having far fewer muscles than men, to have developed such defined abs symbolized her countless efforts.

So, without any ulterior motive, I spoke my mind.

“Just impressive. Even my older sister wasn’t at that level.”

“…Really?”

Adelia must have sensed the sincerity in my words as she slowly revealed her covered abdomen with both arms. Then, she glanced at me and, with a slightly trembling voice, made a request.

“Uhm, would you like to touch it once?”

“What?”

Did I hear it wrong? With a bewildered expression, I looked at Adelia, whose face was turning as red as a tomato. But soon after, she covered her face with both hands,

lowered her head, and collapsed to the ground.

“Ah… this isn’t it… what am I doing…”

“…”

What is she doing alone? She said it herself, but seeing her embarrassed state made me smile involuntarily.

Yet, in her own way, she must have shown courage. I gently reached out and stroked her head as she lay on the ground, trying to comfort her.

When I patted her head, Adelia flinched slightly. But soon after, she relaxed and started to enjoy my touch.

“I’ll pretend I didn’t hear.”

“…Thank you.”

As she replied with gratitude, I smiled and slowly lowered my face. I developed a new hobby with Adelia.

Eventually, I brought my face close to hers and spoke softly with a teasing voice.

“After all, soon I’ll be able to touch without any reservations, right?”

“···Huek.”

That was teasing Adelia. Whether she understood the suggestive tone of my words or not, she startled and let out a surprised scream. Because she showed such fresh reactions every time I played a prank like this, I couldn’t stop doing it.

I looked at her blushing face and couldn’t help but burst into laughter before slowly lifting my head. Adelia still had no intention of raising her face.

‘She’s really cute.’

Little by little, if I give her affection, she’ll choose me even when I reveal that I’m Xenon. In fact, there’s no reason for her to become a member of the Ters Kingdom royalty.

Being my woman was a much higher position than becoming a member of the Ters Kingdom royalty.

‘But why does Hiriya keep sticking around these days? I don’t understand.’

While I continued to gently stroke Adelia’s head, who was still not fully recovered, I thought of Hiriya.

After losing to Adelia in the duel, Hiriya continued to approach me for reasons unknown. Even the reason for exercising in Adelia’s dormitory today seemed to be because of that. While exercising in the training grounds, Hiriya would suddenly appear and intervene between us.

I can’t openly show my dislike, especially since she’s not just an ordinary noble but practically a princess from another country. I already have an official fiancé, yet she’s showing an excessive amount of interest.

‘Surely, she wouldn’t be attempting an impossible seduction.’

Maybe she just dislikes how close Adelia and I are. Besides, since I started exercising in the dormitory, I rarely have a chance to meet her.

Right now…

“Noona? When are we starting our exercise?”

“You… Are you doing this on purpose?”

“Isn’t it because noona is cute?”

“Ugh…”

Let’s enjoy this peaceful weekend. Spoilers or whatever, as long as I’m happy in the present.

‘But I wonder if Kate will come back.’

******

The kingdom of Xavier was currently in a state of considerable turmoil. It wasn’t just a simple state of confusion, one could even say that the very foundations were being shaken.

Not only have ordinary clergy members been implicated, but even a high-ranking cardinal has been revealed to have conspired with devil worshippers. Furthermore, the impact of devil worshippers on the world was more significant than anticipated.

The people of Xavier have begun to question the integrity of the entire kingdom due to the presence of a corrupt cardinal. They were even suspicious of ordinary clergy members.

How can they trust clergy who, in alliance with devil worshippers, have betrayed their sacred duties? Are you truly clergy who faithfully follow the teachings of Luminous?

As a result, a new cultural phenomenon called ‘Mass’ emerged, where clergy and ordinary citizens intermingle in prayer. Personal worship can be conducted at any time, but Mass, being close to an ‘obligation,’ was conducted without regard for social rank.

Although this helped extinguish the urgent flames, incidents of clergy receiving direct punishment from Luminous during Mass occurred frequently. Recognizing the severe progression of the clergy’s corruption beyond initial expectations, Xavier declared a ‘Holy War’ even up to the ‘Holy See.’

If that’s the case, what might Kate, the initiator of all this and the Grand Inquisitor, be doing now? She’s currently confined in solitary confinement within the sacred halls of the Holy See for perpetrating violence. However, merits are merits, so it’s a matter of course that she’ll soon be released.

Through a small hole, only a speck of light entered the pitch-black cell. As the thick iron door of the cell opened, someone came into view.

Thick, bushy eyebrows obscured his eyes, much like his voluminous beard—a senior cardinal named Deimos, belonging to the same rank as Cardinal Bark, and one of the eyewitnesses who directly witnessed the punishment handed down by Luminous.

Deimos looked around the solitary cell, where only a single beam of light shone. His gaze shifted towards the center. There, he noticed Kate, kneeling in devout prayer, relying on a single ray of light. She prayed earnestly.

“…Grant us light, please. Bestow upon us the power to bring hope to the just and wield the scourge upon the corrupt,”

Unperturbed by Deimos opening the cell door, she continued reciting her prayer. It was one of the venerable doctrines passed down among the inquisitors, particularly fitting for the current situation.

As Kate finished her prayer, Deimos, in his aged voice, called out.

“…Cardinal Kate.”

“Yes, Cardinal Deimos.”

Responding to his call, Kate slowly rose from her seat. Despite being confined to the cell, her beauty remained undiminished, having meticulously taken care of herself, a marked difference from her past.

Deimos could sense it. The aura of sanctity emanating from her had grown severalfold. The scent of lilacs, denser within the cell, even making one’s nose tingle. According to the guards, she spent the whole day reciting prayers, except for meal and sleep times, indicating the intensity of her faith.

“For what reason have you come?”

“It’s the Pope’s directive. You are now allowed to come out.”

“I see. Thank you.”

Kate, with a genuinely grateful expression, nodded graciously, sporting a kind smile. Deimos, sensing an unfamiliar reverence in her smile and actions, couldn’t help but feel taken aback.

Receiving grace from Luminous, she naturally possessed a strong sanctity, but even to him, a fellow cardinal, her demeanor exuded an unprecedented sense of reverence. This was no ordinary occurrence.

Kate, already possessing a sanctity that surpassed that of a cardinal for quite some time, felt inexplicable, surrounded by the scent of lilacs filling the solitary room.

Observing this, Deimos cleared his throat and, after a few hesitant coughs, spoke in a quiet voice.

“What are your plans now? Will you continue on the pilgrimage path to find Xenon as before?”

“Yes. That’s the plan.”

Kate, once again embarking on the pilgrimage path to find Xenon after stopping midway, had an obvious plan in mind.

However, Deimos suspected that she might have already found Xenon. Her words during the Cardinal Bark incident echoed in his mind.

‘Dare to doubt him…’

One couldn't make such statements without meeting someone in person. While it could refer to Luminous, Deimos, with his extensive experience, could discern subtle gaps.

Yet, he wouldn't ask directly. There was the immediate need to pacify the confusion of Xavier, and besides, he felt too old. Such complicated matters had to be set aside, focusing on the present reality.

However, curiosity couldn't be easily suppressed. What exactly did Kate intend to do upon meeting Xenon?

He smoothed his lush beard and asked cautiously.

"May I ask a question?"

"I'm always willing to take questions from Cardinal Deimos."

"If you meet Xenon, what are you planning to do?"

At that question, Kate blinked her green eyes slowly and then flashed a gentle smile. She neatly folded her hands and paused.

Was it an illusion that the single beam of light emerging from behind grew stronger? Deimos gazed, utterly captivated by her divine figure.

Hwaaang…

The single beam of light that had been the only thing in the dark cell began to brighten, gradually illuminating the entire cell, far brighter than before, as if dispelling all the surrounding darkness, a majestic and beautiful sight.

While Deimos was left speechless by the indescribable scene, Kate, with a soft smile, finally spoke.

"My original goal was to receive his seed and please Luminous. But that was my arrogance and misconception. He was not a 'light' that someone like me could contain. He's blindingly beautiful, radiant, and divine to the point of blinding one's eyes."

"…"

"So I want to go to him and deliver my words."

Finally, she released her clasped hands and slowly moved downward. Past her ample chest, past her spine and navel, finally to the lower abdomen where the child would be

growing.

Kate looked down at her lower abdomen with sparkling green eyes, gently running her hand over it before speaking.

“To plant his seed, and it grow abundantly.”

There was an immaculate purity, untouched by even an ounce of filth, yet it held a terrifying ‘madness’ because of it.

“To spread his ‘seeds’ of light far and wide.”

Not knowing what went wrong.

“Including me.”

It was the true image of a fanatic.

Translators note:

Chapter 234: Balance (1)

Let me say it again. I am not a slave to Professor Elena at the Halo Academy, but rather a teaching assistant. I might even be considered as a potential successor as the next assistant after Cindy.

Naturally, I have a lot of responsibilities, not just assisting Elena or teaching Cindy, who recently obtained a doctoral degree, how to write.

In addition to writing, there was a lot of work to be done. Furthermore, while working as a teaching assistant, I have learned numerous advantages and disadvantages.

First, let me talk about the disadvantages – it's busy. Incredibly busy. It's not just a matter of being busy; there is a mountain of research to be done, and I have to move around here and there.

Not only do I have to approach other professors for information related to Elena's research, but I even have to reach out to professors from different departments, not just in history, to request materials. As mentioned before, there is no internet here, so to find information, I have to either read books or, if not that, physically run around. And I was currently in the midst of doing just that.

Furthermore, Elena often sought my opinions whenever she was writing papers, as she seems to highly regard my knowledge of history and philosophy. The problem is that she, having accumulated knowledge and experiences that ordinary humans could never fathom, can be quite daunting in many respects. Therefore, I am making efforts to assist her even a little.

Next, an advantage that is similar to a disadvantage is her vast knowledge related to history, pouring out like a rushing stream. Elena's research lab was already filled with numerous historical books and papers, even containing ancient texts whose origins remain unknown.

There's even a diary written by a human soldier from the era of racial war. Not only that, but it's so well preserved that it's an immensely valuable relic of history. Yet,

Elena casually tossed it to me, suggesting I should give it a read.

When I asked her if it was alright for her to give me something so precious, she simply replied that it wasn't a significant period by her standards. Thanks to her, I am once again reminded that she is an elf with a lifespan close to a thousand years.

To an elf, 300 years ago would be like 30 years ago to a human, so differences in perspective are inevitable. Nevertheless, by my standards, it's quite an important item.

'It seems the army is the same wherever you go.'

The contents of the diary were indeed very military-like, whether one should call it rough or just realistically practical. It's filled with the mundane details of an insignificant soldier rolling about.

Whether it's rushing forward to take down an elven warrior by any means, even if comrades fall, or drinking improperly purified water leading to stomach troubles, or finally, biting into bread only to feel the grit of sand.

One striking aspect here was PTSD. There's a daily rant about the army, yet surprisingly, there's almost no depiction of symptoms related to PTSD.

Of course, occasionally they dream of colleagues dying or hear their voices as if they're haunted. There have been mild symptoms, but compared to the harsh conditions of the military, they were relatively minor.

The reason became apparent with each battle against the elves. Every time they fought them, a strong sense of hatred and resentment emerged, calling them 'ear freaks' or feeling indifferent even if tearing apart those damn creatures.

'It seems there's contempt directed towards the elves.'

While it's difficult to treat stress after trauma, there's a way to somewhat alleviate it: by justifying one's actions.

Comparing soldiers from World War II and the Vietnam War reveals a certain significance. World War II had a firm belief in fighting against a great evil, the Axis powers, but the Vietnam War was different, simply fighting for national interests.

The owner of this diary was similar. Apparently, before the racial war, elves didn't just look down on humans; they treated them like monkeys.

Even the owner of this diary suffered explicit racial discrimination from elves in the past, implying it was prevalent throughout their society.

In response, humans formed an alliance and declared war on Alvenheim. It could be seen as self-inflicted, and the downfall of the elves was due to their excessive disdain for humans.

The difference between the old and new generations of elves might stem from this.

'Rank… There's almost no difference from now.'

Even the hierarchy among ordinary soldiers resembled something akin to ancient Rome, such as centurions and commanders. The owner of this diary was initially an ordinary soldier but later got promoted to a centurion.

Nevertheless, compared to knights, he was nothing more than an ordinary soldier, as common as they come. The gap between knights and soldiers cannot be easily bridged, and the reason is the use of 'mana.'

Even if mana exists in this world, it's absolutely not something everyone, from dogs to people, can wield. Elves and demons were exceptions, but in ancient times, only the chosen few among humans could manifest it.

Fortunately, as time passed and civilization progressed, knowledge accumulated, making it more accessible. Currently, all academy students can use mana, and even someone like me, who only received basic physical training at the mansion, can enhance their body using mana.

However, that's about it. I cannot wield mana in a way that allows me to slice rocks with a sword imbued with mana, like others. It takes considerable effort to manifest it externally, even if the potential exists within.

Of course, unless you're an unrivaled genius, you can't use mana as you want. These are what are commonly referred to as 'heroes.'

'Looking at it this way, it's amazing that humans won the racial war.'

The strength of an elven warrior depicted in the book was truly calamitous. Splitting five soldiers in half with a single stroke was merely the basics, and what's more terrifying was the magic.

It's written that when the elves were cornered, the magic they unleashed in a final act wreaked havoc to the extent of nearly wiping them out.

Fortunately, with the support of the knights, the elves were eliminated, but the diarist's unit suffered critical injuries, requiring substantial time for recuperation.

Afterward, with the war over, discharge followed, leading to engagement and eventually marriage, culminating in the birth of lovely children.

'It was really well written?'

It's not just an ordinary diary; the immersion is no joke. There are moments where I was deeply engaged, elements that drew me in, and even incidents born from the distinct military culture that provoked laughter.

Of course, it's not without depth. The diary's owner sometimes contemplates whether it's right to engage in war, facing skepticism, or feels powerless, unable to do anything when a comrade falls.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that this diary is an artifact of immense historical and cultural value. I found myself lost in contemplation after closing the worn-out journal.

'There truly is a vast difference between regular soldiers and knights.'

When people think of war, they often think of knights, neglecting the ordinary soldiers. Frankly speaking, as written in this diary, regular soldiers are essentially meat shields.

They may handle other human soldiers, but they lack a lot when facing elves and demons who can wield mana from birth, as well as races with inherently superior hardware.

If we liken this to a game scenario, it's akin to a single zergling confronting a zealot instead of a marine. This is the reality for regular soldiers who can't even defeat human knights.

'However, a regular elven warrior is on par with a human knight.'

As mentioned before, they are regular warriors. Just as there are knights among humans, there exist similar ranks among elves.

The difference is that while warriors rely solely on physical prowess, they are essentially unarmed combatants. Elven knights, on the other hand, are combat mages

who combine magic with combat.

As if facing a single warrior isn't difficult enough, how much more challenging would it be to confront a knight? According to records, it took four to five human knights to take down a single elven knight.

The internal division within Alvheim was a contributing factor to our victory, but the humans, like a swarm of ants, played a significant role by relentlessly pushing their forces.

Even with the support from the demons, we could not launch an attack, but we could defend ourselves. Especially remarkable was how the humans spared no effort, even resorting to covert operations, while the elves refrained from such tactics. Despite the efforts of their warrior commander, Ikher, well… as you know, he was imprisoned, thanks to the relentless trolling by the Council of Elders.

Looking at it this way, the Council of Elders' actions were incomprehensible to the extent that one might think they were in favor of the humans.

'Back then the beastmen were not just lacking in civilization at that time but also lacked proper unity. Moreover, beastmen excel only in physical attributes.'

Even among the beastmen, regular warriors cannot wield mana; their hardware itself is just insanely superior. The fundamental reason why the massacre of beastmen, akin to the Holocaust, was possible 300 years ago was due to the disparity in civilization.

As the saying goes, 'Divide and conquer,' it's much more advantageous to fight two battles of 100 against 50 each than a straight 100 versus 100. The massacre of beastmen happened through such a process.

Anyway, after 300 years, with the advancement of civilization, various educational institutions were established, and the accessibility of mana drastically increased, leading to an upward leveling. To grasp mana, the presence of a 'teacher' is crucial, and educational institutions have taken on that role. It is the experience and driving force of human development acquired through the racial war 300 years ago.

'But setting that aside, how powerful are devils, really?'

In Xenon's Biography, numerous devils as mentioned in the literature make appearances. Not the Seven Deadly Sins but devils commonly referred to as mere minions.

The Seven Deadly Sins will be driven out anyway by the main characters, so let's assume that's settled. The problem lies with the ordinary devils. Not only do they possess considerable power, but their sheer numbers are staggering. The fundamental reason they were able to occupy Alvenheim, or rather Elvenheim as depicted in the book, was due to their overwhelming quantity.

Will the allied forces hold up while the main characters confront the Seven Deadly Sins? Humans might have their numbers, but fundamentally, they're destined to collapse in the face of a significant difference in specifications. Of course, if they somehow manage to withstand it and it's briefly described, readers will easily accept it. After all, Xenon's Biography is not about ordinary soldiers but the story of heroes.

'In order to effectively counteract such numbers…'

Magic was perfect for that. To be precise, it's potent 'firepower'.

In this world, gunpowder and cannons exist. However, only humans and dwarves use them; elves and demons naturally rely on magic, and giants don't depend on machinery.

Moreover, there are spells that emit firepower several times stronger, so they don't feel the necessity to use cannons.

In a world where magic substitutes for science, the progress of 'machinery' was significantly slower compared to my past life.

'Nevertheless, a magical engine has been invented.'

Everyone knows that Ains invented the magic engine. Currently, with support from the dwarven nation, Makina, he's in the process of jointly inventing magical locomotives.

Although the invention of magical locomotives, symbolizing the civilization of machinery, has occurred, there's still skepticism surrounding its potential superiority over magic and its efficiency.

'I won't include this in Volume 18 but consider it for Volume 19.'

If five human soldiers can wield the power of a human knight, would they believe it?

By the way, this plot twist will not be resolved in Xenon's Biography but will unfold in the future during the Second World War-esque novel that I will write. Although the universes are not connected, I plan to showcase the peak of a mechanical civilization.

Even though there's a high chance, as Luminous said, that dwarves might bring tanks to the exhibition, I have to make use of what I have. I turned my head while gazing at the old journal.

In the direction I turned, I saw Elena working on her thesis and Cindy researching materials next to her.

"Have you finished reading it all?"

Perhaps sensing my gaze, Elena momentarily set down her pen and looked at me. Adjusting her slightly slipping glasses, she had an intellectual appearance.

Upon hearing her question, I lifted the old journal and replied.

"Where did you get this from?"

"From my apprentice. Apparently, it's a journal written by their ancestor."

"Then what is that apprentice doing now?"

"They're deceased. Because their descendants passed away early, it was handed down to me."

"… …"

It's a moment when the aura of the elves stacked even higher. Elena, noticing my uneasiness, propped her chin with both hands and made a subtle expression.

I've seen that expression many times before, so I know well what it means. It's the face she makes when she casually tosses a thesis or interesting material at me, asks me to read it, and then demands my opinion.

"So, after reading it, what do you think?"

As expected, Elena asked for my thoughts on the worn-out reading journal. Cindy, who had been researching materials nearby, seemed curious too, setting down her stack of papers and turning her gaze towards me.

Still with dark, intense circles around her eyes and piercing gaze, there was a deep curiosity within. I wonder why everyone seems to lean on me as one.

I rolled my eyes thoughtfully, pondering what to say, and just blurted out the thought in my mind.

“I’m curious about how the elves discriminated against humans in the past. Disdain towards elves is evident throughout the diary, yet there’s simultaneous awe for their power.”

“You read it correctly.. During the racial wars, elves were indeed a bundle of arrogance itself. They held not just humans but all other races beneath their feet.”

After saying this, Elena brought up a rather unsettling story.

“I used to wonder why these arrogant elves didn’t conquer other nations. Even though they’re elves, the lack of a desire for dominance seemed odd. However, Xenon’s Biography answered that question all at once.”

“Xenon’s Biography?”

“Yes. It was explained in Xenon’s Biography. The incident of the dark elf expulsion. They went into chaos, trying to dominate each other, which led to a massive fallout. The aftermath of that incident probably instilled a sense of restraint among them. Of course, their inherent arrogance wasn’t fixed, hence the bloodshed during the racial wars.”

“I see.”

It’s possible. Indeed, as she mentioned, the elves before the racial wars seemed somewhat inclined towards fascism.

Even if imperialism were rampant and occupying other countries at this very moment, given the situation, the Dark Elf expulsion incident might not have seemed peculiar, and caution might have been exercised in all matters. Moreover, bound by the ‘law’ as a shackle, the scholarly nature of the elves might have compelled them to stay quiet.

“That could be possible. But do you believe everything written in Xenon’s Biography?”

“Just that alone explains why the Council insisted on the formation of laws and further elucidates why Alvenheim remained silent. I’ll be presenting it soon at Yggdrasil.”

Yggdrasil is where prominent scholars gather periodically to present their research findings. While there’s no specific name, it’s akin to a seminar. Originally, only elves could attend, but after Arwen’s open policy, other races were allowed. This expanded its scale significantly.

Occasionally, due to differences in lifespans, situations arise that aren’t laughable. Sometimes, when a few humans vanish, the elves finally grasp the disparity in lifespans.

After carefully considering Elena's story, a question suddenly occurred to me, so I asked her:

"Professor."

"Yes?"

"If there were no mana in the world, what do you think would happen?"

At my question, both Elena and Cindy blinked, wearing puzzled expressions. Their expressions clearly conveyed a lack of understanding.

It's not like my question was difficult, so I can't fathom why they're reacting like this. As I pondered with a tilted head, Cindy, in her characteristic hesitant voice, asked.

"What are you talking about…?"

"What?"

"Without mana… I don't understand what you mean…"

Following Cindy, Elena spoke next.

"I feel the same way. A world without mana? Is that even possible? If there's no mana, wouldn't humanity have become extinct long ago?"

"Is it really that extreme?"

"'Of course. We can't even handle ogres without magic, let alone deal with orcs, without mana, we elves would be nothing more than pretty dolls. Lifespan is closely related to mana, so we'd probably be similar to humans. Perhaps humanity would have peacefully gone extinct."

Some rather pessimistic speculations poured out. Cindy beside me nodded in agreement, sharing a similar sentiment.

As someone with memories from a past life, I couldn't help but feel bewildered. After all, I retain vivid memories from a past life while they are people living in this world; naturally, there would be differences.

I scratched my head and reluctantly agreed.

"Well… I understand your thoughts. It seems like an impossible story."

“It is impossible. Unless, of course, there comes a weapon comparable to magic, but if it’s written in a paper, it might as well be a novel, not a thesis.”

Surprised by those words, I tried to remain as composed as possible and quietly spoke up.

“…Then, how do you perceive Ains’s invention of the mana engine?”

“Well, Xenon is a regressor, so it might be possible for them. If it weren’t for that, we wouldn’t have even thought of it.”

So, that’s why there was the talk about bringing a tank. I let out a wry smile after hearing her response.

‘...I should just throw in some breadcrumbs.’

I contemplated whether to write a thesis about it but decided to set it aside for now.

Translators note:

Chapter 235: Balance (2)

The discussion about balance brings up this point: in terms of balance, there cannot be the absence of "rivals." They are so strong that one cannot easily judge their superiority, even in symbolic terms; they are individuals who never fall behind.

In past lives, there have been various rivals, such as lion vs. tiger, AK-47 vs. M16, Naruto vs. Sasuke, deep-fried chicken vs. soy sauce-marinated chicken, or Cao Cao vs. Liu Bei, and so on. There are diverse rivalries.

Even if something strange intervenes in between, let's ignore it. Anyway, if they are rivals, they are rivals.

People enjoy evaluating which side prevails when similar forces confront each other. Without this tendency, the aforementioned wouldn't even come up.

Sometimes, on the internet, you can see users fighting between imagined things or games. Especially when it's hard to determine superiority, they might fight all day long.

Externally recognized rivalries, like those mentioned, often keep others busy arguing and debating, even if the individuals involved don't really care. That's also how it is in the world I've been reborn into.

Throughout history, there have been various rivalries, but there are venerable rivalries that have persisted since the Devil War.

That would be the Elves and the Demons. Just hearing about it makes one's heart feel grand.

The Elves, undoubtedly the chosen race of the gods and the symbol of light, contrast with the Demons, a race tainted by demons and symbolizing darkness.

Both races possess abilities that do not allow emulation by other races, yet strangely, there have been almost no direct clashes between them.

However, they have a close association with humans. Elves have a history of being defeated by humans during the racial wars, and demons themselves share origins with humans.

In fact, even if they were considered rivals, when elves and demons were compared, most people chose elves. More accurately, they had no choice but to choose them.

That's because until the era of Xenon's Biography, demons were persecuted and couldn't dare reveal themselves to the world. No one knows how they would be perceived if one chose demons.

However, things changed after Xenon's Biography emerged. Since then, the situation has been different. Without needing to worry about others' opinions, one could establish connections with demons and openly compare their strengths and abilities.

Therefore, a certain philosopher described elves as noble and demons as venerable. It's a saying that fits so perfectly that nobody dares to challenge it.

Moreover, with each new volume of Xenon's Biography, the perception of demons was on the rise. Not only due to sacrifices made by Sakran but also because Jin and Lilly's love story shed a brighter light on demons.

Does this mean that the perception of elves is decreasing in contrast? Not quite.

Even though they revealed the darker side of the elves through the 'Council,' they also portrayed their nobility through the actions of two heroes who destroyed the World Tree.

Furthermore, with the Queen of Alvenheim, Arwen's unbiased actions and excellent policies, the perception of elves was gradually changing for the better.

Because of this, readers, and even other people, have begun to wonder.

Are elves really stronger? Or are demons stronger?

This is something I'm curious about as well. Even though elves and demons may not clash directly in the book, to maintain a balance, some adjustment is necessary.

There used to be talk about why there were no elves in the scene where demons (Jin) appeared, but when Mary's identity as an elf was revealed, that talk faded away.

Instead, there was a growing desire for someone else's active role to be richer than ever before. Especially since the 12th volume, due to being immersed in Xenon's Biography regardless of race, that aspect has become even stronger.

In other words, a fandom, particularly a toxic fandom, began to slowly emerge. It's quite a sight when even my mother is supporting Jin, while other readers are at odds.

They were rivals from before, but since Xenon's Biography, it has intensified. Sometimes, conflicts arise over this topic, reported in the newspapers that fans fought over it.

Where people live is all the same; as the popularity of Xenon's Biography rises, so does the influence of the fandom. What's noteworthy here is that even humans have become involved, despite elves and demons being the focus. Although the protagonist of Xenon's Biography is human, they are debating and fighting over who among elves and demons is stronger.

Originally, humans harbored a longing for things they cannot achieve themselves. This longing has grown, spreading even to the fight between elves and demons.

Even if elves are noble beings, there are humans who dislike them for their arrogance, and even if demons are venerable beings, there are humans who dislike them for their devilish origins.

In such an irresolvable situation, balancing things is somewhat expected. Xenon may be the protagonist, unaffected by power inflation or whatnot, but it has become a delicate situation for other main characters.

Why is that? Because my book is being treated like a prophecy, so I must be cautious, or it will spread further. Moreover, the demon princess and the elven queen were silently watching nearby.

Firstly, as Jin is the final boss, he will demonstrate a sublime sacrifice, and the nobility of the elves will also be shown similarly. Just like in every game, in the Elvenheim liberation operation, I plan to show what 'ganji' (meaning 'coolness' or 'swagger') is for both races.

However, balance becomes a hindrance here as well. Both races exhibit abilities that are monstrous from a human standpoint, so even the description must be handled with extreme caution.

‘Didn’t Cecily say before that if she were to unleash her power, she could blow up a mountain?’

This indicates that Cecily is immensely powerful to the extent of being slated as the next Demon Lord. However, what sets demons apart from other races is their use of ‘Black Mana.’

As Black Mana was originally the power used by devils, it had numerous problems in the first generation. Fortunately, through Mora’s generous support and passing through generations, it gradually became refined, leaving only purity behind.

As a result, demons are particularly noticeable for their ‘firepower.’ If other races produce an effect of 10 by using 10 mana, demons emit an effect ranging between 15 and 20.

However, it’s not that they lack accuracy or meticulousness. Recognizing themselves as the most dangerous beings, demons have consistently spared no effort in ‘restraint.’

Thanks to this, they possess magical item-making abilities comparable to dwarves, and they can make barren environments fertile. In many ways, they can be considered a versatile race.

Just looking at this, one might think that demons are an overwhelming race surpassing the elves, but the elves also possess abilities no less than theirs. They excel in magic where demons lag behind in firepower.

As a race that established the first civilization, their depth of knowledge in magic is incomparable to other races. For instance, consider arithmetic.

Humans have to groan even for 15*27, while demons and elves immediately know the answer. For them, this level of mental arithmetic is like 1+1.

However, something as complex as 2415×1172 may require even demons to calculate, but an elf can, with a slight exaggeration, calculate it all with a blink of an eye.

In other words, while they possess abilities up to a certain level equivalent to elves, beyond that, elves hold a superior position.

Precision, meticulousness, and the margin of error need no mention. Because of each one’s strengths and weaknesses, it’s not easy to easily determine superiority.

Especially now, Jin is scheduled for a direct clash with 'Gluttony', Mary is set for a confrontation with 'Lust.'

The highest-ranking official of the Seven Sins, in charge of 'pride,' the elf, will be dealing with Xenon.

Although it's a fantasy setting and there might be differences in combat power and compatibility, my intention is to rigorously maintain consistency, as I've mentioned. Thus, a situation necessitates the consultation of both races.

For demons, I can acquire knowledge through Cecily and Gartz, but the issue lies with the elves. Siris is a dark elf, hence irrelevant. Elena and Cindy are scholars far removed from combatants.

Meaning, there are hardly any individuals closely associated with 'combat.' There is Arwen, but she is currently extremely busy with state affairs.

'I did send a letter, but…'

Regarding the matters concerning Xenon's Biography, I did request Arwen's assistance. I did mention she's free to decline if she's occupied.

Arwen did say she'd come to me if she finds time. However, the issue is on elven terms, so I can't be certain when she'll come.

Firstly, it's important to thoroughly understand the power of demons. So, from now on, what I need to do is…

"So, you're asking for my help?"

"Yeah."

It's necessary to have a more detailed understanding of the strength of demons through Cecily. I've investigated it myself, but asking her directly is the most efficient way.

Moreover, she's not just strong, she's powerful enough to demolish mountains with magic. In terms of strength, Cecily cannot be excluded from consideration.

Originally, she is the model for one of the Seven Deadly Sins, Lilith. She's a very appropriate person to consult and can provide assistance regarding balance.

I'm almost done writing the 18th volume, and from the 19th volume onwards, I'll be engaging with the Seven Deadly Sins directly. So, it's better to be prepared in advance.

That's why, to also have a date and seek advice, Cecily and I came to a café alone. Cecily seemed very satisfied, making the conversation flow smoothly.

"Um… Are you considering me for the battle against Lilith?"

"Yeah. Since Lilith isn't just a regular demon but has become a devil, I thought referencing Noona's power might be helpful."

"Who will be the opponent? Still Xenon?"

"No. Mary will be the one facing her."

"Hmm…"

At the answer that it would be Mary and not Xenon, Cecily fell into thought. Meanwhile, I leisurely admired her beauty.

I wonder when was the last time that Cecily and I were alone together like we are now. Recently, whether with Adelia or joint attacks with Marie, there haven't been many instances of just the two of us.

Since Marie was always the first, there were countless times when Cecily yielded. Somehow, feeling apologetic, today I intended to be as considerate as possible.

"If I decide to unleash my power, well… isn't Mary strong too?"

"As the heroine and an elf, you could say she's strong. She has a lot of combat experience."

"Hmm… still, it's vague. How many people in the world are as strong as me, I wonder?"

"Ah, I see."

It's a response that's easily understood at once. It might sound a bit arrogant, but it's none other than Cecily.

The reason I believe in her like this is also because I witnessed a part of her power with my own eyes in Helium. Like a laser, a beam shot from her index finger, causing a boulder the size of a house to explode.

So, Lilith's strength may be a little lower than her, but I can refer to her for the 'Gluttony', Belzebub.

“Got it. Then, I should just refer to Nona’s fighting style for Lilith. As for strength, I’ll use it for Belzebub.”

“Huh? Belzebub? Who’s that?”

“Ah.”

I accidentally mentioned the Belzebub’s name. As I realized my mistake, Cecily’s eyes narrowed, and with a voice that seemed to question, she asked me.

“Surely it’s not one of the Seven Deadly Sins’ names, right? Every time the Seven Deadly Sins appear, a name comes up.”

“…Sorry.”

“A year ago, it was from Rina, and now it’s from the author.”

I accidentally spoiled it. You might say that the name isn’t important, but demons like Cecily treat Xenon’s Biography almost like scripture.

Naturally, even the names of individual characters are important, and major figures like the Seven Deadly Sins haven’t properly had their names revealed yet, except for a few.

Moreover, ‘Gluttony’, Belzebub, is Jin’s older brother and a presence comparable to ‘Pride’ in terms of power.

I was planning to throw a huge teaser related to him at the end of Volume 18, but I made a huge mistake.

Furthermore, although everyone normally connects Belzebub with ‘Gluttony,’ people in this world have no clue. It would have unraveled like a string of sausages with just one name, and I accidentally exposed that fact.

Seemingly unaware of my feelings, Cecily brushed her hair back and forgave me this time with a tone that said it was the last time.

“Well, if it’s not that important, I’ll forgive you. It’s just a name; we can move past it.”

“…Is it not important?”

“……”

As the author, saying that It's important made Cecily freeze instantly. In her crimson eyes, there was a mix of bewilderment and disbelief.

I've been a sinner, a bad guy, for thoughtlessly babbling. Lowering my head, I received her piercing gaze. I don't have the courage to lift it.

"Haah… Isaac."

"Yeah…"

"First, let's go to your dorm and think slowly, very slowly. Got it?"

"Got it."

So this is how it ends up. I got up silently chuckling to myself. Probably won't do anything like that as soon as I get into the dorm. Cecily liked to mix bodies to express love; except for her evil cycle, when she wasn't unable to control her desires like a cat in heat.

In other words, she's coming to my dorm to really hear me say it. And then, after that, I'll probably apologize. How I'll apologize… everyone already knows. Seems like today's writing has gone off track.

With that thought, as we arrived at the dormitory door arm in arm, Cecily paused and voiced her doubts.

"Yeah?"

"Why's someone inside now?"

"What?"

The mention of someone being inside a personal dormitory was startling. A dormitory was unequivocally personal space, and without a key, one could never enter.

But someone being inside… that was definitely not an easy problem to dismiss. Especially considering that Xenon's Biography manuscript was inside the dorm.

If it's an intruder, the situation becomes serious. I urgently unlocked the door with a key and stepped inside. As soon as I entered, amidst the strong scent of lilacs for a moment, I could see someone reading manuscript 18 at the desk. At that moment, that person seemed to sense my presence and startled, looking in my direction.

“Who…!”

“Uh, uh…”

“…are you?”

And as our eyes met, we both couldn’t help but be surprised simultaneously. Because…

“Arwen?”

“Y-you?”

Arwen, who was supposed to be busy with national affairs, stood there, holding unfinished manuscripts in both hands. As I stared at her dumbfounded, Arwen quickly placed the manuscripts on the desk and desperately exclaimed.

“I-I didn’t see anything!”

Translators note:

Chapter 236: Magnificent (1)

The situation explaining why Arwen was in my dorm and reading the manuscript roughly goes like this:

Last time, Arwen mentioned it, and through letters, we discussed the possibility of meeting if time allowed. However, I'm busy in my own way, and Arwen, with her hands full of state affairs, doesn't really need a separate explanation.

To give you an idea of how much is piled up, some elves, despite spending several nights without rest, collapsed due to overwork, or something along those lines.

Arwen's political philosophy is awkward and challenging for elves who resist change, and furthermore, the Council of Elders, which was a symbol of Alvenheim, vanished into history.

Moreover, as I've mentioned before, Arwen has become much busier due to the tantrums of Fieren. Somehow, she ended up becoming the closest link to Xenon after the CEO.

Every day is a continuous stream of demanding tasks, but Arwen is also a person. Personal time is necessary, and rest is inevitable. So, after dealing with a pile of documents for several days, she came to the academy to meet me as promised.

However, because her face was somewhat known through her speech, she couldn't simply walk in openly. She teleported to my coordinates, which she figured out through Siris, instead.

It was vague to roam outside freely, and most importantly, since she didn't know where I was, she decided it was better to wait.

Although teleporting was a good idea, it seems she was surprised by seeing the manuscript of Xenon's Biography Volume 18 on my desk.

Who wouldn't be surprised to find the next volume lying right in front of them? Initially, she tried to endure it, but eventually, she seems to have succumbed to temptation.

Honestly, even I, being myself, would want to sneak a peek at the manuscript. It's related to the next volume that can't even be bought with money. Just a little peek, right? That thought might have crossed her mind.

The problem was that Arwen had fallen too deeply into it. Normally, she would have sensed my approach and immediately put the manuscript on the desk, but there was no chance for that.

Already cautious due to Rain's stolen draft incident, it was a situation where one had to be careful in many ways, and unfortunately, it happened at that precise timing.

"Thankfully, at least. You didn't steal it like someone else would have."

"…I'm sorry."

Cecily's voice sounded mocking, as if she didn't approve of Arwen's actions. Arwen, aware of her own fault, lowered her head along with her apology.

In Cecily's crimson eyes looking at Arwen, there was a deep suspicion and animosity. Even if the draft theft incident was Rain's arbitrary act, Arwen's responsibility was also substantial.

Moreover, Cecily was a demon. For demons, Xenon's Biography was a divine grace and a book akin to scriptures.

For Rain to steal the Xenon's Biography' draft and now for Arwen secretly sneak in to read the manuscript made Cecily inevitably uncomfortable.

As for me, knowing that Arwen wasn't that kind of person, I could overlook it as rather insignificant. She didn't steal the manuscript; she just read it.

Instead, I wonder if it was really necessary for her to teleport straight to my dormitory. It seemed a bit too hasty, considering she could have been informed through Siris beforehand.

"Lift your head, Arwen. You don't have to be too sorry. I can understand."

"T-thank you…"

As I gently reassured her, Arwen slowly lifted her bowed head. There was a touch of emotion in her twinkling, galaxy-like gray eyes.

Now, with a difference of at least one head, she looked up at me from below. Already looking younger than her age, her eyes were moist, making me feel apologetic. It's almost unfair to be looked up at with such a youthful appearance.

I barely restrained the urge to stroke Arwen's head and started with a question instead.

"I understand why you came to my dorm. But couldn't you have informed me through Siris?"

"That's true, but wouldn't that reduce the time we spend together?"

"Hmm?"

Cecily, who had her arms crossed, raised an eyebrow and let out a sigh. Her expression and reaction conveyed a message of 'See this?'

Honestly, it's a statement containing a fair amount of misunderstanding. If anyone hears it, they might mistakenly think that Arwen has feelings for me.

However, considering Arwen's situation here, sadly, she doesn't have anyone who could be considered a friend. When she was in Alvenheim, she couldn't trust anyone due to the Council, and now, due to her demanding duties, she doesn't even have the chance to build friendships.

Though she gets along with some elves, it's still challenging to get close due to her position as a queen.

In other words, practically speaking, apart from me, there's hardly anyone with whom she could lay down the mantle of being an Elven Queen and talk freely. Even Rain, who was her ward, was living in hiding due to a suspended sentence.

I understood Arwen's words through appropriate filtering and nodded my head.

"Well, then, nothing can be done. But…"

I paused, clouding my words momentarily as I glanced beneath Arwen's face. Due to the height difference, only the face was visible, but as my gaze shifted downward, a striking outfit caught my attention.

Arwen typically wore a silver-gray dress that complemented her hair color, snugly fitted like a knitted one-piece. Even now, she wore a similar style of dress, but the issue lay with the side.

The description of it being ‘ripped at the sides’ seemed fitting, as it was quite boldly exposed. Arwen already boasted a superior hip line, and this dress, emphasizing it further, drew all attention in that direction.

Whether she skillfully utilized her strengths or simply chose without much thought, I couldn’t tell. Knowing Arwen’s personality, it was probably the latter. She likely just put on whatever was handed to her.

“Hey there? Where are you looking?”

Arwen, sensing my gaze, grinned and questioned me. Judging by that expression, it was evident she had no idea what she was wearing. If this was all an act, she must be hiding a few secrets deep within. I replied somewhat nervously.

“Um… Aren’t you cold?”

“Oh, this outfit? It’s a dress I received as a gift from the noble family this time. Does it suit me well?”

It seemed she wasn’t even aware. Arwen casually rested her hands on her exposed side and swept them down to her hips.

If one were to focus solely on that act, it was bound to provoke a man’s imagination, leaving no choice but to turn a blind eye. Normally, the pelvis should remain relatively unnoticed when standing still, but Arwen’s was slender down to her waist. Clad in a tight-knit dress that emphasized every curve, her figure was distinct and well-defined.

Above all, her pelvis was her forte, yet other aspects were above average, too outstanding to ignore, despite her slightly shorter stature being a potential issue. Her proportions were excellent, making any flaws inconspicuous from afar.

‘I don’t know who gifted this, but…’

Sincerely, I want to praise whoever did. It was as if they had amplified her strengths multiple times over, truly tailor-made for Arwen. Not only did it match the queen’s position in terms of design, but it also exuded the unique nobility of an elf.

Though I’d like to discreetly admire from afar, it might lead to an embarrassing situation, especially with Cecily nearby, silently observing. She might have a mindset that doesn’t mind more women around me, but once this news reaches Marie or Nicole’s ears, it’ll escalate beyond control.

Thus, inwardly, I prayed to Luminous and, opening my closed eyes, looked at Arwen.

Arwen, as if entirely unaware of her actions, gazed up at me with innocent, silver-gray eyes. If one were to judge solely by her face, she exuded pure innocence and the distinctive nobility of an elf—a celestial being descended from the heavens.

“Well, it suits you well. They say ‘clothes are wings’(korean proverb), you look like a real angel.”

“T-that’s quite the metaphor befitting of you.”

With a generous amount of sincerity in my praise, Arwen blushed and felt embarrassed. However, she subtly touched her side, which genuinely seemed cold.

Meanwhile, there was someone not pleased with this situation. For some reason, Cecily had a sulky expression on her face.

She stood with crossed arms, observing our conversation. Then, she opened her mouth with a voice that felt sharp, as if she was poking.

“So, what are you going to do from now on?”

“Huh?”

Only then did the shy Arwen turn her head towards Cecily. Eyes filled with dissatisfaction, a pair of reddish-brown and pure gray met each other’s gaze.

Maybe it was due to the height difference. Arwen’s gaze kept moving down and then up again. Cecilia seemed to be doing the same.

At first glance, it might seem like they were exploring each other, but I had a different thought. Maybe they were examining each other’s bodies just like I did earlier.

They each had magnificent advantages in terms of chests and hips. Moreover, their greatest advantage was not just limited to those areas but far exceeded the average in other parts as well.

Just as I was really engrossed in lascivious thoughts, Cecilia, seemingly still displeased, said to Arwen.

“By the way, Isaac and I were enjoying a rare date. But it’s very inconvenient for the queen to interfere.”

Despite her courteous words, Cecily's tone had an underlying edge. Why interfere when we were enjoying a sweet date?

Moreover, Arwen had entered my lodging and even peeked at the manuscript, so she couldn't possibly look kindly upon her.

"I… I'm really sorry. I just wanted some rest…"

Arwen lowered her head, expressing her regret, seemingly aware of that fact too. Seeing her drooping shoulders made me feel sorry for her.

She's been carrying the heavy responsibility of being a queen for so long and finally had a moment of liberation. Yet, even that relaxation had been disrupted by others.

Then, after pondering for a while, she slowly raised her head to face Cecily directly. Cecily's expression was unchanged from before.

"…Is it not possible?"

"What?"

"I'm truly sorry, and I know this might sound audacious, but… even if it's just for 10 minutes, just 10 minutes, I want to talk to Isaac."

Arwen pleaded desperately, clasping both hands together with sparkling eyes. Her appearance was such that even Cecily couldn't help but hesitate.

Who wouldn't waver when a cute girl holds your hands and pleads? Especially when she's not just an ordinary human but an elf.

While Cecily hesitated, Arwen once again pleaded in a sincere voice.

"I know very well what kind of relationship you and Isaac have. But I really want to ask like this. I'll grant you anything you desire in return. Can't you allow me just 10 minutes?"

"… …"

If she came out with such an attitude, even Cecily would be bewildered. Arwen is not an ordinary noble; she is the queen of Alvenheim.

Cecily, despite being a princess of Helium, also has clear differences in position. However, coming out in such a manner puts Cecily in a somewhat awkward position.

Ultimately, Arwen was sincerely appealing. How difficult must state affairs be for her to come out with a demeanor that would kneel to the ground for the sake of a 10-minute meeting with me?

'...Do we really have to do this?'

I wonder what Arwen thinks of me to come out like this. It could be because there's no one else I would consider a friend, but there seems to be something more.

When I was in a perplexed state, Cecily, with a discerning mind, stared at Arwen, keeping her lips sealed, possibly having grasped the essence of that something.

When there was nothing exchanged between the two in the strange silence, Cecily sighed deeply and then quietly spoke.

"Sigh… I understand. Isaac is a sinner, whatever…"

"T-Thank you! Really, thank you!"

Even if Arwen is happy, why treat me like a criminal? Did they communicate telepathically?

As the situation became increasingly awkward, I tilted my head in confusion. Cecily, with a complex gaze, looked at me and then turned her gaze to Arwen.

Continuing, she spoke with a firm voice to Arwen, who was happily jumping around like a child.

"But! There's a condition here."

"What is it? I'll do anything."

Arwen complied with the request, wearing a happy smile as if she had obtained what she wanted, but Cecily, raising the corners of her mouth, proposed something that made Arwen hesitate.

"The conversation will happen here, at the dorm. And I will be by your side."

"…What? That wouldn't just be a conversation between the two of us."

"Well, considering you ruined our date, I should get something out of it too, shouldn't I? You shouldn't take advantage of the situation too much."

“Ugh…”

Arwen expressed disappointment at Cecily’s firm assertion. Well, it wasn’t the worst outcome, so she would probably find some satisfaction in it.

‘But what’s this about taking advantage of the situation?’

What on earth did the two of them discuss confidentially?

*****

30 minutes later.

“Well, wouldn’t demons be more superior? Even if the depth of your knowledge is considered, they can’t catch up in terms of diversity.”

“Sigh. How foolish. Diversity essentially leads to versatility. We elves are the epitome of versatility.”

“Are you done talking now?”

“Haven’t you finished speaking?”

A direct confrontation between the strongest beings in the universe.

In many ways.

Translators note:

Chapter 237: Magnificent (2)

Before the serious clash between them began, Arwen brought up what had been happening in her life. Most of it was about the tight schedule, the hardships due to not getting rest time, the difficulty in clearing up the mess left by the council, and more.

Most notably, there was a significant shortage of talent. Arwen wanted to pull resources from the council, but it seemed risky due to most of them being elder elves.

In the unlikely event that a second council emerged, it would be just as troublesome, so Arwen was handling all the work alone for now. Fortunately, thanks to the events surrounding Xenon, there were no signs of a second council forming, and the operation in Alvenheim was proceeding smoothly.

The considerable increase in support for Arwen after the public speech to the nation was one reason, but more than anything, it was the connection between Arwen and the Xenon's Biography's author that played a significant role.

Especially after the contamination of the World Tree, there was a Xenon craze among the elves. The fact that their queen was connected to Xenon led to inevitable rising support. Along with this, neighboring countries began efforts to interact with Alvenheim in any way possible, starting from major powers like the Minerva Empire and the Ters Kingdom to smaller nations.

Thanks to these efforts, Alvenheim's national power was increasing by the day. Despite feeling like she needed ten bodies to cope with the situation, Arwen said she was happy every day because it was the dream she had been envisioning.

"Listening to it alone feels exhausting, doesn't it?"

To my ears, the workload was so excessive that it made me gag, but the final decision-making power undoubtedly belongs to the queen, so the workload could only be staggering. Particularly now, Alvenheim is in its adolescence. The Council of Elders, a symbol of Alvenheim, has vanished, and Arwen, backed by the people, holds strong royal authority.

Naturally, the workload must be beyond imagination, with Arwen alone bearing it all, which worries me. Arwen seemed to notice my expression, responding with a reassuring, gentle voice and a slight smile.

“Don’t worry about that. I get a solid four hours of sleep each day.”

“Is that okay?”

It reminded me that Cindy, for the sake of writing her thesis, stayed up for days on end without sleeping, resulting in her characteristic slurred speech and trademark dark circles under her eyes.

Unlike humans who encounter problems if they go without sleep for over two days, elves can stay awake for several days without major issues. However, their condition noticeably deteriorates, and except for specific professions, they tend to sleep for at least seven hours a day.

“It’s alright. Using a sleep-inducing spell immediately resolves any problems.”

“Is there such a spell? That’s the first time I’ve heard of it.”

“We elves use magic in our daily lives, so there are various spells like this one. Apart from sleep magic, there are spells to relax tense muscles or enhance concentration.”

“Hmm…”

I listened to the story and glanced over at Cecily, with a question about whether there was such magic among the demons.

As Cecily and I made eye contact, she smiled and then confidently spoke. It seems that demons are more than capable of performing such magic.

“That level of magic is basic. Demons are not inferior to elves when it comes to magic. Magical abilities that are helpful in daily life are already widespread among us.”

Indeed, demons are comparable to elves. They are an enviable race no matter when you see them.

While humans endure some inconveniences in daily life, the two races can simply enchant them away, making the quality of life different. The more I delved into it, the more I wondered how humans managed to win in the race war and how Xavier slaughtered the demons.

‘When will humans be able to use magic in their daily lives?’

At the same time, I became curious about when humans would catch up with these two races. Elves and demons can freely use magic like breathing, while humans need to rely on ‘calculations.’

Even their calculation abilities are much superior to humans, and their memory is on an extraordinary level. They can remember what they ate on New Year’s Day ten years ago.

However, on the flip side, both races lack the adaptability that humans possess. Due to their lifespan, which is several times longer than that of humans, their lifestyles become entrenched. Moreover, with little inclination to compete, they tend to be more leisurely.

On the contrary, humans have a characteristic of striving, almost in a rebellious manner, to leave something behind. There’s a saying that ‘tigers leave their skins when they die, and humans leave their names.’

Because of this, it often happens that knowledge, filled with failures, soon turns into success. I speculate that one reason humans have gained dominance is because an abundance of ‘failures’ has accumulated.

“Both of you are remarkable. As a mere human, I’m just…”

“Don’t belittle yourself. Aren’t you the author of Xenon’s Biography?”

“Yes, Isaac. You’re the strongest among us. There’s no need to belittle yourself.”

Just before I expressed discontent about being infinitely inferior to elves and demons, the two women immediately comforted me. Even though I was referring to the difference in races, they comforted me at the same time.

Although I felt a bit out of place receiving such unexpected comfort, being looked upon with concern by the two beautiful women somehow made me feel relieved without knowing why.

“Thank you. But it’s true that humans are weaker compared to other races, right? And I was referring to differences between races, not individuals.”

“Well… it’s true that humans are weak.”

Arwen nodded in agreement after hearing me.

However, she soon looked at me earnestly with galaxy-like silver-gray eyes and spoke seriously.

“But humans are strong. I can guarantee that.”

“Although humans are weak, humans are strong…”

It’s a phrase that defines what kind of species humans are. Spoken not by anyone else but by Arwen, an elf, the weight of those words is different.

Moreover, Arwen is not of pure blood but of mixed blood. There is a custom among the mixed-blood in the human world that when their human parents pass away, they enter Alvenheim. Having wandered the human world for several decades herself, she would know better than anyone what humans are like.

“Nice words. I should put this in the book.”

I took out the notebook from the front pocket of my school uniform and recorded it. It seemed fitting as a passage describing Xenon and Lilly, humans among the companions.

Individually, humans may be the weakest race, but ironically, when they come together, they become the strongest race. Other races might unite as well, but historically, none have shown the same cohesion as humans. Even though there were demons, they were lacking in various ways due to their isolation.

“Y-you mean putting it in a book? Xenon’s Biography?”

Arwen was taken aback when I mentioned putting it in a book. Her face was filled with surprise and a peculiar joy.

I stopped recording in the notebook for a moment and looked at her.

“Should I not include it if you don’t want me to?”

“No, no! Absolutely not! On the contrary…”

For some reason, Arwen blushed and felt embarrassed. It seems she’s looking forward to her words being included in Xenon’s Biography.

As I was inwardly finding Arwen adorable, Cecily seemed uncomfortable with the situation.

She clapped her hands, drawing our attention, then opened her mouth as if she'd just thought of something amusing.

"Oh, right. Isaac, since we're already here, how about learning more about the races of demons and elves?"

"Huh? What's this about?"

"You asked me at the café. About my power, the power of demons. As Arwen is the Queen of the elves, why not ask her for a reference for Pride?"

"I see."

I think I get the gist. Just as I sought advice from Cecily, she's suggesting seeking counsel from Arwen regarding the prowess 'Pride' should be.

Arwen would likely be pleased that her counsel would be referenced in Xenon's Biography, and I'd be getting help in my own way.

Arwen looked at her with a subtle expression, yet Cecily just grinned.

"…It matters not to me. If it can help Isaac, it's an honor."

"So, you'll help?"

"If you wish, I can do more than that."

As soon as she said that, Cecily's brow furrowed briefly before smoothing out.

Let's skip over what Cecily meant by 'more than that.' Seeking advice is the priority right now.

"First of all, let's overlook the fact that elves are famous for their beautiful appearance. Instead, I'd like to know the differences between elves and demons. I've heard that demons have 'diversity' while elves have 'depth'."

"That's very accurate. Our elves, with the help of the gods, were the first to establish civilization. And that civilization has been maintained until now, after thousands of years. Compared to other races, depth is inevitable. Not just in magic but also in knowledge, culture, society, science, language, and so on. It can truly be said to be the beginning of everything."

Arwen, who carries elven pride within her despite being of mixed heritage, was praising elves from the start. If she were a typical snobbish elf, it might have been awkward to hear, but perhaps because she was Arwen, there was an inexplicable charm.

In reality, it could be said that the start of all civilizations was elven, and humans who achieved civilization afterwards merely imitated them. There was more than enough basis for confidence.

“Through such a civilization, the depth of our magic is beyond description. Not only can we observe the stars in the night sky with our own eyes, but we can also make the land fertile or bring rain to drought-stricken lands. Even parts of nature can be substituted with magic.”

“What’s the difference between sorcery and magic?”

One could also make rain fall using a sorcery ritual, what could be the difference between the two? Arwen widened her gray eyes in surprise when I mentioned sorcery and asked me in an unexpectedly curious tone.

“Do you also know about sorcery?”

“I know someone who is familiar with it. Besides, there are historical records of humans using sorcery in the distant past.”

“Ah, I see. Well, you do love reading like me, so that might be possible. If you ever need related books later on, feel free to ask. I’d gladly provide them.”

“Thanks. I always seem to impose.”

“No need for thanks. If you ever need anything from me…”

At the moment Arwen was about to express her gratitude.

“Alright, can we skip the explanations? I don’t want to waste any more time.”

Cecily interjected, appearing displeased as she crossed her arms. Seeing her react with dissatisfaction as Arwen’s story extended, it was understandable—more of Arwen’s narrative meant less time for the two of them.

Arwen momentarily narrowed her eyes at Cecily’s irritable demeanor, then cleared her throat and continued explaining in her characteristic delicate voice.

“Ahem. Ahem. The digression was lengthy. Anyway, the clear difference between magic and sorcery is that sorcery utilizes nature itself, while magic can be seen as artificially created. Sorcery manipulates the world, while magic is something created on its own.”

“Ah, I see what you mean. So, what about attack magic? I’ve heard that demons are stronger due to differences in firepower.”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

Arwen responded with widened eyes, questioning Cecily’s statement about publicly known facts, sporting a look of utter disbelief.

Cecily’s narrowed eyes were a natural response to such confusion. Was it just a misconception that an unknown current had begun to flow?

Whether to call Arwen elvish or confident, he began to explain in a low voice.

“At a glance, demons with black mana may seem stronger. However, this is a fundamentally wrong understanding. Demon magic often leads to unnecessary waste. Just as their strength may make them seem skill-less, demon magic, in the eyes of us elves, can be considered somewhat outdated.”

“Can you say that so openly? A princess of Hellium is right next to us.”

In response to my surprised question, Arwen turned her head slightly and looked at Cecily. Cecily, with her fists clenched, seemed to be challenging Arwen to say it aloud.

After a brief standoff with Cecily, Arwen, as if unwilling to concede on this point, boldly continued.

“Of course. It’s not because I’m an elf, but it’s a clear fact. To humans, demons may appear more glamorous and powerful. However, that’s only on the surface. It’s thanks to the black mana that they can supply their strength, but their magic, to the eyes of elves, is undeniably crude and chaotic.”

“… …”

It seemed like this could escalate into a fight. Since I was ignorant of magic, I couldn’t say anything, but Cecily probably wouldn’t stay silent.

As soon as I thought that, I checked Cecily’s reaction. She had an expression of discomfort but didn’t respond at all.

Seeing this, it confirmed Arwen's explanation and raised another question in my mind:

'How did demons come to acquire magic?'

The origin of demons is humanity. However, during the devil war, humans struggled not only with magic but even with handling mana properly.

And soon, an answer to that question flowed directly from Cecily's lips.

"…As the queen said, our demon magic might seem chaotic to the elves. Demons use magic closer to instinct than theory. That's the decisive difference between demons and elves."

"Instinctual use?"

"Yes. Demons developed magic literally to survive. In the first generation, becoming a devil occurred frequently before anyone could teach you anything, so they had to awaken to it on their own. By now, we've polished our theories to some extent, but we're still far from perfect."

So, that's it. Demons were using magic as naturally as elves breathed.

While elves manifested magic by calculating, demons brushed aside calculations and reached conclusions directly.

Because of this, impurities affected their efficiency, but they compensated for it with the firepower of dark mana.

Thanks to that, the distinct difference between elves and demons became apparent. This setting serves as a significant aid in distinguishing between Gluttony and Pride.

"However, demons have a distinct advantage over elves in the speed of spellcasting. Simple spells might seem similar, but as complexity increases, the difference becomes severe. While elves mumble for ages, demons can just finish it with a simple gesture."

While contemplating the setting of Xenon's Biography, Cecily confidently spoke, gesturing with her hand. It seemed like she was uplifting demons subtly while indirectly pointing out the flaws in elves.

In that sarcasm, Arwen couldn't possibly remain silent. Arwen furrowed her eyebrows and retorted with displeasure.

“Mumble… be careful with your words. The casting is an indispensable process in magic. In fact, your demons are crude for omitting it.”

“During that time, wouldn’t it be more efficient to cast two more spells? There’s no fool who would just watch the magician cast the spell.”

In response to Cecily’s reply, Arwen, in a rare occurrence, spoke with an almost disdainful tone, even resorting to snorting.

“Hah. Typical of demons to focus solely on combat. I wonder why you only use magic for offense. As I mentioned earlier, magic is not necessarily limited to attack. Magic is an essential force for research that can be greatly beneficial in life. Surely in Helium, you don’t refrain from using magic for research? There’s no way. It’s a race that’s being compared to our elves.”

“Oh, that’s…”

Perhaps finding a flaw, Cecily hesitated and averted her gaze. It seems that Helium lacks an institution like Yggdrasil in Alvenheim.

Of course, it wouldn’t be completely absent. Helium must have actively engaged in magical research in its own way.

However, because it was isolated until the release of Xenon’s Biography, progress may have been slow compared to Alvenheim. In contrast, under Arwen’s policy, Alvenheim had active exchanges with other races.

While Cecily hesitated, Arwen, with a triumphant expression, nodded her head and opened her mouth with an attitude that indicated victory.

“Look, Isaac. Unlike the demons who ignorantly rely on brute force, we elves prioritize efficiency. It’s evidence that elves are superior to demons.”

And perhaps that touched a nerve.

Snap-

A vein bulged on Cecily’s forehead. Subsequently, she muttered quietly with a voice that seemed to be audible.

“A dwarf with a small chest…”

“…?”

Did I mishear that?

Translators note:

hapter 238 – Magnificent (3)

The elves, unlike demons, have a long history of interacting with other races, which has resulted in numerous positive and negative descriptors attached to them.

They are described as a race chosen by the gods, the first civilization, the origin of everything—positive descriptors that abound. However, there are also negative ones that counterbalance these positives.

They're labeled as arrogant, rude, snobbish, excessively prideful, hot-tempered, and discriminatory, with most descriptors culminating in "elves are arrogant." Just as the positive descriptors reflect their exceptional abilities, the negative ones are rooted in their undeniable capabilities, leaving others feeling overshadowed.

Even if elves were to criticize a specific aspect, others couldn't say a word in return. Their perceived arrogance stems from their unwavering belief in their own abilities, allowing them to dismiss criticisms easily.

Moreover, even if elves were to learn something from other races, they would only acknowledge it as such. In their fields of expertise, they wouldn't yield an inch to anyone, regardless of what they might learn from others.

Especially, the most potent aspect was magic. Magic has been the power and ability developed since the establishment of civilization, and indeed, the elves possess the most outstanding abilities.

The demons wield formidable firepower through dark mana, yet it's practically impossible for them, like the elves, to drop meteorites from the sky. While the demons can make barren lands fertile, they can't match the efficiency of the elves in doing so.

Instead, due to the persecution they faced over the years, the magic that aids daily life is far more abundant among demons than elves. Furthermore, magical items like refrigerators rival even the craftsmanship of dwarves.

However, do the elves consider that impressive? That's the question. They believe that with time, they can create not just the same but even better items. Of course, this is a

thought possible because they haven't witnessed it firsthand. In reality, creating magical items requires immense expertise.

Refrigerators, magic pens, temperature control in dormitories, and so on. Although these are magical, engineering plays a significant role. The confidence that elves hold in their magic and research is quite similar to 'science', but engineering is a distinct field that emphasizes craftsmanship the most.

However, the elves seem to forget this fact, and Arwen is no exception. Despite her mixed heritage and integration into human society before entering Alvenheim, it seems inherent traits couldn't be altered. Moreover, Arwen herself took pride in magic, making her reluctant to yield.

Nevertheless, it's not that she was entirely wrong. If it were just the two of us, it might not matter, but the issue is that she uttered those words in front of Princess Cecily of Helium.

The magic of demons appears crude to the elves, citing evidence that elves are superior to demons and so on, even as Arwen, who is most wary of the elven trait of 'arrogance,' ironically exhibits a demeanor that befits it the most.

"A dwarf with a small chest…"

It's understandable why Cecily launched a personal attack. However, this constitutes a significant mistake on her part. While it would be one thing to disparage races like Arwen, this was a direct insult to an individual. It's akin to a signal flare veering into an odd direction in the midst of a fight.

"W-what did you just… What did you say?"

She might have whispered it, but there's absolutely no way Arwen, facing me, didn't hear it. It's no different from saying it aloud right in front of her.

Upon this, Arwen reacted with considerable confusion, briefly covering her chest with both arms. Perplexity filled her grayish eyes.

Although she has said it that way, she's by no means on the petite side and, if anything, she's above average. Cecily is just overwhelmingly large.

As for height… let's overlook that. That's not a matter of relativity but rather absoluteness.

Meanwhile, Cecily, observing Arwen covering her chest with her arms, snorted, crossed her arms, and wore a smug expression.

Already boasting a formidable presence with her school uniform buttons almost bursting due to her massive chest, adding crossed arms only accentuated her imposing aura.

“Did I say something wrong? Even the Queen looked down on demons in my presence. Right?”

“W-well, that’s true, but this was a personal attack!”

“Don’t you consider criticizing demons to be a personal attack on me? It’s a fact that demon magic is somewhat more chaotic than that of elves. However, to speak so bluntly without explaining it a bit… it feels a bit too much.”

Unlike when Cecily made a personal attack, she spoke calmly, but her words were cutting. Insulting demons would be considered a personal attack on her. So, if Arwen insults them further, she won’t stand idly by. Moreover, she’s the princess of Helium and the next in line to be the future demon lord. She has ample reason and justification to speak that way.

When I sensed signs that their argument might escalate, I immediately intervened.

“Arwen, Cecily’s right. You might have said what you thought, but from the listener’s perspective, it could hurt. It might be true that elves are the most proficient in magic. But be cautious about making direct comparisons.”

“…Alright. Seems like I misspoke.”

Even though she’s of mixed blood, an elf is an elf. In the fields they’re confident in, they don’t bend their pride.

As Arwen bowed her head and apologized, I turned to Cecily. She seemed somewhat uplifted that I took her side but had her arms crossed, drawing attention to her chest.

An impulse surged in me, like wanting to snatch away ripe fruit, but I barely restrained myself. Firstly, I needed to address her mistake.

“Same goes for you. Arwen was wrong, but there was no need for a personal attack. You could’ve phrased it differently.”

“But isn’t that the truth? I just returned it as it was given.”

Cecily remained unyielding, showing no concession to my words. It seemed that Cecily had taken offense at Arwen underestimating the demons. Clearly, Arwen had openly engaged in racial discrimination, and she probably wouldn't even consider apologizing. She had stayed quiet, but Arwen had pushed her into this.

However, it wasn't a personal attack. To retort, she should have targeted the elves, not Arwen individually. Arwen seemed to share a similar sentiment, as she spoke with a slightly choked voice.

"Is that so? Alright then. I'll stop attacking the demons as well."

Following her words, she, just like Cecily had done, launched a personal attack.

"Fatty."

"Wh-what?"

"Arwen?"

Cecily, and even I, stared at Arwen in surprise. "Fatty" was undoubtedly a word that scorned Cecily's chest. It was a part that stood out much more than others, making it a vulnerable point for an attack. However, it also raised a question.

Isn't having a large chest considered good? Cecily had touched on Arwen's weakness, but Arwen, instead of getting offended, seemed to take it as a compliment. Cecily, initially taken aback, later caught on, looking embarrassed for a moment before snorting in laughter.

Instead, she confidently responded, emphasizing her already prominent chest even more by clenching her fists.

"Thank you. Some people don't even have these lumps of fat. It may be a bit uncomfortable, but Isaac likes it."

"Why me?"

"Why. It's true."

It is true that it's true, but I don't understand why she insists on involving me in this fight.

"Hmm. Isaac, you can understand too. Men have traditionally preferred women with large breasts. I've read about it in books. Biologically, they are attracted to it because it

reminds them of their mother's embrace."

Why are you like that again? Even Arwen was nodding seriously, accepting it.

While Cecily was smirking even more, Arwen slowly got up from her seat. I just watch her actions with a puzzled look.

Then, Arwen places her hand on her slender waist and sweeps it down, showcasing her superior hips.

With a dress already exposing her bare side, her actions make it even more detrimental to the heart.

"Well, how about this? Isn't it better to have these curves than just having a lot of fat?"

"Uh…"

"I don't know about the chest, but I'm confident below. I've been praised for my beauty since ancient times."

Considering Arwen's standards, it's been quite a while since ancient times, and if she's been praised since then, her pelvic line is undoubtedly as overwhelming as Cecily's chest.

Cecily, being a demon, boasted exceptional hips and a well-defined lower body, yet she doesn't quite compare to Arwen. Moreover, due to Arwen's petite stature, this difference was further emphasized.

While sitting, I found myself gazing at Arwen's lower body as if entranced, slowly shifting my gaze upwards. However, this action seemingly embarrassed Arwen, whose flushed face caught my eye.

Trying not to be obvious about my scrutiny, her efforts to hold back made her even more endearing. Yet, when I looked away, the charm faded entirely.

One side had the chest, the other, the hips. Truly, it was an unequaled battle between two grand places.

'…Why am I comparing them again?'

I didn't know why I was comparing. Whether it was a matter of feminine pride, neither woman yielded an inch.

Rather than merely watching from afar, it felt like I was adding fuel to the fire.

“Th-that much I have too! Look!”

In the midst of this, perhaps sensing some urgency, Cecily abruptly stood up, placing her hand on her waist. Following suit, just like Arwen did, she swept her hand downward. While undoubtedly above average, compared to Arwen, she fell slightly short.

Arwen’s hips were indeed remarkable, but her slim waist made comparisons impossible. Despite her short stature, her proportions, typical of elves, made her anything but small.

Confirming this, Arwen wore a triumphant expression and, with a bold voice, spoke up.

“Comparing just that much is rather petty, isn’t it? So, Isaac, which do you think is better?”

“What? Out of the blue?”

“Yeah. Isaac, you’ve got a good feel, right? You touch my chest every night.”

“Wait, why are you suddenly saying this to me? This feels like a situation where a shrimp’s back breaks during a whale fight.”

Honestly, her chest was indeed good, but when I see Arwen, my eyes shift to her hips again.There was a saying even in my past life, that when a man sees a woman, he first looks at her hips. It’s some sort of deep-seated genetic instinct.

As I was entertaining these useless thoughts, Arwen seemed to sense something strange and blinked as she asked Cecily.

“Every night? Touching every night, what kind of talk is that?”

“Huh?”

“Oh.”

Come to think of it, Arwen had no idea that Cecily and I were having these nightly encounters. I inadvertently revealed an embarrassing truth, but Cecily wasn’t fazed at all. In fact, she seemed to take it as an opportunity, wearing a sly smile, a particular blend of mischief and amusement in her expression.

“Oh my. Come to think of it, Your Majesty didn’t know. Do you know that Isaac and I are in a relationship?”

“W-well, I knew about that, but… But, about the nights… No, before that, aren’t you the Princess of Helium? Even if Marie is human, you are…”

Arwen alternated her confused, silvery-gray eyes between me and Cecily. In response, I scratched my head, suppressing a wry smile.

It seemed the grand confrontation’s end would yield results in a different direction.

“Your Majesty knows, don’t you? In relationships, it’s natural for things to blaze hot like a volcano. Isaac and I are no different, right? At least once every three days.”

“… …”

“Me being a princess of Helium? That’s no issue at all. Why? Isaac is the author of Xenon’s Biography. I offered my body to the savior of the demons. What’s the problem?”

In essence, the game was over. The clash between the elves and demons abruptly turned into a battle of hips and chests, resulting in Arwen’s defeat.

What Cecily wanted to convey was that no matter how much noise she makes, it’s meaningless unless a relationship is established. It’s meaningless to compare if bodies weren’t mingled.

“So, Your Majesty. No matter how superior your hips are, they mean nothing to Isaac. Do you understand?”

“… …”

With each successive attack, did Arwen really dislike losing that much?

She hesitated slightly, gave me a fleeting glance, then tightly shut her eyes. Her fair skin flushed a deep red, reminiscent of a tomato.

Subsequently, Arwen mumbled for a moment, then shouted forcefully.

“This is unfair!”

“What?”

“Arwen?”

Then came Arwen’s next statement…

“Then allow me to engage in an intimate act with Isaac!”

Something was seriously amiss.

“That way, we can fairly compare!”

It was Elvish communism.

Translators note:

Chapter 239: Magnificent (4)

When does a person feel ‘shame’?

When the other person insults them? That’s correct.

When their weaknesses are exposed to the world? That’s also true.

When they feel unnecessary embarrassment from observing someone else’s actions? That’s also true.

Each person experiences shame or embarrassment in different ways.

However, just as one cannot retrieve words once spoken, many experience shame after blurting out anything just to win an argument.

Realizing later, but just as I said a moment ago, once spoken, words cannot be taken back. Such situations often result in what’s commonly referred to as ‘throwing a blanket over it.’

Moreover, if the words spoken were particularly sensitive in a relationship between a man and a woman? If they unexpectedly popped out?

“Uh… Arwen?”

“… …”

The Queen of Alvenheim, even if she ruled over the elves, couldn’t bear the overwhelming embarrassment and hid her body. That’s exactly how Arwen was right now. She bravely made a statement announcing Elvish communism, but after a brief silence, she immediately hid.

Where? Under the blanket. So embarrassed that she didn’t even think about it not being her own blanket, she promptly covered herself entirely without hesitation. Afterward, she climbed onto the bed, wrapping herself tightly like a silkworm, ignoring my cautious calls without a response.

‘This is just…’

I smiled awkwardly, observing Arwen wrapped in a blanket on the bed.

The initial silence just wouldn’t fade away. Her statement about wanting to share a bed with me echoed as if it were an unforgettable illusion. What followed was as everyone had expected. Realizing the situation belatedly, her face turned crimson, and became a blanket silkworm

It’s embarrassing even for the listener, but how would she feel? Thanks to that, her feelings could be understood perfectly. Somehow, I couldn’t help but think she was like a child. However, that too was a trap that fit Arwen’s appearance extremely well.

Yet, if this continues, Arwen might never emerge from under the blanket. I must somehow soothe the situation to prevent this awkward moment from lingering any further.

Glancing at Cecily discreetly, she was sitting there with one corner of her mouth upturned in a helpless expression.

Arwen felt a sense of embarrassment and was visibly squirming inwardly, while Cecily stood there in utter bewilderment, unable to utter a word. Cesily’s expression, one of disbelief, seemed as if she was seeing something for the first time.

“C-come on, Arwen?”

“… …”

“Arwen, say something.”

Even after calling her name several times, Arwen didn’t even flinch. Wondering if I had called too softly, I climbed onto the bed. As I did, Arwen, wrapped tightly in the blanket like a silkworm cocoon, visibly twitched.

Though she might not have heard any sound, she must have felt the vibrations and realized that I had approached. After a while, she brought what seemed like her head out from the blanket and reluctantly spoke.

“That’s my blanket. Are you planning to keep doing that?”

“……!”

Flutter!

The words seemed quite provocative to Arwen at that moment, as the edge of the blanket fluttered, covering her face. I closed my eyes tightly, waiting for her to completely emerge from the blanket.

Eventually, the blanket, which had been fluttering vigorously, slid down, and like a silkworm turning into a butterfly, Arwen emerged from within. As she cleared the blanket that had covered my face…

"Ar…"

"… …"

Now, I discovered Arwen lying face down in the corner without even covering herself with a blanket. I was speechless at the sight.

Though she seemed to be trying not to meet my eyes at all costs, her posture forced me to glance in her direction.

A ripe and tantalizingly large peach was right in front of me. All unnecessary; a single word could deduce the situation perfectly.

She was lying as if bowing towards the wall, yet her posture showcased an impressive backline.

Her normally noticeable pelvis, now bent over, compelled me to stare as if enchanted. She emitted a charm as fatal as Cecily's chest.

"You're quite the seductress, Your Majesty. Boasting so brazenly."

Cecily retorted in a teasing tone, seemingly displeased with Arwen's posture.

Only then did Arwen realize the situation and silently rose from her place.

Yet, she continued to face the wall, now on her knees, pressed tightly against it.

What's amusing is that despite her efforts, she couldn't conceal her backline. Ironically, every change in posture highlighted her strengths to the fullest.

I think I might just end up fixating on Arwen's pelvic line if I keep going like this. I pulled myself together and placed my hand on her shoulder.

As soon as I placed my hand on her shoulder, Arwen's body trembled noticeably. She even shook all over.

Thinking it was unnecessary for her to shake so much, I slowly pulled her shoulder. At first, she resisted as if pushing back, but when I pulled firmly, she slowly turned her head.

And then…

“Arwen?”

“Sniff. Don’t… stop…”

I found myself facing Arwen, her slate-gray eyes filled with teardrops. Her face seemed as though it could explode any moment, flushed red and lips tightly sealed.

Arwen, who normally showed increased emotions in private situations rather than as a queen, seemed to be overwhelmed by emotions she couldn’t control, unable to overcome unbearable shame and embarrassment.

Looking at her, who already appeared distant and far from maturity, crying made her seem like a young child. Maybe it’s just my misconception that’s making my heart ache so much.

“Are you crying?”

“S-sniff. I-I’m not crying…!”

No, you definitely are. Your nose is as red as a ripe strawberry.

While thinking this, Arwen hurriedly wiped away her tears with her small, adorable hands. Although I wished I could help her by wiping them away with a handkerchief, she had already wiped them all, leaving me with no chance to lend a hand. Cecily was watching beside us, so I had to be mindful.

For a while, Arwen wiped her tears, unaware that the tip of her nose had turned red, and finally managed to speak in a nasal voice.

“I-If, if it’s about those words just now, pretend you didn’t hear it. I feel so embarrassed I could die…”

“Um… okay.”

I almost blurted out “I don’t want to,” but I barely restrained myself. If I make a joke here, I might actually start crying. Arwen might resent me. Even if I’m not like that,

there's no law saying Cecily can't be. Instead, she seemed to take pleasure in teasing as if she had found a weakness.

"You know, words spoken can't be taken back, right? Honestly, saying it once might not be so bad. It might cause a big fuss, but…"

"Noona…"

"Ugh…"

I looked at Cecily with a 'Please stop' expression, and Arwen covered her face with her hands in embarrassment.

Whether she said it or not, Cecily only showed her mischievousness by sticking out her tongue in a teasing manner.

Once Arwen comes back in a little while, I'll have to give her a real scolding. Seeing her act like that, she must secretly want it.

"Sigh… I'm sorry. What am I doing, acting like a child…"

"You know it now. I didn't expect you to have such a preference."

"It's not a pre-preference! Don't misunderstand!"

Anyway, the situation eventually settled down, and Arwen fanned herself, trying to cool down her flushed face.

Of course, sometimes when she glanced at my face, it would heat up again, which was a futile gesture. It seems impossible even with magic.

Originally, it was a dispute between elves and demons, but it suddenly turned into a showdown between chests and hips, eventually ending in elf-style communism as usual.

Both Cecily and Arwen seemed to sense that if they continued to argue, it might veer into strange territory, so they began to be careful with their words.

"Then, do most demons have the same physique as you?"

"It's not common to have a big chest like mine. Because historically, due to harsh environments, it was necessary to safely bear children. Do elves not have such a thing?"

“Elves don’t have that history, but before engaging in sexual relations, they visit temples for blessings. If they conceive with such divine blessings, the child inherits all the physical talents of the parents. Even in hybrids, there’s no difference between a pureblood elf and one with mixed blood due to this.”

Thanks to this, I also learned about the cause of the superiority of elf genes. I learned in class that elves view sexual relations as a kind of sacred ritual.

However, it’s the first time I’ve heard of visiting a temple to receive sacred power. The fact that this sacred power permeates into the child and inherits the talents of the parents.

There might be a question about whether humans can do the same, but being an elf means fully accepting the sacred power; it’s not the same for humans. Let’s first understand why they are referred to as a race chosen by the gods.

At first glance, one might think that the gods discriminate, but instead, humans inherited an infinite reproductive capacity. Ancestors leave behind knowledge, and their descendants use that knowledge as a stepping stone for development, which is incredibly advantageous.

‘Not some transcendent race.’

But looking at history, that statement is partially true. Elves were strong from the start, while humans are a race with an incredible capacity for development.

I briefly looked into the characteristics of humans again and then shifted my gaze to Arwen.

If she inherited all physical talents, why is Arwen so small in stature? Her hips are incredibly well-formed, but her height is quite disappointing.

Perhaps sensing my gaze, Arwen blushed momentarily, cleared her throat, and quietly spoke up.

“Um. Um. Why are you staring at me like that? It’s uncomfortable.”

“Just wondering why you’re so short.”

“My father… forgot and didn’t fully receive the sacred power.”

“I see.”

That curiosity was neatly resolved. Arwen glanced at my now-relaxed face, smirked slightly, then sighed.

She looked at me with a provocative gaze and then casually spoke.

“So, where do you feel the most confident?”

“Huh? Me?”

“Yeah. It’s been unfair for us to talk only. So, it’s your turn to speak.”

Once again, Arwen brought up an Elvish-style communist statement. I blinked my eyes when I heard the question. It seemed like she was challenging me to touch upon my own complexes. I felt a bit uneasy.

Scratching my head, pondering how to answer, Cecily, who was nearby, intervened.

“Maybe you could say you’re similar to the queen.”

“Huh?”

“What are you talking about?”

Our gazes shifted towards her at that comment. What could it mean that my physical advantages might be similar to Arwen’s? Even I couldn’t understand.

When I was still pondering the meaning behind Cecily’s words, she flashed a teasing smile and answered in a subtle voice.

“Isaac is also excellent in the lower body like the queen.”

“… …”

I should have expected that. Cecily really knows how to use seductive remarks. That’s the princess for you.

Even just hearing it made me cover my face with one hand in embarrassment at the joke. It seemed that just as she used to do in the past, she was teasing Arwen, and it sounded like it was hitting close to home this time.

“Lower body? Has Isaac’s pelvis developed? I’ve never heard of a human man having a developed pelvis, even if women do.”

At first, it didn't seem to register over there. Arwen grinned and shifted her gaze towards my lower body.

Arwen, who had been staring at my lower body for quite some time, seemed to have something come to mind; suddenly, she stiffened visibly. Subsequently, starting from her neck, her face turned crimson all the way to her ears.

Hmm. Finally, it seems it struck her over there. I hoped that side would remain pure, but perhaps I relied too much on the mixed blood.

Flap flap flap

How excited must she be for her typically elongated elven ears to twitch up and down? I've read in a book that when an elf experiences intense emotions, their ears wiggle up and down.

This is the first time I've seen it with my own eyes. That probably means Arwen's emotions are in turmoil.

Fortunately, was the embarrassment a kind of preventative measure just now? Arwen, with eyes spinning before turning around, managed to open her mouth slightly.

"W-Well, I think I understand what you mean. It's important for a man's l-lower body to be considered for… ahem… good childbirth."

"Arwen…"

"Ah, it's fine. You don't have to be too embarrassed. I'm an adult too, I can accept this kind of joke just fine."

For someone who said that, her ears kept twitching up and down, this elf.

On the other hand, Cecily was suppressing her laughter, enjoying Arwen's reaction as she turned her head. She wanted to squeeze out a chuckle, but for now, she must hold it in.

Amidst the awkward situation, Arwen barely managed to cool down the heat on her face. Yet, her gaze kept returning to my side.

"Phew… Anyway, you're overdoing it, Princess of Helium. Don't tease too much."

"Oops. Sorry, I apologize. Your Majesty is just too adorable…"

Cecily apologized, wiping away tears forming at the corners of her eyes. Calling a queen adorable might be impolite, but it signifies their closeness.

Arwen, nonchalantly, got up quietly from her seat. I raised my gaze as she stood.

“Are you leaving now?”

“Yeah. I’d love to stay longer, but time won’t wait.”

“You can come visit anytime.”

“Thank you. But Isaac, can I ask you one thing before I leave?”

“What is it?”

The moment of parting was imminent. Though brief, the time spent was meaningful, making the impending farewell more poignant.

Arwen gazed at my sitting face for a moment and softly curved her lips upward. Her smile held deep affection and warmth.

As I was drawn into her grayish eyes, she spoke quietly.

“When I read Xenon’s Biography, I was certain, but the more I meet you, the more confused I become. Isaac, are you a prophet or someone from the future, as the world speculates? Siris said it wasn’t so.”

“Are you saying that too? No way. That’s all nonsense.”

It was so absurd that I burst out laughing. I waved my hand dismissively as if it was nothing.

Ordinary people might believe me here, but Arwen didn’t seem convinced.

Watching my reaction, she nodded as if confirming something.

“Alright. Then answer this question.”

“What is it?”

“You…”

Arwen’s subsequent question was…

“Are you from a place entirely different from the world we live in?”

“What…”

It was a question enough to startle me as a ‘reincarnator’ and still leave me pondering.

As soon as I heard that question, my heart raced, and a chilling sensation swept through my body.

How did she know? I’ve never explicitly mentioned being a reincarnator despite subtly revealing that I’m the author of Xenon’s Biography. From the very beginning of this life, I had no lingering attachments, so I seamlessly blended into this world. Occasionally encountering differences in common knowledge didn’t pose any problem.

Why did she ask such a question? Could it be because of the ‘restriction’ that’s been buzzing around the world? Maybe the gods put a restriction on me, so she indirectly asked through that kind of question, unable to directly reveal it? I really don’t know.

My mind was in complete disarray, utterly confused.

When I couldn’t say a word and just stood there dumbfounded, Arwen seemed more certain from my reaction and her smile grew even brighter than before.

Not just a smile, but her silver-gray eyes began to sparkle, expressing clear ‘joy.’

And then…

“If that’s the answer, it’s all good!”

With those determined words, she teleported away. But even after she left, there was something remaining…

“Isaac?”

“… …”

“What… what was that? Is it true?”

Cecily was staring at me with wide eyes.

Translators note:

Chapter 240: Book 18 (1)

Due to Arwen's unexpected bombshell, I couldn't help but feel disoriented for a while. Her question about whether I came from a completely different world than the one we live in. I didn't inquire about the meaning behind that question, so as a 'reincarnator,' it's quite perplexing.

Whatever the intention, it is true that I come from a different world.

When the world noisily proclaimed me as a regressor or a prophet, I could easily refute that, but I couldn't help but momentarily falter at the notion of coming from another world.

That momentary hesitation gave Arwen a sense of certainty. Whatever misunderstanding she had, the events ahead were inevitably complicated. The issue isn't just with Arwen, though. At that time, not only Arwen but also Cecily were in the same room.

After Arwen dropped that bombshell, Cecily started questioning me for a while. Whether I really came from a different world as Arwen asked, and if that's why I ended up writing Xenon's Biography.

As you might know from my life so far, I'm terrible at lying. Even though I usually maintain a stoic expression, my complexion drastically changes when a specific point is touched upon.

Moreover, Cecily has a particularly keen sense of reading my feelings. If Marie intuitively detects my lies, Cecily, like Rina, has an incredibly sharp observational skill.

So, even if I lie, she mostly sees through it, and this time is no different. Eventually, Cecily completely started believing that I came from a different world.

As for whether my attitude changed afterward? No, far from changing, I was too preoccupied that day.

Since then, lying side by side in bed, she said that even if I came from a different world, it's a grace from the gods, or even if not, it doesn't change the fact that I'm a benefactor of the demons.

Instead, just one thing. she asked why I had taken her as a model of lust until now. Whether her future self really becomes a devil for a specific reason. But since it was closely related to the unfortunate past of lust, I refused it all. It felt like thrusting a sharp spoiler, so she just obediently accepted it.

Anyway, it's a bonus that my relationship with Cecily was subtly getting closer than before. I hope the day comes soon when I can officially declare my relationship with her without any disturbances.

It seems Cecily is beginning to think of me as a gift bestowed by the gods. If I indeed claim to be from another world, one can only think in that direction.

For now, I plan to quietly bury the part related to reincarnation. Cecily agreed with this plan and even promised to strictly monitor any slip-ups.

Some might wonder why I don't speak up, especially why keep it a secret from Marie. But considering my current situation, it might be understandable.

Already being teased as a regressor or a prophet in jest, what if I were called a reincarnator now? From this moment, I can't simply take the jokes as just jokes.

Cecily might regard it as a gift or grace bestowed by the divine to a mortal. Especially since it is obvious that this will significantly affect my relationship with Marie, the closest person to me as a human being.

Of course, due to Marie's slightly simple personality, there is a very high chance of her simply saying, 'Oh well,' and moving on. Over the year we've spent together, I've come to understand that she avoids complexities in human relationships to an extreme degree.

In the past, although it was an inevitable situation, after being deceived by Rina once, she just wanted to meet people simply. She tries to avoid entangling complicated stories like politics in these relationships as much as possible.

Despite the verbose explanations, the biggest issue is the lack of necessity in revealing it. After all, I've been acclimatized to this world for so long, and only Arwen and Cecily know.

Even the landscapes change in a decade, so wouldn't people change too? Apart from the trauma of losing my parents in an accident and the vivid memories, I've almost forgotten everything. There's no gain in speaking up, and even if I do, nothing changes. For now, staying silent seems to be the best option.

In a few days, they'll probably forget that I'm a reincarnator anyway. It was like that even before Arwen asked, so it'll likely be the same this time.

'...But writing a World War II novel seems impossible to avoid, doesn't it?'

World War II was a clash of steel-made weapons, the worst war in human history. It altered history itself, a turning point in history.

If Arwen or Cecily read that book, they'll surely sense it. 'Isaac came from a world like this,' they'll say. I'm 100% certain of that. Even the name is World War II. It might be related to the racial war that happened 300 years ago.

Because of this, I thought about putting the World War II novel on hold, since first, I must finish Xenon's Biography. There are troubles piling up due to Xenon's Biography, and now a World War II novel? It would be too much.

Honestly, I wanted to do that nonsensical thing, but I can't afford it. I have to somehow grasp the divine power to survive, so I must focus only on Xenon's Biography.

Fortunately, recently under the leadership of Adelia, I carried out intense physical training, and my stamina noticeably increased. Perhaps because of this, Marie's and Cecily's calls have become much more frequent. However, it seems they were now calling for reinforcements, saying it's too much for them alone.

Anyway, despite the lengthy gossip, shortly after Arwen's reincarnation question, the 18th volume of Xenon's Biography was revealed. Due to real-life spoilers, the readers' reactions were lukewarm, but the book still sold like hotcakes. Reality is reality, and a book is a book. Even if you're curious about the ending, you have no choice but to read it.

[As it turns out, the identity of the one who made a pact with the devil as it happened in reality was the cardinal.]

[I want to smack the person who spoiled it.]

[Ironically, the cardinal who pressed Jin is truly faithful. There was just a difference in perspective.]

[Even such a cardinal grew mentally and broke the prejudice against demons.]

There was a strange opinion inserted in the middle, but there's actually a statement like that. It seems to be from a dedicated reader of Xenon's Biography who got angry enough to put such words in the newspaper.

Seeing that, I wondered if I had misread it and blinked my eyes several times. But it was indeed there.

How angry must someone be to put such words in a newspaper? In fact, not only this critic but also quite a number of ordinary readers were angered by spoilers.

Moreover, since I didn't express any stance, it must have been a complicated feeling for me as well. Even as the author, I reacted with, "What is this?" but how did the readers feel?

[The one who tempted the fallen cardinal is named 'Belzebub.' What is the identity of the one with this name?]

[The tricks of the devils that are gradually coming to the surface.]

[The present reality is no different. Currently, devil worshipers are being eliminated one by one…]

The impact of Kate's reality spoiler seemed so significant that half the talk was about Xenon's Biography, while the other half revolved around real devil worshippers. Xavier's declaration of a 'holy war' undoubtedly carries substantial consequences. Moreover, the fact that an actual cardinal was a high-ranking member among the devil worshippers.

Thanks to this, surprisingly, since the release of Xenon's Biography, there hasn't been any unusual commotion…

[Are we still going to deny he's a prophet? Xenon, reveal your true identity as soon as possible!]

[Xavier's announcement. We'll definitely protect you, so please support the holy war…]

[He surely knows about the devil worshippers' higher-ups as well. We must quickly calm the world's chaos…]

…Bunch of crap. They've started begging now. At this point, anything goes as long as it helps expose the devil worshippers and eliminate them. Despite the emphasis, I am not a regressor or a prophet by any means.

With worries about future affairs or personal relationships looming, what use is there for assistance? Besides, with more women around me, I must continually maintain my strength. First and foremost, I have to survive whether or not I'll be of any help.

'Anyway, as for Kate…'

According to the news in the newspaper, Kate has once again embarked on a pilgrimage. The previous pilgrimage was aimed at finding me, but this time, it seems to have a different purpose.

Perhaps she's coming to find me while smashing the heads of the devil worshippers. With Xavier proclaiming the holy war, as the grand interrogator, she wouldn't have spare time.

The inquisitor who initially stepped onto the pilgrimage path wasn't the only one there. It's reported that most inquisitors, following the declaration of the holy war, have mobilized.

For Xavier, it was a revealing flaw that must be somehow addressed. It's expected to cause quite a stir in the world for a while.

'No, it was noisy from the start.'

Right now, I should probably stay really quiet. I raised my head, covering the newspaper filled with various news stories.

'Now that the vacation is approaching… the exhibition needs to be prepared too.'

It feels like the new students just arrived yesterday, but already, the summer vacation was slowly approaching. Along with this, preparations for an exhibition in our territory were actively underway.

Originally, the Ters Kingdom was eager to host the exhibition themselves, but a few months ago, the Minerva Empire cunningly took control.

My mentioning Marshal Territory as my birthplace played a significant role here. Moreover, Xenon's rising reputation by the day made it impossible for even the Ters Kingdom to be obstinate.

Correspondingly, my father's workload soared even more. In a letter sent by my mother, my father grumbled about wanting me to inherit the family duties soon and hoped the exhibition would end quickly.

I felt guilty for no reason, but with ample support from the royal family, there are no manpower issues. Initially, in order to keep my father in the empire, an estate with exceptional potential was granted from the upper echelons.

'I also want to see Lily soon.'

A year ago, it was the night after the exhibition ended and I spent it with Marie for the first time. Unfortunately, due to my mother giving me the last remaining contraceptive pills as a gift, she ended up bringing Lily into the world unexpectedly.

And exactly one month ago from now, she gave birth to the adorable youngest daughter, Lily. Being the fourth child, she delivered her without any crisis, apparently healthy. According to the letter, she's a really cute and charming baby, with red hair like her father and golden eyes. I really want to see Lily.

'How cute must she be?'

I imagined Lily in my mind with anticipation. At the same time, I pondered what kind of stage this exhibition would present.

Certainly, those rascals from the Ters Kingdom will come, that's for sure, but as long as Adelia shakes off the trauma, there won't be a major incident if we're cautious. Anyway, at that time, Adelia will be acting as my bodyguard, and there will be others including Marie.

I wonder if Dave and Nicole will come. Even if they're busy, I heard they send their regards through vacations at least.

'At least the usual people will come…'

Some who will definitely come are decided, but I'm not sure about the rest. Especially, Leona and Cherry are critical.

Leona is likely to come if I provide some help, but Cherry is the issue. Her home environment is just as harsh as Adelia's, if not worse.

It's a household where they ruthlessly tear apart the works poured with dreams and hopes, going as far as trampling upon them.

If I had left it alone, it would have been as obvious as seeing fire, but luckily, she was able to endure it with some help.

'It would be better to visit an exhibition rather than being in such a place…'

That would be good for Cherry too. It would be better for her to spend the vacation somewhere else rather than in a hellish family.

No, perhaps she could spend the entire vacation at the academy without returning to the family. Didn't Leona mention working during the vacation too?

I thought of a good idea and smiled. Just lie to her parents that she'll be at the academy the whole time, and once we're in our territory, it's over.

'Anyway, the likelihood of those people not coming is high.'

In many ways, it's a vacation with a lot of expectations.

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As Volume 18 of Xenon's Biography came out, where was the busiest place? By now, everyone knows, but naturally, it was the publishing house.

The publishing house CEO, Musk, didn't care at all even when hearing that Xavier declared a holy war or that the cardinal was, in fact, a devil worshiper.

If anything, rather than paying attention to that stuff, they had to print at least one more volume of Xenon's Biography. Musk is completely crazy about money, to the point of being deeply mad.

It was like that until unexpectedly receiving a knife in the belly.

"Oh my…"

"Are you alright?"

Matthew, Musk's secretary, worriedly called out to Musk who was lying on the white bed, groaning. Matthew's concern was none other than Musk's condition, as thick bandages were tightly wrapped around his swollen belly.

Fortunately, the surgery had ended successfully, but initially, the bleeding was quite severe, reaching a dangerous level. Musk retorted.

“Do I look okay, damn it?

Hurling even vulgar curses at Matthew. Despite receiving such insults, Matthew did not erase the worried expression from his face.

The reason Musk, who was usually healthy, with oil flowing through his veins, ended up like this was simply because of the actions of devil worshippers. After the revelation of spoilers in reality, devil worshippers began to sense the crisis and started causing chaos. Musk became their top priority.

If it weren’t for the Xenon incident, their wicked plan would have progressed without anyone knowing, but now it was falling apart. Originally, they would have targeted Xenon, or rather Isaac, as their top priority, but his identity was not even known. Therefore, they targeted Musk, one of the connecting links with him.

Apart from Musk, there was also the Elven Queen, Arwen, but she was like a whale in comparison when it came to the devil worshippers’ targets. So, they focused on Musk, who was relatively smaller in size. Of course, Musk was not entirely foolish, so he invested a considerable amount of money to hire mercenaries. However, he overlooked the fact that devil worshippers had infiltrated among those mercenaries.

If only he had visited the temple with the mercenaries even once, but due to his complacent belief that everything would be fine by this point, he failed to reach that realization.

“Why do you swear and act like this? Can’t you see I’m worried?”

“Sigh… I’m sorry.”

“If the boss isn’t here, who will pay my salary?”

“You jerk. Right now, you—oh…”

Instead of getting angry at Matthew’s not-so-joking joke, Musk restrained himself, holding his stomach. If it had been an ordinary stab, it would have been better, but due to the poison laced within, the aftermath was severe.

Thankfully, under the motto of “Even if you’re rich, you can’t use it when you’re dead,” he always kept emergency potions. Otherwise, he might have become a cold corpse.

Currently, he was in a temple, focusing on recovery, but there was more than one thing causing concern.

“Matthew.”

“Yes, sir.”

“How are the other employees? Are they wavering?”

“They are wavering.”

As expected. After news spread that the CEO himself had been targeted by devil worshippers, the publishing house staff showed intense wavering.

Fortunately, under the protection measures of the Luminous Order, there hadn’t been any threats to his safety, but there were still worries.

No matter how much Musk was crazy about money, he wasn’t someone who placed human life beneath it. With beads of sweat running down, he looked up at the temple’s ceiling before speaking quietly.

“Matthew.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Prepare a letter immediately.”

“A letter?”

“Yes.”

There’s no law that says only I should suffer like this. Especially with an ‘exhibition,’ it’s even more dangerous. Devil worshippers will be determined to tarnish Xenon’s name by any means necessary. There might even be ‘terrorism’ at the exhibition. If I’m in this state, how could the exhibition possibly succeed? And there will be numerous nobles attending.

Therefore, in order to minimize casualties…

‘What big hands those people have!’

…Forget it. If they disappear, there’ll be a direct hit on sales. Musk decided he had to prevent that much at least.

Those who impact sales are bastards. To Musk, devil worshippers fit that bill perfectly. And bastards must be controlled through punishment. With this in mind, after briefly

chuckling inwardly, he returned to the practical problem.

“The issue of protecting the employees… sigh… seems inevitable.”

“Is there any sharp solution?”

“If Luminous allows it, it’s possible.”

“What solution?”

Then from Musk’s lips came…

“Buying a temple.”

“What?”

“And merging with a publishing house.”

It sounded ridiculous, but it was a very surefire method. He glanced at the bewildered Matthew and discussed the ‘grounds.’

“The only publishing house contracted for Xenon’s Biography. Wouldn’t Luminous allow it?”

Translators note:

Chapter 241: Book 18 (2)

Every day, I'm just waiting for the vacation to come, but life has a way of throwing unexpected things at us. The Academy, with its many guards, maintains excellent security due to the high number of people coming and going, resulting in very few incidents occurring.

Even if security-related issues were to arise, they are usually promptly resolved. I've never heard of any major incidents like terrorism happening at the Academy so far. But that's within the Academy; the situation outside is different. Especially in this world, where individual strength holds sway, it's inherently unstable in terms of security.

Hence, it means that anywhere, anytime, there might be some lunatics up to no good. And the devil worshipers fit that description perfectly. They have been a force lurking in the shadows of the underworld long before Xenon's Biography. If people suddenly go missing or 'undead' appear without any signs, it's mostly their doing.

They're nothing but vile beings worse than pests, nothing short of the epitome of evil in this world. Their biggest problem was that they were virtually unknown before Xenon's Biography, but now they've fully emerged.

In fact, it would be apt to say that due to Xenon's Biography, they've been forced into the limelight. Rumor has it that with Xavier declaring a holy war, the devil worshipers' heads are being smashed every ten seconds.

However, their scariest aspect is that they managed to go unnoticed even by Dark Elves and Demons.

If the dark elves and demons borrow the power of darkness through Mora, the devil worshipers were literally the slimy darkness itself. Some demons, deeply associated with the devil, had sensed omens from the past. This was speculated because among the devil worshippers, there seemed to exist a faction of radicals that was believed to have been annihilated in the distant past.

During the time when demons were persecuted, there were those who harbored not restraint but hatred towards the world, embracing the power of the devil themselves. Though defeated in the civil war that took place in Helium long ago, it is gradually being revealed that they are secretly in league with the devil worshippers.

It's been said that even in Helium, some clues were found after assigning the task to the 'Reaper' to track them down. The power and scale of the devil worshippers are far greater than anticipated.

With great power and scale comes great danger. Moreover, whenever any faction feels threatened, they tend to act out. While it's uncertain in what form this acting out will manifest, many resort to causing chaos.

The issue lies in the immense damage caused by this chaos. Particularly, those deeply associated with Xenon's Biography were in extreme danger.

[…Therefore, I send this letter urging caution. Please do not worry, and I hope to continue steady serialization.]

The owner of the letter I've read is Musk. He is precisely in such a situation. Musk is the CEO of the only company known to have contracted with Xenon's Biography and is one of the visible links to Xenon externally. Naturally, he could become a target for the devil worshippers. Although Arwen is also known to have a connection, she's currently too significant a figure to engage with, hence they aimed at Musk.

According to the contents of the letter, it seems that there was a surprise attack from devil worshippers, but it was handled appropriately and safely. The upcoming publication will be done in collaboration with the Luminous Church.

Collaborating with the Luminous Church for publication was surprising, but what concerns the writer most is undoubtedly the attack. The letter expresses that while the sender doesn't mind being attacked, they are particularly worried about the upcoming exhibition in the Michelle Territory.

Since I, as Xenon, announced my attendance in a previous exhibition through a letter, there's a high probability I'll attend this one as well. Hence, there's a possibility that the devil worshippers might target the event. Although I will take precautions, there's an uneasiness that won't fade away.

It's said that crazy people don't listen to reason, and even with significant manpower invested in the exhibition, the devil worshipers are individuals who could carry out acts of terror.

‘Father mentioned a direct request to the royal family, but…’

Musk’s letter has been read by my father beforehand. The CEO thinks of my father as Xenonand sends his letters to him, since it’s better if it’s not addressed directly to the writer, me.

Father plans to invite officials from the royal family to the mansion. There’s a clear justification for reinforcing security, the threat from the devil worshippers, which should convince the royal family.

Furthermore, if I inform Cecily about this, Helium might also provide personnel. This exhibition only happens once a year, and there’s no intention of missing it.

Most importantly, the scale of the exhibition a year ago and the current one differs greatly. A year ago, mostly humans and demons attended, but now, it’s expected to be bustling with attendees from all races without discrimination.

If the security here collapses to the point of even terrorism occurring, the repercussions on the Minerva Empire and not just the Michelle territory would be beyond imagination. To prevent that, the exhibition must proceed smoothly.

‘Will it extend to Xavier? If it does, Kate will come, right?’

Somehow, it feels like the exhibition is becoming something other than an exhibition. It seems like a massive amount of people, including other countries, will gather.

During the last exhibition, my father said he was suffering from headaches due to preparations, but now, not even a hint of relief was visible.

For now, there’s nothing immediate that I can do. There’s about a month left until the vacation, and at the same time, the exam period is approaching.

The approaching exam period means that students are getting very busy. Thanks to that, my recent meetings with acquaintances have decreased, and I’ve become quite busy on my own.

“What kind of topics do you think the exam questions should be about? Just think about it.”

“Why are you telling me, a mere assistant, that?”

“Because you come up with brilliant ideas. Remember when you imagined a world without mana last time?”

Elena instructed me to make the exam questions instead. I’ve heard of assistants grading papers in my past life, but I’ve never heard of them substituting for exam questions.

This is obviously passing the buck and an illegal act, but in these times, let’s just brush it off. There’s no specific law against it, so it’s meaningless no matter what anyone says.

I momentarily stopped fretting and shifted my gaze to Cindy, who was tirelessly writing a new paper.

She still stuck to her messy hairstyle, and judging by the dark circles under her eyes, her lifestyle seems unchanged from before.

“Did Cindy submit exam questions like me?”

“I used to do it too… But now I don’t have to.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m also a doctor like the professor…”

It seems Cindy, like me during my assistant days, has indulged Elena quite a bit. Nevertheless, she didn’t seem to have any complaints. Elena doesn’t ignore things like human rights as if they were trivial or pick on oddities, so that’s a relief.

Instead, helping her seems to be quite helpful in history-related matters. Through researching, I’ve gained various knowledge, unknowingly accumulating an enormous amount of information.

“Oh, by the way, if you leak exam questions, I’ll immediately strip you of your assistantship. Not even close friends are exempt.”

“I know that much. Different questions for each class, right?”

“Of course. I’ll handle the questions for the second year and Class 1, you’ll take care of the rest.”

“Understood.”

It’s bothersome, but what can I do? If the professor commands, I have to accept it. It might be somewhat interesting in its own way.

For a moment, I stopped pondering about what kind of questions would impress the students, and suddenly a question for Elena popped into my mind.

“Professor, are you planning to visit the exhibition this time?”

“Huh? Ah, come to think of it, the exhibition is coming up soon. Will it be held in your territory again?”

“Yes.”

“Hmm…”

Elena lifted her glasses, paused for a moment in thought, then shrugged and spoke up.

“I really want to see it once. They said the Matrics Theater troup’s performance was so amazing, right? They collaborated with the Rilus Orchestra.”

“It was a performance I’ll never forget. If the professor saw it once, you’d never forget it either.”

The vivid memories still played in my mind—the sacrifice of Sakran by the Rilus Orchestra and the Matrics theater troupe from the very opening act.

Later, when it was revealed that the director of the Matrics theater troupe was a demon, there was a bit of a stir, but ironically, that only boosted their popularity.

A show you wanted to see twice after seeing it once, and three times after seeing it twice. This exhibition was about to showcase the performance again. The Matrics theater troupe had emphasized they’d only perform Sakran’s sacrifice at this exhibition, meaning it would happen only once a year.

“Are you going this time?”

“Sorry, but I’ll pass on this exhibition too. I have a mountain of research to do during the break, stuck in the lab.”

“Are you that busy?”

“Yeah. We’ve spotted some inconsistencies in certain historical records that seem to be tampered with by devil worshippers. If I delve into this, I might uncover what kind of influence these devil worshippers had.”

It might be appropriate to say it's typical of Elena, or perhaps it's a scholarly response by nature. She was so firm that I couldn't persuade her anymore.

As I was neatly giving up and thinking about submitting a certain problem, at that moment, Elena advised me in a very serious tone.

"So, be careful at the exhibition. Devil worshippers are the kind of people who even slightly alter history. We don't know how they might cause harm."

"I'm aware of that. That's why I'm preparing thoroughly."

"Then, that's fortunate. I don't want to lose a good sl… no. Assistant after finally acquiring one."

"Weren't you just about to say 'slave'?"

"You misheard."

It didn't seem so.

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Isaac was having busy times due to his final exams at the academy.

The Michelle Territory, where the exhibition is taking place, was bustling with a seemingly never ending daily routine.

Under the immense symbolism of Xenon's birthplace, it's evolving into a cultural city, attracting diverse upper-class and tourists alike.

Originally a peaceful small village, it's gradually advancing into a cityscape, with various buildings being erected and skilled workers meticulously constructing them using materials flown in.

In preparation for any potential mishaps, clergy members were on standby in the vicinity, just in case.

Not only that, but artists were sporadically displaying their artwork in advance for the exhibition.

Most were intricate sculptures and handicrafts that are challenging to move, and more artworks were planned to be exhibited in the future.

The once tranquil Michelle Territory, relentlessly progressing into a cultural city day by day, felt different this time.

“Hurry up! We need to have everything completed before the exhibition!”

“Hey! If it’s too exhausting, take a break. If you collapse while working, who will it be reported to, Xenon?”

“Give me that hammer!”

The essential need to construct the designed buildings is labor. Equally important is the ability of the workers who construct the buildings, comparable to architects.

Both sides will be satisfied only if the workers understand what the architects want and build accordingly. Additionally, as the labor force increases, the time required significantly reduces.

However, the most crucial factor is the number of workers, especially for large-scale construction where quantity takes precedence over quality.

Look at this now. Regardless of the lack of technological advancement compared to Earth, they had to work manually, yet the scale of construction remained unchanged.

So, what exactly are they building to warrant such a massive labor force?

“…Is it really going to be completed within a month?”

The head of the Marshall family, Hawk, opened his mouth with a bewildered expression as he gazed at the bustling construction site. The current scale of the construction, reminiscent of what one might see in the capital, was reflected in his eyes.

And the woman with golden hair standing beside him flashed a charming smile. She was armed in white armor, and a well-maintained mace hung at her waist. It was Kate Louise Angelica, known to have recently returned to the pilgrimage and also serving as the grand inquisitor.

For some reason unknown to him, the situation had led her beyond the capital to Michelle’s territory. And not just her, but an enormous force dispatched from Xavier accompanied her. All the personnel currently at the construction site were individuals directly dispatched by Xavier.

“Of course. That’s why I brought them.”

Kate said, his arms crossed, glancing at the somewhat functional temple before turning his head slightly.

She wore her usual compassionate smile, but Hawk sensed a slight unease. He had been puzzled when he heard about the pilgrimage arriving with an enormous group in their territory and was left baffled by the subsequent talk of erecting a temple in the territory.

He wanted to ask what nonsense it was directly to her face when he first heard about it but found himself speechless when it came to getting to work. Apparently, the decision had already been made in discussions between the royal family and the involved parties.

For the country where the temple would be erected, Xavier's jurisdiction played the most significant role, and other nations simply had to give their consent. From the standpoint of the country where the temple was being built, it meant goods would be sold, unemployment rates would decrease, and above all, the welcoming of the temple's construction with open arms.

"Hmm…"

Hawk listened to Kate's explanation and slightly furrowed his brow. Being a devout follower of Luminous himself, he had no objection to the construction of a temple. However, constructing a temple was typically required in a city of a certain size. As a result, to visit the temple, one had to head towards the capital.

Being the one referred to as the "Red Lion," he could make the journey to the capital every day, but for others, it was nearly an impossible task. Especially considering he went there without even taking a carriage, opting to run.

"You might be wondering why we're suddenly building a temple. But building a temple is necessary for this sacred land to receive protection from Luminous."

Kate said, sensing Hawk's thoughts, with a reassuring smile.

Hawk raised one eyebrow in response, questioning.

"Sacred land, you say?"

"Yes. It's the land where Luminous has chosen, the opportunity to drive out the vile darkness from the world. It's the land where Xenon was born."

"… …"

“Building a temple on top of it is only natural. Under the protection of the god, the exhibition can be safely held, and blessings can be received.”

She continued, locking eyes with Hawk. There was a clear conviction in her emerald eyes.

As Hawk gazed into her determined eyes, he shifted his gaze towards the construction site. Though it might be unclear from just listening, Kate’s words conveyed her intent.

[I will make Marcel’s territory a ‘sanctuary.’]

She will make it a land that remains forever untarnished, where only purity lingers.

Hawk realized the situation and let out a sigh with a perplexed expression. Above all, there was something particularly unsettling.

“If Lord Xenon were to see this, how delighted he would be? Just imagining it gives me shivers.”

“… …”

“Ah, how I wish this land were quickly filled with the blessings of Lord Luminous…”

It was Kate’s fanatical aspect. Hawk had already seen through at once that she knew Isaac’s true identity. However, her attitude towards Isaac sent chills down the spine of anyone who witnessed it. Despite being someone who had seen everything, having soared under the reputation of the Red Lion, he was discreetly stepping back.

‘What on earth have you done, my son…’

Hawk sighed once again with a perplexed expression, looking at the construction site.

‘Surely, the Demon Princess wouldn’t imitate this after seeing it?’

Such a thought crossed his mind unexpectedly.

Translators note:

Chapter 238: Magnificent (3)

The elves, unlike demons, have a long history of interacting with other races, which has resulted in numerous positive and negative descriptors attached to them.

They are described as a race chosen by the gods, the first civilization, the origin of everything—positive descriptors that abound. However, there are also negative ones that counterbalance these positives.

They're labeled as arrogant, rude, snobbish, excessively prideful, hot-tempered, and discriminatory, with most descriptors culminating in "elves are arrogant." Just as the positive descriptors reflect their exceptional abilities, the negative ones are rooted in their undeniable capabilities, leaving others feeling overshadowed.

Even if elves were to criticize a specific aspect, others couldn't say a word in return. Their perceived arrogance stems from their unwavering belief in their own abilities, allowing them to dismiss criticisms easily.

Moreover, even if elves were to learn something from other races, they would only acknowledge it as such. In their fields of expertise, they wouldn't yield an inch to anyone, regardless of what they might learn from others.

Especially, the most potent aspect was magic. Magic has been the power and ability developed since the establishment of civilization, and indeed, the elves possess the most outstanding abilities.

The demons wield formidable firepower through dark mana, yet it's practically impossible for them, like the elves, to drop meteorites from the sky. While the demons can make barren lands fertile, they can't match the efficiency of the elves in doing so.

Instead, due to the persecution they faced over the years, the magic that aids daily life is far more abundant among demons than elves. Furthermore, magical items like refrigerators rival even the craftsmanship of dwarves.

However, do the elves consider that impressive? That's the question. They believe that with time, they can create not just the same but even better items. Of course, this is a

thought possible because they haven't witnessed it firsthand. In reality, creating magical items requires immense expertise.

Refrigerators, magic pens, temperature control in dormitories, and so on. Although these are magical, engineering plays a significant role. The confidence that elves hold in their magic and research is quite similar to 'science', but engineering is a distinct field that emphasizes craftsmanship the most.

However, the elves seem to forget this fact, and Arwen is no exception. Despite her mixed heritage and integration into human society before entering Alvenheim, it seems inherent traits couldn't be altered. Moreover, Arwen herself took pride in magic, making her reluctant to yield.

Nevertheless, it's not that she was entirely wrong. If it were just the two of us, it might not matter, but the issue is that she uttered those words in front of Princess Cecily of Helium.

The magic of demons appears crude to the elves, citing evidence that elves are superior to demons and so on, even as Arwen, who is most wary of the elven trait of 'arrogance,' ironically exhibits a demeanor that befits it the most.

"A dwarf with a small chest…"

It's understandable why Cecily launched a personal attack. However, this constitutes a significant mistake on her part. While it would be one thing to disparage races like Arwen, this was a direct insult to an individual. It's akin to a signal flare veering into an odd direction in the midst of a fight.

"W-what did you just… What did you say?"

She might have whispered it, but there's absolutely no way Arwen, facing me, didn't hear it. It's no different from saying it aloud right in front of her.

Upon this, Arwen reacted with considerable confusion, briefly covering her chest with both arms. Perplexity filled her grayish eyes.

Although she has said it that way, she's by no means on the petite side and, if anything, she's above average. Cecily is just overwhelmingly large.

As for height… let's overlook that. That's not a matter of relativity but rather absoluteness.

Meanwhile, Cecily, observing Arwen covering her chest with her arms, snorted, crossed her arms, and wore a smug expression.

Already boasting a formidable presence with her school uniform buttons almost bursting due to her massive chest, adding crossed arms only accentuated her imposing aura.

“Did I say something wrong? Even the Queen looked down on demons in my presence. Right?”

“W-well, that’s true, but this was a personal attack!”

“Don’t you consider criticizing demons to be a personal attack on me? It’s a fact that demon magic is somewhat more chaotic than that of elves. However, to speak so bluntly without explaining it a bit… it feels a bit too much.”

Unlike when Cecily made a personal attack, she spoke calmly, but her words were cutting. Insulting demons would be considered a personal attack on her. So, if Arwen insults them further, she won’t stand idly by. Moreover, she’s the princess of Helium and the next in line to be the future demon lord. She has ample reason and justification to speak that way.

When I sensed signs that their argument might escalate, I immediately intervened.

“Arwen, Cecily’s right. You might have said what you thought, but from the listener’s perspective, it could hurt. It might be true that elves are the most proficient in magic. But be cautious about making direct comparisons.”

“…Alright. Seems like I misspoke.”

Even though she’s of mixed blood, an elf is an elf. In the fields they’re confident in, they don’t bend their pride.

As Arwen bowed her head and apologized, I turned to Cecily. She seemed somewhat uplifted that I took her side but had her arms crossed, drawing attention to her chest.

An impulse surged in me, like wanting to snatch away ripe fruit, but I barely restrained myself. Firstly, I needed to address her mistake.

“Same goes for you. Arwen was wrong, but there was no need for a personal attack. You could’ve phrased it differently.”

“But isn’t that the truth? I just returned it as it was given.”

Cecily remained unyielding, showing no concession to my words. It seemed that Cecily had taken offense at Arwen underestimating the demons. Clearly, Arwen had openly engaged in racial discrimination, and she probably wouldn't even consider apologizing. She had stayed quiet, but Arwen had pushed her into this.

However, it wasn't a personal attack. To retort, she should have targeted the elves, not Arwen individually. Arwen seemed to share a similar sentiment, as she spoke with a slightly choked voice.

"Is that so? Alright then. I'll stop attacking the demons as well."

Following her words, she, just like Cecily had done, launched a personal attack.

"Fatty."

"Wh-what?"

"Arwen?"

Cecily, and even I, stared at Arwen in surprise. "Fatty" was undoubtedly a word that scorned Cecily's chest. It was a part that stood out much more than others, making it a vulnerable point for an attack. However, it also raised a question.

Isn't having a large chest considered good? Cecily had touched on Arwen's weakness, but Arwen, instead of getting offended, seemed to take it as a compliment. Cecily, initially taken aback, later caught on, looking embarrassed for a moment before snorting in laughter.

Instead, she confidently responded, emphasizing her already prominent chest even more by clenching her fists.

"Thank you. Some people don't even have these lumps of fat. It may be a bit uncomfortable, but Isaac likes it."

"Why me?"

"Why. It's true."

It is true that it's true, but I don't understand why she insists on involving me in this fight.

"Hmm. Isaac, you can understand too. Men have traditionally preferred women with large breasts. I've read about it in books. Biologically, they are attracted to it because it

reminds them of their mother's embrace."

Why are you like that again? Even Arwen was nodding seriously, accepting it.

While Cecily was smirking even more, Arwen slowly got up from her seat. I just watch her actions with a puzzled look.

Then, Arwen places her hand on her slender waist and sweeps it down, showcasing her superior hips.

With a dress already exposing her bare side, her actions make it even more detrimental to the heart.

"Well, how about this? Isn't it better to have these curves than just having a lot of fat?"

"Uh…"

"I don't know about the chest, but I'm confident below. I've been praised for my beauty since ancient times."

Considering Arwen's standards, it's been quite a while since ancient times, and if she's been praised since then, her pelvic line is undoubtedly as overwhelming as Cecily's chest.

Cecily, being a demon, boasted exceptional hips and a well-defined lower body, yet she doesn't quite compare to Arwen. Moreover, due to Arwen's petite stature, this difference was further emphasized.

While sitting, I found myself gazing at Arwen's lower body as if entranced, slowly shifting my gaze upwards. However, this action seemingly embarrassed Arwen, whose flushed face caught my eye.

Trying not to be obvious about my scrutiny, her efforts to hold back made her even more endearing. Yet, when I looked away, the charm faded entirely.

One side had the chest, the other, the hips. Truly, it was an unequaled battle between two grand places.

'…Why am I comparing them again?'

I didn't know why I was comparing. Whether it was a matter of feminine pride, neither woman yielded an inch.

Rather than merely watching from afar, it felt like I was adding fuel to the fire.

“Th-that much I have too! Look!”

In the midst of this, perhaps sensing some urgency, Cecily abruptly stood up, placing her hand on her waist. Following suit, just like Arwen did, she swept her hand downward. While undoubtedly above average, compared to Arwen, she fell slightly short.

Arwen’s hips were indeed remarkable, but her slim waist made comparisons impossible. Despite her short stature, her proportions, typical of elves, made her anything but small.

Confirming this, Arwen wore a triumphant expression and, with a bold voice, spoke up.

“Comparing just that much is rather petty, isn’t it? So, Isaac, which do you think is better?”

“What? Out of the blue?”

“Yeah. Isaac, you’ve got a good feel, right? You touch my chest every night.”

“Wait, why are you suddenly saying this to me? This feels like a situation where a shrimp’s back breaks during a whale fight.”

Honestly, her chest was indeed good, but when I see Arwen, my eyes shift to her hips again.There was a saying even in my past life, that when a man sees a woman, he first looks at her hips. It’s some sort of deep-seated genetic instinct.

As I was entertaining these useless thoughts, Arwen seemed to sense something strange and blinked as she asked Cecily.

“Every night? Touching every night, what kind of talk is that?”

“Huh?”

“Oh.”

Come to think of it, Arwen had no idea that Cecily and I were having these nightly encounters. I inadvertently revealed an embarrassing truth, but Cecily wasn’t fazed at all. In fact, she seemed to take it as an opportunity, wearing a sly smile, a particular blend of mischief and amusement in her expression.

“Oh my. Come to think of it, Your Majesty didn’t know. Do you know that Isaac and I are in a relationship?”

“W-well, I knew about that, but… But, about the nights… No, before that, aren’t you the Princess of Helium? Even if Marie is human, you are…”

Arwen alternated her confused, silvery-gray eyes between me and Cecily. In response, I scratched my head, suppressing a wry smile.

It seemed the grand confrontation’s end would yield results in a different direction.

“Your Majesty knows, don’t you? In relationships, it’s natural for things to blaze hot like a volcano. Isaac and I are no different, right? At least once every three days.”

“… …”

“Me being a princess of Helium? That’s no issue at all. Why? Isaac is the author of Xenon’s Biography. I offered my body to the savior of the demons. What’s the problem?”

In essence, the game was over. The clash between the elves and demons abruptly turned into a battle of hips and chests, resulting in Arwen’s defeat.

What Cecily wanted to convey was that no matter how much noise she makes, it’s meaningless unless a relationship is established. It’s meaningless to compare if bodies weren’t mingled.

“So, Your Majesty. No matter how superior your hips are, they mean nothing to Isaac. Do you understand?”

“… …”

With each successive attack, did Arwen really dislike losing that much?

She hesitated slightly, gave me a fleeting glance, then tightly shut her eyes. Her fair skin flushed a deep red, reminiscent of a tomato.

Subsequently, Arwen mumbled for a moment, then shouted forcefully.

“This is unfair!”

“What?”

“Arwen?”

Then came Arwen’s next statement…

“Then allow me to engage in an intimate act with Isaac!”

Something was seriously amiss.

“That way, we can fairly compare!”

It was Elvish communism.

Translators note:

Chapter 242: Invitation (1)

As the exams approach, the closer the vacations become. Additionally, my academic workload, which includes submitting exam papers, becomes increasingly busy.

You might ask if submitting exam questions is difficult, but surprisingly, it is challenging. Especially in majors close to liberal arts, like history, most exams require subjective answers, and its not something I can do alone.

Elena told me to just focus on creating the questions, as grading needs to be fair, and there will inevitably be a lot of differing opinions.

If it were a multiple-choice problem, I could just roughly prepare the answers, but the academy doesnt work like that. Each professor has their own beliefs and philosophies, so there are no multiple-choice questions; only subjective ones.

So, I kept pondering repeatedly on how to squeeze out some sort of subjective answer. I need to submit the answers quickly to have more free time for myself.

But theres always a way the world gets its way with you. Suddenly, I had a good idea and proposed it to Elena.

What if we just submit the problem from a year ago?

I was actually thinking about that.

But why ask me for a favor?

I was curious about what problem you would come up with. A bit disappointing.

One way or another, the test questions were settled casually. Actually, there might not be a better question than asking new students, What is history?

However, from now on, I really have to submit history questions myself. Since Elena said she would directly submit them for the second-year students, its like Ive been given some substantial free time.

During this free time, I was writing Volume 19 and researching historical data. Ive been spending my time productively until the vacation approaches.

This free time also includes invitations to the exhibition. Marie, Cecily, and Rina will definitely come to the estate, and Adelia is my bodyguard, so shell automatically attend.

However, Leona and Cherry are a bit different. Leona became my woman due to the unique cultural norms of the beastmen, but she has a strong sense of independence.

So it meant that she wouldnt be able to work part-time throughout the vacation period. Shes always done that until now, so theres no reason this exhibition would be any different.

Well then, Ill cover everything you need for next semester.

Ah, even if you say that much

Including food. How much steak do you want to eat?

I love you, darling.

Of course, inviting Leona, who adored steak, wasnt difficult. When I promised to buy her steak for the next semester without any hesitation, Leona pressed her face against my chest.

It was fortunate that we were alone in the cafe; otherwise, if anyone had seen us, they might have given us a cold stare.

With her ears perked up, she gave off a vibe of a very affectionate cat. Lions are part of the cat family, so maybe its not that strange.

Leona often shows her affection by pressing her face against me, regardless of whether its my cheek or chest.

Just as animals leave their scent, when were alone, Leona tends to engage in physical affection, skin-to-skin.

There are a lot of delicious things in your territory, right?

Yeah, there should be plenty. Its Xenons Biography exhibition, after all.

The more I see you, the more impressive you become. How could Xenons birthplace be over there?

Well, because I am Xenon. By the way, I havent told Leona that I am Xenon yet.

I should have told her from the beginning, but first, I plan to introduce myself to my parents and then tell her.

Its all because of my father. He has extensive experience not only with Elven reconnaissance units in the border zone but also clashes with beastmen.

Naturally, there might be some reluctance towards beastmen, so its better to seek permission first.

Given Fathers disposition, hell reluctantly accept, but I have a feeling that I should let him know that Leona is a beastwoman.

Well, then when do you plan on pairing up? Im ready anytime.

Um this upcoming vacation might be tough, right?

Ah, so theres someone who has made prior arrangements?

Its not really a prior arrangement

I was at a loss for how to explain this, offering a wry smile. For now, Leona is certain to follow after Adelia.

However, at this exhibition, its uncertain whether Adelia and I will have our first night together. I want to give her a joyous first night that erases all past traumas, but its not that simple.

I vowed that even if I were to reveal my true identity as Xenon, I would ensure she chooses me, but shouldnt I also consider others?

Especially since Marie and Cecily are eagerly anticipating this vacation, there might be a chance for Adelia to intervene.

She was thrilled when I remembered our anniversary.

On the exact day marking one year since I started dating Marie, I gifted her a ring adorned with a ruby. It was a fairly expensive ring purchased with the profits from selling Xenon series.

When I asked my mother about it, she said that noblewomen who like to show off prefer expensive jewelry. In particular, They wear the jewelry given by her beloved every day.

My mother also always wears the same ring on her left ring finger. However, it turns out that the ring is a marriage anniversary ring that my father obtained by using his retirement money. I was so surprised to hear that.

Anyway, when I gave her the ring, Marie jumped around happily and confessed her love to me continuously. I, too, was very pleased with her reaction, and my heart became full.

After that, well you probably know. Despite it being an exam period, her passion for me flared dramatically. She even made a nearly runaway statement, saying that we should have a child immediately.

Luckily, I managed to regain my composure. If not, I might have immediately prepared for a wedding instead of studying for exams.

Its a bit unexpected. So, it might take some time. Is that okay?

Whether its okay or not, it doesnt matter. It might be a bit challenging during the mating season, but I can endure it.

Yeah. Yeah. Thanks for understanding.

Purrr.

I stroked her head with sincere words. As I did, Leona purred, rubbing her ear against me.

Although her tail was hidden behind her pants, I wondered if it would sway if revealed.

While stroking Leonas head, a sudden thought crossed my mind.

Come to think of it, I seem to embrace a different girl every vacation, dont I?

The first summer vacation was with Marie, and the last winter vacation was with Cecily. And though its not confirmed, it seems like this summer vacation will be with Adelia. So, does that mean the next winter vacation will be with Leona? Honestly, I seem to fit the description Nicole mentioned, a trash wandering around and seducing girls.

Well, what can I do.

I should consider this my fate. I kept soothing my mind by continuously stroking Leonas soft, fluffy hair. For some reason, it feels addictive. Even in my past life, I tended to

enjoy petting cute puppies or cats. After losing my parents in an accident, the only solace I found was in cute dog or animal pictures. I wanted to raise one myself, but circumstances didnt allow it, so I lived somewhat lonely.

Although Leona isnt an animal but a person, isnt she still a living being? I want to keep feeling this sensation in my hands.

Purr. Mrrr.

Do you like it that much?

Yes. Hubby. Please stroke a little more.

Its certain. Leona is not a lion but a cat.

I chuckled and, as she wished, didnt stop stroking her hand. It seems she wants to address me as Hubby.

I invited Leona too, and the remaining person is

Cherry, a freshman who has just sprouted the buds of dreams and hopes. I havent proposed going to the exhibition to her yet, but I plan to do so soon. However, given her suppressive family environment, there is a possibility that they strongly discouraged her from even dreaming about going to the exhibition.

Ive counseled Cherry extensively so far. Her family, the Roseberry, boasted an extremely rigid upbringing. Treating people more like robots than fellow humans. Just listening to it makes one feel suffocated.

Originally, their lineage, well, her grandfathers time, was relatively ordinary, but this particular Roseberry generation, especially after the release of Xenons Biography, became severe. Cherry mentioned this trend intensified significantly after its publication.

I should meet her in person and talk.

If possible, Id like to invite Cherry to the exhibition. If thats not feasible, I plan to directly send an invitation to her family. If thats not possible either Ill coax her to come secretly. She needs to witness firsthand how Xenons Biography is becoming a culture.

One might call it motivation. The public already speculates her as Xenons disciple. Despite only one volume being out, its gaining significant attention due to its

reincarnation theme.

If Cherrys popularity continues to rise, even her family wont easily interfere. Its the most certain way right now.

Suddenly

Huh?!

Oh. Sorry. I didnt think you would be surprised.

I was lost in thought for a moment when suddenly I felt a cold sensation on my neck, making me jump in surprise. Simultaneously, Leonas apology followed. Wondering what was going on, I glanced down to see her awkwardly smiling with her tongue sticking out.

It seemed she couldnt resist her instincts and had licked my neck. Its a behavior commonly referred to as grooming. I stared blankly at the giggling Leona and felt a chill down my spine. Meanwhile, she, with a peculiar expression, regained her composure and spoke to me with sparkling golden eyes.

I thought it would taste similar since the fragrance was so vibrant. But, it seems not. It even seems quite delicious, doesnt it?

Can I try licking it one more time? You can lick mine too.

Is that a custom among your kind?

More of a characteristic of beastmen like lions, tigers, and catfolk rather than beastmen. So, is it okay?

I almost asked her to lick somewhere else instead of my neck for a moment.

*****

The second exhibition at Michelle Territory was about a month away. For humans and certain other species, it might seem like plenty of time, but for those whose lifespans surpass theirs by far, its quite brief.

Especially for those engaged in the arts, needing to transport their works to Michelle Territory makes the time even shorter. Consequently, most artists have been bustling about long before the exhibition, striving busily to secure a spot and earnestly presenting their pieces.

And among those passionately striving to exhibit their work was someone

Does this thing really move?

Yeah, why would I lie?

Ains, a dwarf and inventor of the magical engine, who had committed to attend this exhibition, was currently showcasing his creation to other dwarfs. At first glance, it appeared to be an ordinary carriage, but distinct differences were noticeable here and there.

Firstly, the carriage, quite literally, was horseless; no visible mechanism was in place for the horses. Instead, there were seats for the coachman, and remarkably, seats for guests as well.

However, one striking feature stood outthe peculiar item hitched at the reara magical engine designed for magical locomotives but affixed to the carriage by Ains himself.

So, was it coal? How far can you go by putting that black rock in?

I havent even experimented with that yet.

You idiot! Without even trying that, youre planning to head straight to the Minerva Empire? Youre out of your mind.

In response to Ains unclear answer, a dwarf muttered under his breath. Its understandable, as the distance between the Dwarfs realm, Makina, and the Minerva Empire is quite vast.

While it doesnt require crossing a sea like Alvenheim, traveling by land would take at least a month, assuming one doesnt walk but uses a carriage. Even with a carriage, it takes a month to cover that distance, and yet, they havent even experimented with the magic carriage.

Nevertheless, Ains, confidently folding his thick arms, spoke up. His rich brown beard stood out prominently.

Its possible, thats why Im doing this! Once you ride it, all doubts will vanish. Did you all think I couldnt even create a magical engine?

Well thats true. But why start with this instead of a magical engine train?

This is more of an experimental piece. Because of its size, it needs to be constructed on a large scale altogether. The crucial thing is to get it moving, for now.

That makes sense. So, whats its name? Magic carriage?

Thats too unimaginative.

Well, a magical engine train sounds like it has something special, but this one seems to lack that something. It sounds like a downgrade.

The dwarves were already criticizing it without having even heard its name, yet Ains paid no mind.

He had anticipated such reactions well enough. Especially among dwarves, ones inventions must be handled as preciously as ones own children.

This principle extends to the name as well. Its crucial to choose a name carefully to avoid becoming the subject of ridicule in the future.

Ains frowned as the dwarves casually assigned names, wagging their tongues, then spoke with his characteristic confident voice.

Do I look like I dont have such thoughts? Am I not Ains Eitri, the inventor of magical devices?

Yeah, you seem totally clueless.

He probably made that thing because hes a thoughtless fool. We can acknowledge his achievements, but he lacks thought and is reckless, right?

Damn bastards. Anyway, the name for this invention is quite simple. No need for any words, it moves only with magical engines!

If Isaac had witnessed this scene, what would he have thought?

By its name, the magical car!

It seems even worse than before?

Just call it a car.

Perhaps he would have chuckled softly. It might have been a moment where he considered the Second World War novel more carefully.

Ignoring the harsh evaluation of the two dwarves, Ains nodded as if he liked it and then pointed with his thumb to the magical car behind him.

So, want to give it a try? If you guys want, Ill give you the honor of the first ride.

Well, were bored. Should we give it a shot?

Why not.

However, even the inventor Ains had faced a completely unexpected issue.

But how do we stop this?

What?

What? What what! Dammit! Stop it right now!

He forgot to create the brake. Luckily, it was just before takeoff; otherwise, it would have almost caused the worlds first transportation accident.

With just one month left until the exhibition.

This reckless guy. Step aside. We should create a stopping mechanism.

Lets also include speed conversion here. Whats the maximum speed of this?

Itll probably be slightly slower than going at maximum speed, right? Whatever we put in, itll eventually convert into mana.

Hmm. That might be a bit tricky. How about creating a separate mana storage? Store extra mana and if it becomes excessive, just discharge it outside.

Is that okay?

Culture and religion were converging towards science.

Translators note:

Chapter 243: Invitation (2)

Inviting Cherry to the exhibition surprisingly proceeded very smoothly, much more easily than expected. Despite hesitating a few times due to the oppressive home environment, she readily accepted the proposal.

The ease of acceptance left me rather dumbfounded. When I cautiously inquired if her family was not concerned, a bewildering response came back, leaving me perplexed.

Seniors proposal is much more important than my family.

Upon hearing that, a sense of unease prompted me to hastily ask further questions, fearing potential consequences if discovered.

The subsequent response was truly bewildering. Cherry, with her distinct hazy gaze, blinked slowly and responded with a playful tilt of her head.

Is there anything scarier than seniors indifference?

It was a statement that seemed to diverge in various meanings, but she seemed satisfied with just attending the exhibition. It appeared that she had somewhat dealt with the trauma related to her family.

I then asked about the progress of the next volume. Apparently, despite loosely attending classes, she diligently wrote as much as she did in the first volume.

Cherry, like me, had a style of planning the plot in advance and didnt experience delays in her writing pace.

According to her, now that a month had passed since the release of the first volume, if she completed the finishing touches, releasing the second volume was feasible.

Curious about her new work, I playfully urged her. However, Cherry seemed to take my jests quite seriously.

How serious was it?

If I cant keep the promise, Ill cut my wrist.

No. Theres no need for that.

No, its your order, Senior. I must absolutely keep it.

With a resolution not to joke with Cherry in the future, I returned to the accommodation. All classes were over, and with the exam period, time was relatively relaxed.

The remaining time was naturally being poured into writing. From volume 17 onwards, especially in volume 19, devils from the Seven Deadly Sins, slowly start to emerge.

The Wrath, Satan has already been defeated magnificently, so naturally, he wont appear, and the remaining Seven Deadly Sins will gradually make their appearance. However, Pride and Gluttony will be dealt with by Xenon and Jin, respectively, a little later. They will serve as driving forces for growth for these two characters, so their appearance is inevitable.

Nevertheless, due humanitys utmost efforts and hardships, theyve established a coalition force. However, the devils are incredibly powerful. Whats even more terrifying about devils are their seemingly endless numbers.

Even Elvenheim couldnt overcome this quantity and, despite resistance, ended up being pushed back. Moreover, if it hadnt been for the heroic sacrifices of the heroes, Diablo might have resurrected.

Fortunately, there havent been instances where devils directly attacked while awaiting Diablos resurrection, but its not something that can be left unattended. Here, the Elves who were lost Elvenheim were sharpening their swords. The Elves who lost their home hurriedly fled to the area inhabited by the Dark Elves after the sudden demonic invasion.

However, the deep-seated conflict between the Elves and Dark Elves, built up over a long time, hasnt diminished. They not only argue among themselves but, particularly, the older generation of Elves clashed with the younger generation of Dark Elves.

This situation was very similar to reality. The older generation of Dark Elves perceive Elvenheim as their ancestral homeland, whereas the younger generation of Dark Elves does not. Conversely, the younger generation of Elves simply heard about the Dark Elves and let it slide, but the older generation of Elves rejected them as heretics.

Here, the heroine and Elven woman, Mary, steps forward. Mary, having traveled the world with Xenon for a long time, has an open-minded way of thinking.

In the midst of the parliamentary fumbling, Elvenheim faced destruction right before their eyes. Despite the simmering conflicts exploding and lingering, warriors continued to rampage, insisting on restoring Elvenheim without a proper understanding of the power dynamics.

The reason for this chaos lies in the absence of a leader among the elves, or more precisely, a cause that can unite them. The elder of the Dark Elves is too feeble, functioning at a day-to-day level, and the Elven Queen remained in a state close to being a pauper. It vividly illustrated the characteristic disunity of the elves at a critical moment, turning it into a complete catastrophe.

To overcome this

In times of crisis, a hero is always needed. A sublime existence like the Elven heroes who sacrificed themselves to prevent the resurrection of Diablo. If heroes do not appear where they are needed, it could lead directly to doom. Mary will become such a heroic figure, facing challenges as diverse and tumultuous as those of Xenon.

Not only will she endure mental anguish, but she will also lose a symbol of the elves one of her ears, in the battle against Lilith.

Mary is known for her bold combat style for an elf

Marys personality is vibrant and fiery to the extent that the word lass suits her perfectly. The character who first showcased the legendary Hexopascal Kick is none other than Mary. Strangely, she is not ignorant or reckless. On the contrary, she always maintains composure during battles, showcasing exceptional intelligence by strategically using magic to turn the tide.

As for weapons? Mary doesnt need them. She simply pummels her opponents with her fists.

If Xenons finesse in swordsmanship learned from the master Kyir defines sophistication, then Mary primarily employs techniques acquired over decades of traversing the world.

Observing Marys battles so far gives a glimpse of her style. Perhaps she might even shatter the fixed notion of a magician.

Of course, Marys combat style is only possible due to her being an elf, if she were human, she wouldnt even dare attempt it. Humans have to recite even simple spells.

In fact, Marys combat resembles more that of demons than elves. She knocks foes away like in that pirate manga, using sheer brute force.

On the other hand, Cecily No, Lillith

Mary has faced Lillith, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, before.

Lillith serves as the protagonist Marys rival in various aspects, contrasting in many ways. Firstly, their races differ: Lillith turned into a devil but originally belonged to the demonkind, while, as everyone knows, Mary is an elf.

Moreover, Lillith has faced a loss of a loved one right before her eyes in the past, while Mary, though inexperienced, continued her path with Xenon.

Marys discovery of this fact provokes Lillith, leading to Lillith exposing a vulnerability in her rage, resulting in a fatal wound.

Yet she managed to cut off one of her ears.

The battle between Mary and Lillith lasts for more than three days and nights. As my father said, battles between the mighty arent about whos stronger but a test of endurance and adaptability.

Assuming equal prowess, the worst case inevitably will happen. Therefore, one must always consider the worst, not the best, and approach battles with that in mind, especially in a fight where ones life is at stake.

In this aspect, Mary triumphs over Lillith due to her superiority. A significant injury to an elf, symbolizing their identity, is the severing of their ear?

For Mary, something like an ear is not important; what matters more is the future ahead and the existence of the world. Must she not save the world before marrying Xenon and having a child?

This mindset becomes one of the decisive reasons why Mary later leads the Elven Union, establishing the Elven identity as us, not you or me.

It might seem somewhat like Elvish communism, but lets overlook that. Associating Arwen with this would be a mistake.

And Lillith

Lilliths end In many ways, it can be considered regrettable. Hearing the news, Xenon rushes to support Mary, whereas Lillith is betrayed by her own comrade.

The Seven Sins, the betrayer among the elves, known as Pride, Lucifer. Without a hint of hesitation, Lucifer coldly looks down at the dying Lillith and mercilessly ends her life.

Its absurd enough to kill a comrade, but what Lucifer utters after killing Lillith is even more absurd. She should have been a nourishment for the devils long ago.

Amidst all this, whats lamentable is that, just before dying, Lillith called out the name of her former lover. She will be etched into peoples minds as a symbol of tragedy within the demon realm.

That would be the same for Lucifer, symbolizing Elven arrogance. He doesnt even spare a glance at Xenon and Mary as he departs. Unaware that his choice threatens himself.

Looks like there will be plenty of anti-fans.

There are countless clichs where villains kill their subordinates or colleagues. Yet despite being a clich, it still shocks the viewers considerably. Even my past life was like this.

Why did it have to be this way? Perhaps its a situation where he might even be treated worse than a bastard, maybe as a son of a bitch.

Its fortunate people dont pay attention to names.

If people considered names as a kind of prophecy I dont even want to imagine. The name Lucifer isnt common, but that very uniqueness might invite suspicion.

Even if they were to deny it, it could be seen as an insult to Xenons Biography and lead to a witch hunt. Thats why I canceled the illustration. Temporarily setting aside my diligent writing, my hands gradually became numb, forcing me to put down the magic pen. Everythings fine, but its a pity this world lacks typewriters.

Considering typewriters were invented at least after the Industrial Revolution, they were far from being available. Yet, with printing presses around, I wondered why it wasnt feasible, but theres no news about it.

Ideally, Id like to release it before the exhibition.

Theres about 20 days left until the vacation and precisely one month until the exhibition. At the current pace, it might be possible, but if it continues like this, my hands wont endure. Ive forced myself to write for a living and had to juggle academics; the hardships were not few.

Although machines for writing or the magic itself certainly exist, its akin to copying at best. What I need isnt a printer but a typewriter. Then the work speed would be much faster than now. Im confident I could release one volume every fortnight.

Im just being greedy.

Lets start by writing something. My goal is to finish writing the 19th volume before the exhibition.

Knock knock knock

Just as the tip of my pen touched the manuscript, the sound of someone knocking reached my ears. I lifted my head and glanced toward the door.

There shouldnt be anyone coming at this hour. I thought it might be someone from the academy, so I got up from my seat.

Yes. Come in.

Creak

After a moment, as the door was cautiously opened, I wondered who it could be.

It wasnt an academy official or Adelia, but Gartz, the guard of Cecily, was standing solemnly at the door.

A demon with horns curved like sheeps horns, unlike Cecilys. Due to Morras tantrums, Gartz has been visiting Helium more frequently, and Ive been in touch with him often.

However, it was usually me who called him first, so it was the first time Gartz had come on his own. And he even knocked very politely.

Mr. Gartz?

As I wondered if there was any reason for him to come, Gartz, in his characteristic cold voice, spoke.

Have you been well?

Despite his cold tone, his manner of politeness towards me was striking. He appeared aloof on the surface, yet somehow possessed a peculiarly warm sentiment.

While receiving his polite greeting with a nod, I suddenly noticed something in his hands. Entirely black and rectangular, longer horizontally than vertically. At a glance, it resembled a keyboard from my past life. Just what could it be? Seeing it held by no one else but Gartz only fueled my curiosity.

Whats that?

Oh, this? Its a device. I had it made in Helium, thinking it might be helpful for the benefactor.

For me?

I raised my head again at the mention that it was made not by Gartz personally but by Helium. It seemed like he had come to deliver it on behalf of Cecily, who was likely busy with exam preparations.

During that time, Gartz excused himself for a moment and entered the dormitory. Originally, it was forbidden for outsiders, but at this point, it was merely a nominal restriction.

Afterwards, he looked at the manuscript on the desk and seemed surprised, then began to glance at me. As soon as I confirmed that, I quickly put the manuscript into the desk drawer.

Upon seeing me put the manuscript in the drawer, Gartz bowed his head apologetically.

Im sorry. I didnt realize you were busy

No, no, its okay. By the way, what is that item used for?

I was not interested in anything else; I was just curious about the nature of the item. Gartz, seeming tense at my question, let out a sigh and placed it on the desk.

Placed on the desk, it really looks like a keyboard. Characters arranged as they are in this world, including special characters

Hmm?

Whats this? Its a real keyboard. What in the world have these people created?

As I stared bewildered at the object resembling a keyboard, Gartz cleared his throat and offered an explanation, his usually cold tone now tinged with an unexpected hint of tension, his voice trembling slightly.

Like I mentioned earlier, its an invention from Helium, designed to assist benefactors in any way possible. Artisans hailed in Helium dedicated themselves to this creation.

Firstly, this button is the power switch, which, as the name suggests, turns the device on and off. And if the device is turned on

Click!

As soon as I pressed a familiar button, the keyboard(?) emitted a blue light. Honestly, to anyone, this looked like a keyboard.

Regardless, Gartz, proud in tone, continued his explanation.

This is how the light appears. Pressing these characters here would display a message in the air. For instance, if you type my name

Tap tap tap

Our guardian knight, Gartz, cautiously typed his name using the famous eagle claw technique. Its unbelievable that this same person is referred to as a reaper who deals with peoples lives as if they were nothing.

However, Gartz was always serious. He glanced at his name displayed in the air and nodded once.

Is there any spare paper?

Here.

A sheet of paper was taken out from the drawer and handed over. Gartz then inserted the paper into a small gap beneath the keyboard.

He pressed a specific button again, and with a whirring noise, the paper wound its way into the keyboard, much like a common copier from a past life.

And

Whirrr

The paper emerged from a gap at the top of the keyboard. Gartzs name, just typed moments ago, was clearly imprinted on it.

I couldnt help but look bewildered. What I thought was just a simple keyboard turned out to be a combination of a keyboard and a printer.

A fusion of keyboard and printer, truly a product of science and magic. Is this really possible?

Mr. Gartz.

Yes, please speak.

How did you make this?

To that question, Gartz smiled proudly and answered confidently.

Its magic. After the benefactor started associating with the princess, the king devised this to assist the benefactor.

If it ever malfunctions, please let me know anytime. Ill come immediately.

As soon as I heard that, I immediately said to Gartz,

Do you need any more signatures?

Hail to the magic.

Translators note:

Chapter 244: Typewriter (1)

In this world, writing may resemble English, but the context itself is no different from Korean. The reason I quickly grasped the languages of this world was that despite the languages being different, the context remained the same. If you just memorize the language, thats the end of it.

The reason I said that if typewriters were invented, the work speed would double was also because of this. Since the context is the same, I could just type as I imagine, and it would be done.

Language issue? Once you get used to it, it becomes meaningless. Even in my past life, when I typed in English instead of Korean, I struggled a bit, but after adapting, I could use it as naturally as water flowing.

And that fits perfectly with the current situation. This machine I received from Gartz, could be called a typewriter and a copier. If you turn it on and type, hologram-like characters appear in the air, and if theres paper, you can print those characters.

A creation specialized in magic and with craftsmanship rivaling dwarves, made only by the demon race, who are adept at both magic and craftsmanship, exclusively for writing.

Gartz told me to call this machine whatever I wanted. When I asked why I, not the creator, should name it, he said it was solely for me. So, I simply named it Typewriter. It might seem ordinary, as I brought up a name from my past life, but Gartz was pleased. Despite being a simple typewriter, its performance surpasses technology by leaps and bounds.

Its a piece that could transcend the industrial era and fit right into the modern age, even if its claimed to be mixed with magic. Despite that, its performance is unbelievable. Thanks to it, Ive come to realize the potential of magic in this world and what outcomes the demons might cause if they decide to.

Especially for something like a typewriter, its akin to giving me wings. Its not an empty statementI can release a book every two weeks while juggling my studies. During

breaks, I might write continuously and publish every ten days. After all, until now, Ive been steadily releasing one every month, all handwritten.

Above all, the best part is being able to upgrade its performance through Gartz. If I express a desire for certain features based on memories from my past life, Gartz would immediately return to Helium and add those functions.

At first, the keys for numbers were oddly placed, and the backspace was similar. But after various suggestions, a typewriter very similar to my past one was born. Its called a typewriter, but its almost just a keyboard.

The only downside is the key pressure. They seem to have set the key pressure very low, considering my finger fatigue, but that also means I often press the wrong keys.

Still, its much better than writing by hand. Its a bit of an indulgence to have that crisp sound, like a mechanical keyboard.

Nevertheless, the typewriter, born after numerous improvements, has significantly increased my work speed. Ive already typed about half, so Ive used the typewriter for the remaining portion.

Ta-tatata ta-tata

The distinct typing noise of the typewriter gradually filled the dormitory. At the same time, the characters Im typing startede lining up in front of my eyes.

Although this typewriter works on scientific principles, its mostly crafted through magic, so the noise isnt that loud.

The key feel is just a sensation of pressing, and otherwise, its quite plain. Despite improvements based on my advice, it has many shortcomings as a prototype.

However, as mentioned earlier, the existence of a typewriter alone is advanced technology. The significant influence of magic, rather than machinery, adds value to the typewriter.

I happen to be one of the few who can use the typewriter almost as well as an expert. Its like giving wings to a tiger.

Ding

Not even five minutes have passed, and Ive already filled a whole page. As soon as I heard the notification that the page was full, I immediately inserted a manuscript into the space below.

Then, with the characteristic whirring sound of a copier, a sheet of paper came out of the typewriter. Along with a warm feeling, the characters filling the manuscript caught my eye.

The standard for the pages is strictly based on the manuscript, and if desired, the font size can be reduced.

Its really convenient.

I quickly checked for any possible typos on the page and gently placed it on the desk. The desk was already piled high with manuscript paper.

The typewriters efficacy was impressive, but the most astonishing aspect is its typo inspection feature. Unlike the drawback of having to discard paper in case of a typo in typewriters from my past life, this typewriter uses a holographic format for output, allowing for the removal of characters beforehand.

There are no issues even after printing. Im not sure how copying works, but it erases cleanly with a remover. Of course, it wont disappear after five minutes, just like before, but even five minutes are enough. Its an item Ill consider a lifelong treasure.

This led me to receive an improved typewriter as a gift, and in just five days or so, maybe due to excessive excitement or joy, Ive completed all of the 19th volume.

Finally, I havent forgotten to meticulously check for typos and, after confirming, I placed it in an envelope for mailing.

Ah, I didnt forget to include a handwritten letter before placing it inside. While I started writing it by hand until halfway through, suddenly it changed to neat handwriting, so I needed to explain the situation.

And though I might not do that for other things, I plan to consistently write the letters by hand as a matter of etiquette. This might be a kind of sentimentality.

Now that things have turned out this way, should I try writing the 20th volume?

For some reason, I feel like writing more. Leaning back against the chair, I stretched and looked toward the typewriter.

When writing by hand, I had to stop due to fatigue, but since I started using the typewriter, Ive wanted to continue writing.

It didnt have the same satisfying feeling as using a keyboard from my past life, but its its own type of a sensation, if I should call it that. Anyway, that feeling was really nice.

In the past 5 days, I couldnt think of anything except wanting to use a typewriter quickly. When that thought merged with my concentration, I managed to fill more than half the content in just 5 days and completed the 19th volume.

Ive also outlined the plots for the 20th volume, so its just a matter of typing it out. I blinked my eyes and reached out both hands.

I should aim to release the 20th volume before the exhibition.

Theres nothing urgent to do right now, and it doesnt hurt to prepare in advance. It might even garner more sacredness, so its beneficial.

Moreover, among the stories I wanted to write, one of the reasons is the proper appearance of Jins father, Belzebub, who governs gluttony.

Furthermore, the demon country briefly mentioned in Volume 5 will also appear. Its name is Pandem, and it will be based on real-life Helium.

Originally, I intended to depict it somewhat melancholically, but

Whether from the time of Rains punishment or when I visited during winter vacation, Helium was a place where the scent of people lingered strongly. Its not at all like a crime-ridden city or a chaotic mess, but rather, most people there move forward into the future with happy smiles.

The food might deviate slightly from my taste, but that was their culture, so I can understand it well enough.

Bringing such a city into confusion feels a bit daunting, but

The 20th volume involves Jin and Lilly going directly to Pandem to meet the king. However, the situation in Pandem isnt particularly favorable.

The number of disappearances among demons was increasing due to the tricks played by Belzebub, who already had an insatiable appetite.

The reason for the demons disappearances was quite simple. It was to increase Belzebubs own power. Belzebub had a characteristic of absorbing strength, quite fitting for the sin of gluttony, and the process was simple yet horrific. By devouring the heart of their opponent, the power would be completely assimilated and become their own. Throughout history, the heart has been the foundation of power, making this entirely plausible.

However, this isnt the crucial point.

In truth, the disappearances occurring in Pandem were nothing but a smokescreen. Belzebub had grander plans than this. It involved turning all demons living in Pandem into devils.

Kidnapping demons to stockpile power was also part of the plan. Belzebub wasnt merely turning demons into monsters like a Lilith; they were inherently evil from their origins. Naturally, black mana was impure and exceedingly corrupt and vile. To spread this like a plague throughout all of Pandem was a dreadful plan.

No matter how many generations pass or how much help they receive from gods, the origin of demons is that of the devils. Theres always the risk of turning into one at any time.

Demons become devils only when they experience tragedies like despair or sadness, but they also turn into devils when they absorb thick darkness, as in the case of Sakran.

Once key figures noticed this plan, they immediately remembered Sakran and swiftly took action to thwart it. While they wished to seek help from Xenon and Mary in their hearts, the plan had already been set in motion a long time ago.

Belzebub goes so far as to block all external communication and even disable teleportation, showcasing a cunning level of prevention. In the end, the main story of volume 20 is about Jin and Lily working tirelessly to stop it.

Wow. Have I written this much already?

I paused briefly for a break, but the manuscript was already piling up. My hands werent even tired. Is this the power of machinery? At this pace, it might actually be possible to produce one book every two weeks.

I was marveling at the addictive performance of the typewriter Helium had specially made for me when a thought struck me. They went through the trouble of making this typewriter for me; shouldnt I do something for them in return?

By the way, I handed a signed copy to Gartz. Not just one book, but all the books from the first to the present. I vividly remember how happy he was when he received the signed copies. But that was a personal gift for Gartz, not a gift for Helium.

So, what would be a good gift? Since they invented a typewriter for me, I should give them something in kind.

After much thought, a good idea came to me. Just like writing the Kayr side story, I should write a Jin and Lily side story. Its been mentioned so far, but the detailed reason why they fell in love with each other hasnt been explained.

There are few stories about love between a human and an elf, but there wasnt one with a demon. Frankly, while they might not show it outwardly, they might secretly feel disappointed.

Do I release the side story after the 20th volume? Or should it be released together with it?

At the conclusion of the 20th volume,

I might just receive endless criticism

As soon as Jin hears the secret of his birth from Belzebub, he gets stabbed through his heart.

*****

Due to the fear of potential aftermath, I had to momentarily put it aside. I thought I should ask Cecily about it first. So, the next day, as soon as it became possible, I found Cecily and asked her a question. I really liked the typewriter and I wanted to reciprocate to Helium.

I asked if there was anything else she needed apart from my writing, which I am best at. Cecily seemed to ponder deeply and said.

There is one way.

What is it?

Cecily smiled slyly at my question and replied in her characteristic teasing voice.

You just have to stop taking birth control whenever were together for about two months.

Upon hearing that, I immediately raised my gaze to check her horns. Somehow, except for the tips, they were already tinged with red.

Im scheduled as the next Demon Lord, so I have an obligation to bear offspring. It wont be a problem if its slightly accelerated. Besides, its Isaacs child, right?

Lets discuss this later.

Sheesh.

Cecily genuinely felt disappointed.

Translators note:

Chapter 245: Typewriter (2)

The news that the publishers CEO, Musk, intends to purchase a temple might already be known to you. He planned to merge the temple and the publishing house, not as a joke but for the safety of himself and his employees.

Although he is a money-driven individual who even engages in tax evasion, surprisingly, his principles are firmly grounded. Moreover, considering the era, tax evasion can be a forgivable offense with the right bribes paid to those in authority.

If this were within the royal court, Musks head would have rolled long ago. However, he holds a formidable shield named Xenons Biography that protects him. Its challenging to touch him, even if one desires to.

If Musk had been blinded by money and indulged in all sorts of villainy, Isaac would have severed ties immediately. However, Musk wasnt someone who went that far.

Instead, he invested in the printing press to enhance the spread of the Xenons Biography and amassed a fortune akin to nobility.

Yet, after being attacked by devil worshippers, he realized one thing thats the value of life.

No matter how much money one has, losing ones life renders it all meaningless. Musks truth, his enlightenment, was realized only after narrowly escaping death, from the brink of a fatal crisis.

Did he only think about his own safety? Thats not true. Since establishing the publishing company, he has also been concerned about the employees who have experienced various hardships.

Even though those concerns were coming from a somewhat selfish direction. Its much better now to invest heavily in hiring and nurturing new employees than to do so later.

Money can solve many things, but time is hard to buy. Especially considering the uproar that would occur if Xenons Biography was to continue to come out, experienced

employees were not just a choice but a necessity.

So, the proposal to buy a temple with money, though it seems absurd, turned out to be acceptable.

The publishing company, which made a contract with Xenon, who saved the world from the threat of devils, hoped that Luminous would also approve.

Matthew and the other employees initially looked at Musk with a disdainful expression, but after careful consideration, they all agreed because every word he said was true.

However, even Musk, unexpected variables were present.

You mean its not possible?

Unfortunately, thats correct. While we would like to build a temple according to Musks request, it seems difficult due to the scrutiny of other denominations.

That was none other than the existence of denominations other than Luminous. Musks plan itself might seem absurd to anyone, but it was brilliant enough to warrant the term genius.

However, in worldly affairs, there are countless variables. In this world, besides Luminous, there are other gods.

Most humans worship Luminous, but there are countries like Helium that adopt Mora as their national religion, and Makina and Animers worship Harte.

Finally, Alvenheim is currently divided by ethnic groups, but all three religions are worshiped there. This is practically a very difficult matter.

If Xenons Biography is released within the Luminous Temple, other religions will inevitably oppose it. Especially since Xenons Biography is about the redemption of devils, it will cause a stir in Helium.

This situation was not Isaacs decision but Musks arbitrary act, and the aftermath that will come back will be so huge that an individual cannot bear it. Even if the Minerva Empire were to protect him, it would still be burdensome.

Its not an exaggeration; this carries the risk of escalating into a religious war. Dealing with matters involving religion always requires considering the worst-case scenario.

In this situation, Musk couldnt help but feel awkward. Its undeniably a genius idea, but there were many practical problems.

Even if the number of believers in the Luminous is large, the situation will be reversed if the other two religions unite. Above all, Xavier now has to raise the tarnished reputation due to devil worshipers. It might end up being a finger-pointing game for the overly ambitious.

For safety, purchasing the temple with capital seemed to be the right answer, but paradoxically, it was very difficult because the reputation of Xenons Biography had soared to the heavens.

Is there no other way then?

Considering it a sure investment for the future, Musk had no intention of giving up on purchasing the temple. So, once again, he sought permission from the Archbishop of the Luminous Church sitting across from him.

The archbishop, after hearing his question, smiled as if amused and shook his head slowly. Although he wanted to approve in his heart, this is a matter that could lead to a major conflict between religions.

Still, just one thing. Its not entirely impossible. Its just that the feasibility is extremely low.

The archbishop, looking at Musk who seemed in a hurry like an eager puppy, spoke in a polite tone.

While its close to being nearly impossible, there is one possibility.

W-what is that? Can you tell me?

I repeat, its almost impossible. Erecting the temple for not only Luminous but also Mora, and finally Harte. Its a daunting task.

The archbishop advised Musk to fairly acquire the temples of each denomination to prevent conflicts anywhere.

Purchasing not just one but all three temples of different denominations? Was this some kind of joke?

Even acquiring just the Luminouss temple alone required an enormous amount of funds, a situation Musk found utterly impossible.

Initially, it was doubtful if other denominations would readily build temples. To construct a temple, a person of at least the rank of an Archbishop had to personally oversee it.

If even the Luminous Church was a struggle, how would other denominations go? Despite Musk having considerable connections, they didnt extend that far.

It simply means its impossible.

Thats correct. Im aware of your circumstances, but this is about Xenons Biography We can, for now, dispatch a paladin from our denomination.

Alright I understand. Thank you for taking the time, even though Im sure youre very busy.

In the end, establishing a temple of Luminous and the publishing house had to be temporarily suspended. It is best to seek protection from the paladins under the Archbishop.

After sending the Archbishop away, Musk pondered for a while. The silence settled in his now-empty office.

How can one ensure their own and their friends safety? Even trusting the paladins in the church, where a Cardinal himself was suspected of devil worship, seemed difficult. Furthermore, werent the mercenaries he hired last time also devil worshippers? It was a moment when he vividly realized that things in the world dont always go as one desires.

Somehow, I have to convince Mora and Harte Churches

The more he thought about the problem of becoming too famous, the more he felt a bitter laugh welling up.

Xenons Biography being treated as a scripture or prophecy? Such matters held no relevance to Musk. It was merely a means to make money.

For Musk, Xenons Biography wasnt a golden goose but a diamond-encrusted one, and even that goose was being embraced by the world.

What should I do

He was in the midst of repeating his concerns while endlessly staring at the ceiling.

Knock knock

Boss, its Matthew. May I come in?

Matthew, who is both a faithful secretary and somewhat of a wage thief, had come. Of course, calling him a wage thief was half in jest, as he was as diligent in his duties as he was in receiving his pay.

And Matthew showing up meant something had happened. Musk, with the intention of addressing the current issue first, straightened up with resolve.

Come in.

Creak

As Musks permission was granted, the office door opened, revealing Matthew.

Lately, he seemed sleep-deprived, with deep dark circles under his eyes. Musks expression turned puzzled upon seeing this.

Already weary-looking, today he appeared even more exhausted. What could have happened?

Why the weary face? Didnt get enough sleep?

Boss, if I dont even know where those guys stuffing knives into your belly are, shouldnt I be worried? Every day, Im on edge, wont

Musk seemed to grasp the situation roughly. His expression hardened in an instant.

Just because Matthew hasnt been attacked by devil worshippers and wasnt directly involved didnt mean he could dismiss the matter. This applied to Matthew and any other employee.

If this unease among the staff continued, it would inevitably affect the companys revenue. If even an accountant were to leave the thought was dreadful.

Musk, assuming a serious hemorrhage, asked Matthew a question.

Putting that aside, what brings you here this time?

Its about the manuscript for Xenons Biography Volume 19. Its arrived.

What? Already?

Elon Musks eyes widened at the news conveyed by Matthew. The 18th volume of the manuscript arrived just a fortnight ago, yet there was already a new one here.

What sort of magic has been cast to make them arrive so soon? Even producing one book per month is a terrifyingly fast pace of work. A typical writer might release one book every two months. Of course, Xenons Biography is as easy to read as it is relatively easy to write.

However, the inexplicable pace remains unchanged. Musk, with a bewildered expression, received the manuscript from Matthew.

Ripping open the envelope and peering inside, thick sheets of manuscript paper met the eye, along with an accompanying letter. Musk, before reading the manuscript, started with the letter. Upon seeing the distinct elegant handwriting and the signature written in Hangul, it was certain it was from Xenon (Isaac).

[Hello, Mr. Musk. This is Xenon. I believe you must have been quite surprised to receive the manuscript in such a short time. The reason being a gift I received from the demons I have been acquainted with, which greatly enhanced my writing speed.]

The contents of the letter were roughly as such: originally having a connection with demons, Xenon received a gift from them, significantly accelerating the writing pace. While initially publishing a new book every one or two months, Xenon now anticipates sending manuscripts every fortnight or ten days.

I have no idea what kind of gift this is, but it was enough to make Musk feel like dancing with joy.

However, its not without its side effects. As time passes, the demand for Xenons Biography was increasing.

The printing press was running at full capacity, yet the supply was far from sufficient. Moreover, incidents of crimes like hoarding were gradually increasing, causing considerable concern.

What kind of gift could this be?

Musk momentarily set the letter aside and checked the manuscript. Initially, it was written only in Isaacs elegant handwriting, making it difficult to spot any differences.

But as he turned past the middle of the manuscript, it became clear what those differences were. Like a book printed at a press, every character was typeset rather than handwritten, precise and orderly.

It seemed that the item gifted by the demons had a deep connection with typesetting. If he had read the manuscript first, he might have misunderstood it was made in another publishing house.

[I am considering writing a side story out of a desire to respond to fans. The side story would delve into the past of Jin and Lily, who are currently beloved by many readers. As its a side story for the demons, it seems Ill focus more on Jin.

Following the Kyer side story, a Jin-Lily side story. Already, the sound of money piling up resounded in his ears.

The Kyer side story depicted tragedy due to differences in lifespan, but wouldnt Jin and Lily be somewhat different? In the main story, Jin and Lily never confessed, but they were no different from lovers.

At this, the CEO quickly calculated in his mind. This will sell incredibly well. Especially among the Helium enthusiasts.

[If possible, I would like the spin-off to be sold first in Helium. Its my small gift to them, conveying my gratitude.]

Even this kind of consideration was there. The wailing sound of demons who consider Xenons Biography as a grace of God could already be heard from here.

[I would like to express my gratitude once again to the demon who gave me the gift. Naturally, I wont reveal who the demon is, but I would like to convey my thanks through this letter. Oh, and Mr. Musk, if you wish, you can release it at your convenience. According to the news, it seems that the supply is having difficulty keeping up with the demand. Mr. Musk, feel free to do it your way.]

Wow

Why is this person so kind? Musk let out a sigh of admiration upon seeing the content that neatly scratched the itch.

But that doesnt mean Ill do it every month. Until a little while ago, I was worried that the supply wouldnt meet the demand, but even though I dont know what the gift is, Isaacs work speed has increased several times.

Buying not just Luminous but also Mora, even the temple of Harte. If new volumes are released every two weeks or ten days, its not entirely impossible.

After reading the letter, Musk gently put it down and looked at Matthew. Matthew still seemed to be struggling with fatigue, rubbing his eyes.

Youve worked hard, Matthew. If youre tired, you can leave now.

Thank you. Oh, by the way, have you heard the rumor?

What rumor?

Im not entirely sure as Ive just heard it, but theres a mention of the Michelle Estate.

Of course, I know.

Xenon was born there. Moreover, an exhibition is scheduled to be held there soon. Matthew spoke quietly with a tired voice.

They say that Luminouss temple will be erected there. I heard that Grand Inquisitor Kate personally brought in the manpower.

Hmm? What does that mean?

I dont know either. Its the place where Xenon was born, so they might consider it a sacred place or something. Im not sure. I just heard the stories being passed around.

Hmm.

Musk listened to his words and fell into thought. Theres no baseless rumor in this world. Most likely, that rumor is ten to eight true.

Although Musk has never personally met Grand Inquisitor Kate, its said that her devotion is close to madness. Of course, this is also a rumor.

Making Xenons birthplace a sacred place is justification enough. He had revealed the existence of devil worshippers who had been gnawing at the world and had even brought retribution upon a corrupt cardinal.

Wait a moment.

Would the demons, or rather, the followers of Mora, just stand by and watch?

Since they consider Xenons Biography as a relic and his birthplace as their means of salvation?

Religion is sometimes something that transcends races and has a unique rivalry.

The rumor is circulating that the Luminous Church is raising funds to build a temple in the Michelle Territory, but there is no law prohibiting the Mora Church from doing the same.

This is it!

A vivid spark flashed through Musks mind in an instant. His brain, which worked unnecessarily well in these situations, manifested.

In this case, there were various risks to bear, and it would require consultation with Xenon. However, the probability seemed higher than what the Archbishop had mentioned.

After careful consideration, Musk chuckled and casually asked Matthew.

Look at this, Matthew.

Why are you calling me?

Could you find out how many of our employees have families? Specifically, those who havent separated or started families.

Why is that?

Musk responded promptly to Matthews question.

We might have to relocate the company.

?

What is this guy up to now? Strong suspicion took hold in Matthews gaze.

*****

A few days passed.

[Helium Side: We also plan to build a Moras temple in the Michelle Territory.

?

Isaac, eating bread in the dormitory, received news that made him doubt his own eyes.

Translators note:

Chapter 246: Book 19 (1)

The contents of Volume 19 focus on the heroine Mary and the conflict between the elves and dark elves, with battles involving Lilith also being significant. From the early stages, there is mutual distrust between the two races, leading to occasional conflicts.

Dark elves look down on elves as wretches who couldnt even protect their homeland, while elves insult dark elves, calling them heretics who mutilated their ears.

However, there is a high possibility that this situation might change if the two races reconcile. As mentioned before, the differences in culture that emerged between the two races after the dark elves separated from Alfheim are a significant factor.

Especially, elves have a deeply ingrained culture related to gods in their daily lives. For example, there is a cultural belief that values elongated ears more than life itself to communicate with the gods. Considering that cutting ears is one of the worst punishments in Alfheim, the significance of ears can be understood.

On the other hand, dark elves were expelled in the past due to their fanatical devotion to gods. Witnessing the rejection and developing a strong hatred towards ears, they adopted the practice of cutting their own ears.

As a result, mutual trust was lacking between the two races. Even though elves sought refuge after Alfheim was occupied, cohabitation was uneasy, especially considering the unpredictability of conflicts due to the elves belief in being a chosen race by the gods.

The early story of Volume 19 describes the events that would unfold if the elves and dark elves were to unite for some reason.

[If different cultures blend without any preparation, such phenomena will occur.]

[Should elves and dark elves be regarded as different races, or should they be treated as one race?]

[Just as there are numerous ethnicities and cultures among humans, its evident that there are distinct elven races.]

Due to the clear demonstration of how cultural differences can cause significant repercussions, it garnered the attention of many.

In fact, Arwen was making efforts to win over the dark elves, and although it ended in failure, her support for Rain was also based on this.

And just like Arwen, who tried to reconcile the two races, Mary in Xenons Biography was also putting in various efforts.

[If it werent for the sacrifice of their two heroes, the situation would have been much worse.]

[Are their sacrifices truly meaningless?]

As assessed above, if it werent for the sacrifice of the elven heroes who oxidized along with the World Tree through their fusion, the situation would have escalated to the worst possible outcome.

In essence, their sacrifice hinted at the possibility of the eventual merger of elves and dark elves, but no one knows when that might happen. With the current scenario of the older generation of elves and the new generation of dark elves at odds and in turmoil, reconciliation seems far-fetched, considering the ongoing civil war.

One somewhat fortunate aspect is that through this series of events, elves were gradually moving away from the strict totalitarianism they once held onto.

[Only elves are capable of casting magic through physical means.]

[Seemingly crude, but it will prove immensely effective in combat.]

[A new combat style that shatters the common notion that magic requires incantations.]

Marys combat techniques displayed during the battle with Lillith attracted a lot of interest. In this world, even the sorcerers had some biases, namely the belief that magic could only be unleashed by chanting spells.

Therefore, Marys combat techniques were seen by humans as not just innovative but almost revolutionary. However, this was a bias unique to humans; the elves, who could use magic almost effortlessly, had a slightly different perspective.

[A method capable of emitting extreme efficiency.]

[Treating ones body as a form of calculation?]

[It holds significant research value but could be risky.]

Despite the perceived risk, many attempted to replicate it. Magic originally manifests as an ability through a form of calculation. However, Mary applied that calculation to movement, which, from the perspective of an elf, was a theory intriguing enough to capture attention.

Hence, for the very basics of magic, like casting a fireball, calculations are necessary, regardless of whether one is an elf or a demon.

But to associate that formula with a specific movement, releasing a fiery fist akin to a pyrokinetic from a certain pirate manga, naturally drew interest. If this theory were further developed, it could supposedly summon lightning bolts with a flick of the finger in a clear sky or conjure up a snowstorm.

[What is the name of this theory?]

[Yggdrasil of Alvenheim. Lets designate the theorys name as Memorize. However, if Xenon comes up with a more definitive name, Ill change it accordingly.]

[Given that its a theory Xenon revealed, it should undoubtedly be achievable.]

No, I havent thought that far. What are these people trying to do again? Now there are people trying not just to imitate but to actualize the combat techniques from Xenons Biography.

Whats frightening is that these people arent human; theyre elves. Elves, the origin of magic, who boasted of a magic history longer than demons.

In other words, if they set their minds to it, it might be possible. In the book, it was just a combat technique Mary made because she was annoyed with casting, but now theyre determined to apply it in reality.

Just because theyre elves.

This place was, from the start, a fantasy world. There are countless things beyond the common sense of my previous life, so lets just accept and move on.

[Even Lilith ultimately was just a demon who couldnt forget her beloved. Her end was tragically fitting for a demon.]

[To live without forgetting. The truth about Lilith is finally revealed.]

[If Jin had lost Lily, he would have been no different from Lilith.]

[In reality, there are countless cases like this. Demons turned into devils, the unfortunate products of their environment.]

The fight between Mary and Lilith was just a fight, but Liliths ultimate fate deeply resonated within the readers minds.

Already drawing attention due to the setting of being a devil-turned-demon, the focus intensified as the past was vaguely revealed, earning a gaze of sympathy.

It was a clich commonly seen in my past life: This guy was also a pitiable one, vividly portrayed in Lilys case, is an example also illustrating the tragedy of the demons.

A common evaluation was that if Jin loses Lily, he would be no different from Lilith. The sympathy towards demons has also increased, as it was an occurrence often observed in reality as well.

This assessment was very satisfying as expected. Although imitating Marys combat style was a bit surprising.

[Pride, Lucifers appearance is short but simultaneously very intense. How does his conduct, fitting for arrogance, unfold?]

[Its wrong to treat comrades simply as chess pieces.]

[What kind of fate will he face?]

The appearance of Lucifer, who murdered Lilith, left a strong impact. Being an elf in addition to being part of the Seven Deadly Sins by killing a comrade, there was considerable interest.

Moreover, having mercilessly killed Lilith, who had just begun to rise with the revelation of her past, he was now receiving a torrent of curses. Wishing for him to meet a dreadful end, hoping for him to plead for mercy soon, and so on.

From the beginning, he has accumulated numerous anti-fans, and elves even made hard statements, perhaps there might be sparks flying at Alvenheim. No matter how arrogant elves may be, they are not at this level of trash.

[At the end of the fierce battle with Lilith, Mary lost one of her ears. However, it will remain as a symbol.]

[Marys actions carry a message of us, not just you and me. It is very similar to the current Alvenheim, which suffered from chaos during the mixed-race conflict.]

[Is the fusion of elves and dark elves possible in reality?]

The 19th volume can be considered successful except for the attempt to realize Marys combat techniques.

What about Lee Wae-jin? I just gave up on that. Even if I made a mess, people would cheer or even worship, but I had to give up. There is something more important now than Lee Wae-jin.

[Helium Side: We also plan to build a Moras temple in the Michelle Territory.

?

I was leisurely eating bread in the dormitory when I was struck by unexpected lightning. What kind of nonsense is this again?

No matter how many times I read it, the unbelievable news about building a temple in the Michelle Territory by Helium stood out.

No. Why?

Even though I received a typewriter as a gift and promised to write a side story in return, why would they go this far? Could it be that demons understand give and take in a different way?

If it were a simple device like a teleportation facility rather than a temple, it would be understandable. However, its not an ordinary facility; its a temple.

Unlike in my past life, temples cannot be built just by people gathering together and working swiftly.

It not only unmistakably houses the sacred energy but is also the sole architecture capable of direct interaction with the gods. From the very conditions required to erect a temple, its a painstaking process.

Firstly, one must consider if the area is densely populated by people; you might call it cost-effectiveness. If it were a region inherently potent with sacred energy from the start, the story would be different. However, the Michelle Region has only just begun its surge in development.

While its close to the capital and towns, its unsuitable for temple construction, even for gratitudes sake, given the immense scale. I heard that the Luminous Church mandates a minimum number of high-ranking clergy to oversee the construction of a temple. It seems Moras Church operates similarly.

Cecily must be aware of this fact, right?

As I realized the situation was unfolding unexpectedly, I found myself scratching my head in perplexity.

Most humans venerate the Luminous, but not everyone does. Nonetheless, its incredibly challenging to find Moras shrine in human society. Moreover, the Michelle Region is externally known as the birthplace of Xenon. If Moras shrine were to be erected, naturally, there would be resistance from both the Luminous and Harte sides.

[According to the latest reports, under the supervision and management of Grand Inquisitor Kate, a Luminouss templeis under construction in the Michelle Region]

[If this happens, both the Luminous and Moras temples will stand in the Michelle Region simultaneously. Only Hartes temple remains.]

[Harte, the goddess of life and nature, unlike the twin gods, doesnt require a separate temple. Nature itself embodies Harte.]

[If a ceremony is conducted for the goddess Harte in the Michelle Region, it will truly become the fabled Temple of All Gods.]

No need for that! No wonder Kate didnt come to the academy but instead made her way to our territory.

It seems that there hasnt been any separate news because she went to my territory to build a temple. My parents probably didnt send me letters to avoid burdening me. Moreover, with the recent birth of Lily, they probably had even less time to pay attention to me.

Well, now it makes sense.

I nodded with a relieved expression. Actually, whether it makes sense or not, I dont know. Lets just give up understanding. As I mentioned before, it seems like Ive reached the point of where they would get excited even if I poop. Theyre building a temple without even asking for my opinion.

But thinking about it calmly, our territory would become the safest area in the world under the protection of the gods. Even with just one temple, it would become a place where devil worshippers wouldnt be able to act out. And now with Mora and Harte, its even better.

Oh, by the way, since Harte is the goddess of life and nature, you dont need to build a separate temple; you just need to perform a ritual. Harte was closely related to rituals, especially those involving magic.

Instead of a temple, all you need is an altar or something like a totem. However, since it needs to be imbued with divine power, a shaman was essential. As for inviting a shaman, well figure it out yourself. I dont know.

Sigh

I let out a sigh laden with various meanings and flopped onto the bed. Now, I dont even know what I should do. The news mentioned that thanks to the gifts from the demons, my work speed had improved, but surprisingly, there was no word from the elves side.

Thats what makes it scarier. What are they planning that theyre not saying anything about? Similar to this, theres Animers. The reason Animers had been quiet for a while was due to political reasons.

Wouldnt Alvenheim be somewhat similar?

What kind of gift are the elves preparing?

Really, its not just empty words; Im genuinely excited, to the point where I might not even sleep due to anticipation.

*****

The Council Hall was not just a place where the king met his courtiers or exchanged opinions, but since Arwens reign, it had taken on a broader range. It meant that even common folk could come if the matter was important, not just the courtiers. In other words, it allowed for a closer hearing of the voices of the people.

The situation now: a multitude of elves were respectfully kneeling and displaying proper etiquette in front of the throne where Arwen was seated.

So, do we also need to offer something?

That is our suggestion. To present an unparalleled gift, claiming we cannot be defeated by the likes of demons.

Hmm. I concur with that sentiment. So, what kind of gift do the people wish to offer?

Arwen listened to the delegations story that entered the hall to make a request. It was truly unsettling to hear the news.

Thanks to the gift delivered by the demons, there was a significant improvement in Xenons work speed, news that scratched the pride of the Elven magic users. It was more than enough to unsettle Arwen, especially considering the recent dispute with Cecily.

Just at that moment when she was contemplating what gift to give, the people acted on their own without any specific orders.

The demons have enhanced the speed of Xenons work, so I believe an appropriate gift is due.

That is only natural.

So I dare to suggest. Its something only our queen, the sole link to Xenon, can do.

What could it be that they emphasized dare with such insistence? Curiosity and anticipation froze in Arwens gray eyes.

Then, representing the masses, an elf stood tall, facing Arwen squarely, speaking confidently.

Our queen and the symbol of Alvenheim. We will present Queen Arwen to Xenon as a gift.

What?

Did I hear it wrong? Arwen blinked her silver-gray eyes twice upon hearing his words before replying.

For a moment, she was confused whether it was a statement or a joke, but the determination in the elfs eyes as he spoke was resolute.

This only added to her confusion. Even without going far, there was the dew of the World Tree, the essence of the elixir, so why would she present herself as a gift?

It didnt make sense to Arwen at all, and she found herself unable to say anything. In the midst of her silence, the spokesperson spoke with a dignified voice.

The true entity that can be called ours is none other than the Queen herself. Presenting the Queen is no different from presenting our entire elven kind. Its a worthy gift for the benefactor who saved us from the contamination of the World Tree, incomparable to any gifts from demons.

What about my opinion? I almost asked but held it back. Initially startled, she gradually swayed in their favor.

Well, theres nothing to be done about it. Could there be a king who refuses when the people want this? Isaac might find it absurd, but he would accept it on the surface, at least.

Furthermore, through that opinion, she came to know how the people currently perceived her. Alvenheim would never abandon her, that was certain. Stories about elves that surfaced during Xenons Biography and the things Fieren shouted made an intense synergy.

Of course, she herself would never abandon Alvenheim. She was someone who wielded power for the sake of ideals rather than greed for power.

Arwen scrutinized their expressions one by one, then coughed softly and reluctantly responded in agreement.

Theres merit in it. I shall consider it.

Another remark then followed.

This isnt for me but for our elven kind.

The elvish communism seeped in steadily.

Translators note:

Chapter 247: Book 19 (2)

At the same time the 19th volume was released, rumors spread about a new temple being erected on Michelle territory. Even those who didnt subscribe to the newspaper would have caught wind of it through the grapevine. In other words, acquaintances who know my true identity are aware that Ive received the gift from the demons.

Cecily knows the nature of the gift, so she overlooked it. The rest of the people, however, were left wondering what kind of gift I received that drastically improved my work speed, considering they were used to me releasing a new volume once a month, but now I could manage one every two weeks or even ten days.

Therefore, I arranged a meeting to show them the typewriter. Since I had finished all my exams, having a gathering after such a long time wasnt an issue. Oh, of course, I couldnt openly carry the typewriter around, so I enlisted Cecilys help. Cecily had become closer to me since the reincarnation remark from Arwen the last time, but after the release of the 19th volume, it felt like we had grown even closer.

It seemed different from mere misunderstanding; even the gaze had changed. It felt like the expression of her affection had intensified, perhaps as the evil cycle approached.

Anyway, with Cecilys assistance, I arrived at the caf where my acquaintances were waiting. Since the exams were almost over, I could afford to take a little breather.

Is this it?

Yeah.

It looks fascinating.

Let me show you the typewriter first. Marie opened her eyes wide, scanning here and there with a sense of wonder and curiosity in her blue eyes, like a child discovering a toy. As I smiled at the unknown delight of witnessing her, Marie, who had been examining the typewriter, pressed the keys firmly with her index finger.

Coincidentally, the typewriter was already powered on, and holographic characters began to line up on the display. Marie, watching the scene, exclaimed in awe and removed her index finger. At the same time, the characters that had been appearing stopped.

Looking at the holographic characters suspended in the air, she turned to me and asked.

How do you use this?

Do you see the gap here at the bottom? If you insert paper here, the characters will be copied onto it.

Amazing. How does it work, though?

I have no idea.

I am ignorant not only in magic but also in engineering. Even in my past life, I was a liberal arts student; does that count for anything? Anyway, explaining the principle wouldnt make sense to anyone except Cecily, who understands these things.

Can I write anything?

Of course. Feel free to write.

At Maries request, I gently pushed the typewriter toward her. She carefully examined the typewriter once again, then began pressing each letter with her index finger.

The way she typed using the eagle method was truly cute and endearing. She seemed completely absorbed, alternating between focusing on the typewriter and the hologram, occasionally biting her lip in concentration.

Curious about what she might type, I shifted my gaze to the hologram displaying the sequence of characters. As expected, she was in the midst of typing her own name.

Just like the Gartz explained before, peoples thoughts seem to be quite similar in appearance.

Wiiing

Finally, just in case, I had prepared an extra sheet of paper for copying, and as I did, Maries blue eyes sparkled endlessly.

Written with a clean font, she exclaimed upon seeing her name printed on the paper.

Wow! This is amazing. Is this the gift from Helium?

Its a masterpiece crafted by the artisans of Helium, filled with dedication.

Cecily shrugged, crossing her arms. Due to the crossed arms, her chest was emphasized even more

Seemingly, she wanted to emanate as much confidence and poise as her ample chest displayed. Undoubtedly, the typewriter was an incredible invention, bordering on innovation.

It even featured a backspace function unlike regular typewriters. It was a masterpiece beyond its time, combining magic and engineering.

Well then, let Isaac try writing once. Im curious about how its done.

In front of me, Rina, elegantly sipping her tea, made a suggestion with an enthusiastic gaze. Despite her lineage from the royal family, the existence of a typewriter seemed mysterious to her as well.

In response, I willingly obliged her request, placing the typewriter in front of me. At first, I pondered what to write, but I began typing whatever came to mind.

Taptaptap taptap

Characters appeared skillfully rather than in the eagle-pecking style. Characters amalgamated into words, words flowed into sentences.

[Hello. I am Isaac Ducker Michelle, Xenons Biography author.]

The completion of this sentence took no more than ten seconds.

If I had written it by hand, it would have taken several times longer. Working with just a typewriter made the process smooth, drastically reducing writing time by more than double.

How was it?

Its incredibly fast. Youre using all your fingers.

Rina looked at my formidable typing skill with admiration, as did Marie, who was observing from the side. However, Cecily wore a somewhat subtle expression. She glanced between the produced sentences and me before coyly asking,

Are you already proficient at this?

Yeah, its getting easier after a few tries.

Is that so?

For some reason, Cecily still looked at me with a mysterious gaze. After staring at me for a while, she grinned and spoke up.

As expected, huh.

What do you mean?

Is Isaac quick to adapt to these kinds of things?

I can vaguely grasp the meaning behind her words. As I mentioned earlier, after Arwens reincarnation remark, Cecily has been speculating that I might be a reincarnator.

In that situation, by quickly adapting to this new invention, its as though Ive stamped my identity completely.

Maybe Cecily aimed for this. In my eagerness to show off, my habits from a past life inadvertently surfaced.

If I flinch here, others will probably be suspicious too. I answered evasively, avoiding Cecilys gaze.

I, I just got used to it quickly while practicing. I initially tapped with my index finger. Anyway, thanks to you, my work speed has significantly increased. Im really grateful.

If youre grateful, you know what to do, right?

While gently caressing her lower abdomen, Cecily subtly rested her hand on my thigh. Is it just an illusion that Kates image was reflected in Cecily?

But Kate genuinely lacks common sense in some areas, while Cecily is filled with her own desires; thats the difference.

When I couldnt say anything and was awkwardly smiling, the relief pitcher came to the rescue appropriately.

Hah! Where are you getting greedy? The first one has always been mine, hasnt it? You sly fox.

Tsk.

My lovely girlfriend, Marie, spoke firmly, pushing away Cecilys hand on her thigh.

Cecily, aware that she might have been too greedy, showed regret but didnt offer any other retort. However, she just stepped back, but she probably had a lot to say. Cecily glanced briefly at Marie and grumbled under her breath.

Cant you consider the wait? Even though Im a demon and have a long lifespan, waiting is tough.

Dont demons consider moderation a virtue? Surely, Princess, you dont lack such virtue.

As Marie touched upon the virtue similar to the demons belief, Cecily awkwardly chuckled.

In reality, despite being a demon with strong self-control, Cecily doesnt hesitate to express her desires towards me. This became even stronger, especially after meeting Arwen.

Marie was no different. Using her unique intuition, she felt something off in Cecilys attitude, and her vigilance intensified.

But its nothing more than a small, white cat hissing. I gently stroked Maries head to ease her displeased expression.

The wary expression on Maries face, filled with caution, gradually softened as I pet her head. Then she firmly grabbed my arm and pushed her head against it as if asking for more.

Marie is always adorable. It seems like an undeniable law.

Anyway, Isaac. Did you hear the news? Theres talk of a temple being erected in your territory.

To dispel the subtle tension, Rina mentioned the situation in our territory. While I was petting Maries head against my arm, I glanced at Rina. Cecily, with a discontented expression, suggested we move on momentarily.

Of course, I heard. I couldnt believe it when I did. Has there been no word from the royal side?

As you said, a temple cannot be built just because the clergy strongly advocates it. It should ideally be done under the agreement of leaders from each nation. The same goes for Helium.

Rina spoke while glancing at Cecily, indicating for an explanation. In response, Cecily, seeming to prepare for a serious conversation, shrugged before speaking in a calm, deliberate tone.

Rinas right. Temples are supposed to be built under the agreement of leaders from each side. But this time, its different. Even the Minerva Empire readily agreed.

They agreed immediately?

Yeah. It seems to me theyre planning to turn the Michelle territory into a Xenon district entirely Or am I mistaken?

Cecily chuckled and threw a question at Rina. Her smile might have seemed beautiful at first glance, but it held various political implications.

Rina noticed the meaning behind that smile and faintly smiled before raising her teacup. Gracefully sipping her tea, she then spoke in a calm voice.

Yeah. Isaac mentioned writing a side story for the demons, and things escalated quickly. Plus, with the Luminous Temple under construction, itll truly become Xenons territory.

Helium is one thing, but was there an agreement beforehand for the Luminous Temple?

No. That was something Kate, the Grand Inquisitor, pushed for almost forcefully.

What?

Theres a rumor that the Luminous Temple will be completed just before the exhibition. That means construction began not long ago.

It usually takes several months for leaders of each country to meet and reach an agreement, but all that was skipped.

As more Luminous Temples are erected, the power of the Xaviers nation naturally grows stronger. So, having many temples isnt necessarily a good thing.

Thats why theres usually strict consensus before constructing temples, but Michelle territory progressed without any of that.

In a serious view, its clearly ignoring the Minerva Empire, but for some reason, theres no word about it.

Then there will be a lot of talk about this?

At first, yes. But Cardinal Kate declared shed build a sanctuary for Xenon.

Sanctuary?

Yes. Like Alvenheim itself, declaring Xenons birthplace a sanctuary. I suppose they see you as a divine envoy.

Envoy? That term was also used in theology. People chosen by gods to save the world from crises, like saints.

Though Kate possesses formidable divine power, bestowed by the grace of Luminous, enough to be called an incarnation, she seems to consider me a saint. However, I obtained my divine power purely by chance and coincidence. I am definitely not the saint she envisions.

Feeling perplexed and utterly dumbfounded, I couldnt utter a word. Rina gently explained.

Moreover, at present, Cardinal Kate is exerting significant influence within Xavier after purging the corrupted cardinal. Having a figure with such influence declare you as a saint, there is no choice but to permit it unless there is a reasonable justification. Its also advantageous from our empires perspective.

Um There wont be any harm coming to the Michelle territory, right?

I find getting involved in politics troublesome, especially since my father detests the conflicts among nobles and was assigned the Michelle territory. I want to avoid causing trouble for my family as much as possible.

Its hard to say. Can anyone really trouble you politically? The Michelle territory, which can receive the protection of Luminous, Mora, and perhaps even Hartes in the future? If you inherit the position of the lord and someone slights you, you might even declare a holy war, not just in Xavier but possibly extending to Helium.

However, Rina responded with an answer that belittled my concerns. Ironically, her reaction seemed more absurd than my worries.

Thanks to her, Ive become acutely aware of the current situation of our territory. It means even touching it comes with considerable risk.

But if it goes that way, my family should be able to live comfortably. I nodded contentedly, reassured.

Well, thats fortunate. Its a bit burdensome, though.

Even that burden will become familiar over time. Our husband is truly amazing.

The cat, who had been rubbing against me until now, playfully looked up at me, gently brushing against my face while subtly stroking my thigh.

Marie doesnt seem to pay much attention to who I am, whether Xenon or whatever. Shes just happy that Im advancing to higher places, and that, in turn, makes her happy. I adore her for this.

Should I just have a child?

I had such a naughty thought for a moment. However, even for her future, contraception needs to be consistently maintained.

As she made a discreet gesture, I cautiously held her as if understanding her intention. Her smile then deepened even more.

Perhaps our affectionate behavior made Rina uncomfortable, as she blushed and coughed lightly.

Uh, um. Anyway, Cecily. When is Moras temple expected to be completed?

Probably before the exhibition, right?

What? That fast? Is that possible?

If theres magic, the construction itself is rather quick. Instead, it takes a bit of time to call Mora to a temple.

Now its not particularly surprising. Without such magic, inventing a typewriter would be impossible.

After saying that, Cecily clapped her hands and then spoke to me as if she had just remembered something.

Oh, by the way, Isaac. Can I ask you something?

Yeah?

You said last time that the model for Lilith was me. You also said illustrations would be included accordingly.

Thats right.

However, the sudden focus on Xenons Biography as prophecy began to disrupt the original plan.

How many unique and beautiful women are there in the world like Cecily? If her drawings were attached, there might have been some damage to Cecily as well.

Thats why it was put on hold, and Cecily agreed. But it seems that the perspective has changed with the release of Volume 19.

Can we include it now? Volume 19 didnt justify Liliths misdeeds, but the perspective has greatly improved. You know that too, Marie, right? Lilith called out the lovers name at the end and died.

Oh, that? I know about it too. That scene was really sad. I wished Pride would just die.

What about Rina?

She seems no different from demons in reality.

You heard, right?

Cecily, having heard the opinions of Marie and Rina, finally asked me. I faced Cecily with a subtle expression.

What could she be thinking to bring up the topic of illustrations? Perhaps, does she really think of herself as Lilith? Honestly, thats the direction my thoughts leaned toward.

Still, I cant refuse her request like that. I reluctantly nodded, granting her request.

Okay. But as for the drawings

We can support you from the heliums side with the illustrations. If you only depict the characters, we can draw others as well.

I was about to suggest finding an illustrator, but Cecily interrupted. She said she could support not only Liliths illustration but also other characters if needed.

Once again, I faced Cecily directly. She still smiled, looking at me with her reddish eyes.

In those eyes, there was a deep trust and an indescribable emotion towards me.

It wasnt scary or intimidating at all. On the contrary, it was the opposite, raising questions.

Noona?

Yeah, Isaac?

Do you really think of me as a prophet?

I asked, and Cecily answered with a grin.

Yes, of course.

The reincarnation statement of Arwen last time and the depiction of Liliths end in Volume 19.

I dont want to face such an ending.

Those two seemed to create a suitable synergy and caused confusion for Cecily.

So, as soon as possible, I want to give birth to Isaacs child.

I was left speechless.

Translators note:

Chapter 248: Book 19 (3)

Even though Marie was right beside, Cecily showed her greed, so Marie naturally got upset. I thought the situation might become noisy again, but fortunately, Cecily apologized first, saying it was just a joke.

When Cecily stuck her tongue out like a prankster, Marie reluctantly let it go, but I know. I know she was sincere.

Whether its because the evil cycle is approaching or because of the 19th volume that was recently published and Arwens statement, Im not sure, but it seems like Cecily is eagerly waiting for an opportunity.

Considering the nature of the demon race, getting pregnant easily might be unlikely, but recalling her appearance during the demonic possession, its not entirely impossible.

Although Marie, like a huge barrier, stood in the way, Cecily was subtly expressing her desires. Just by observing the increased physical contact, it was evident.

Marie seems to have noticed this, as there has been an increase in efforts to restrain Cecily, who has always been a powerful rival. After all Marie always emphasized that she is first, and even with having a child, she insisted on being the first.

But whenever Cecily and Marie talk about it, I try to smoothly move on and return to the peaceful situation.

Its just speculation, but Cecily might be trying to provoke Marie in this way to instill anxiety. Its not entirely impossible, as there have been students who got pregnant and married while attending the academy. However, both Marie and I are being cautious.

Even though Im Xenon, everyone has their dreams and things they want to do. In my case, its becoming a historian, and for Marie, its studying political science for her benefit.

Theres no need to rush into engagement. Cecily expressed her feelings, but I didnt feel any pressure. Above all, we need to think about whats happening at the Michelle

territory and the upcoming exhibition.

As mentioned before, Leona and Cherry will also attend this exhibition. Cherry can stay at the mansion with the permission of my parents as a guest, but Leona is a bit of a problem. Leona isnt just a friend; shes my future wife. Though the customs of the beastmen culture led to a speedy process, its still a bit ambiguous.

I havent revealed to her that I am Xenon yet, and theres also Adelia. For Adelias sake, the first night with Leona should be postponed.

However, this is also a matter of etiquette(?), but it bothers me. For now, Ill stay at the mansion.

Ah, that? Its okay. I can stay with my mother.

Your mother?

Yeah. She said shed come to the academy the day before the break. I dont care, so we can decide our matchmaking later. Just find a decent inn for now.

Leona was momentarily forgetting that she was a filial daughter. When I briefly met her at the cafe and informed her of this fact, she cheerfully brushed it off. Instead, she asked if I could lend her some money to enjoy the festival with her mother, and I agreed, as I was willing to help.

Oh, by the way, I heard that temples for Luminous and Mora will be built on your territory?

You heard about it too?

Of course. I read the newspaper every day. But isnt it a bit unfair to leave out Lord Harte?

I am considering inviting a sorcerer as well.

As mentioned before, Harte is the goddess of life and nature. Unlike the twin siblings, she doesnt grant divine powers and simply represents nature itself, exerting the greatest influence on humanity. Through rituals, she can easily bring rain to drought-stricken lands or unleash storms causing significant damage to others.

However, as a part of nature herself, these actions have a deep connection to natural disasters. According to some texts, rain and snow represent Hartes sorrow, volcanoes

and earthquakes express her anger, and thunder and lightning indicate surprise.

Sometimes, uncontrollable events occur during her manifestations, causing significant harm. Yet, 3000 years ago, during the Devil War, it was Harte who gave the elves the seed of the World Tree.

There will never be a time when humanity loses its awe for nature, and Hartes sanctity will never disappear. Above all, Harte does not desire to cause natural disasters. Just as we occasionally get angry or shed tears, Harte is a transcendent being with emotions.

Moreover, controlling nature itself is challenging. If we were to liken it to humanity, its like not being able to control ones digestion or circulatory system as desired.

I heard that if a sorcerer performs a ritual, Harte will watch over it. Is that right?

Yes, thats correct. You dont need anything extravagant; offering a suitable sacrifice to Harte is enough. Since Harte is nature itself, theres no need to build a temple. I can do it if you want.

Come to think of it, I heard about this when I visited Mora last time. Leona can use magic and communicate with Hirt through possession. Although a significant price is needed for possession, I have the divine power to cover it.

Considering when it would be appropriate to talk to Harte had to be considered, so I decided to postpone it for later. It might be better to conduct the ceremony at an exhibition rather than in a cafe. Ill ask Leona for help with the ritual.

Then Ill ask for your help at that time. Before that, Father might invite a sorcerer, but if not, we can do it then.

I understand. Take care from now on. Hubby?

You too.

The meeting with Leona ended here. Next, its the encounter with Cherry.

First of all, the invitation to the exhibition was over, but I had to ask her what they would wear there and how she would live there.

And what happened?

Cherry. So

Ill do it.

I havent said anything yet?

Whatever the senior says, Ill do it.

The conversation proceeded like that. When I asked what clothes she would wear at the exhibition, Cherry said she would wear whatever I wanted.

In a teasing manner, I asked if, in that case,she could even come naked if I wanted. Cherry, without a change in her expression, looked straight at me and answered.

Yes.

If you want, I can take it off right now.

Cherrys attitude towards me became increasingly strange as time went on. While she used to show a tendency to depend on me before, after publishing her work, it became almost blind obedience.

It created an uneasy atmosphere, similar yet different from Kate in various ways. Considering her family background, it might be understandable, but at some point, it became odd.

It seemed like I controlled everything as if I were manipulating a marionette. Its not just a simple metaphor, I genuinely felt Cherry will do anything I order.

The situation was almost indistinguishable from that of a master and a slave. I pondered deeply on how Cherry came to this point, but I couldnt find a satisfactory answer. Perhaps because last time, she even gifted me cherry tree sap. Just seeing that, she certainly had a certain degree of autonomy.

Where did things go wrong?

After concluding a simple yet complicated conversation with Cherry, I stepped outside. My last task was to meet Adelia, and during that time, I thought about Cherry.

Cherrys attitude is clearly far from normal. To put it plainly, shes like an animated doll with a personality.

A doll that has a definite owner but, if no specific commands are given, it does its own tasks. It perfectly matches Cherrys current situation.

Since Im not a psychology expert and cant offer counseling, my plan for now is to observe as much as possible. Leaving her in that state might lead to some unexpected results.

I hope she doesnt do anything strange during the exhibition.

As long as she doesnt go around completely naked, I dont care if she even chews on my hair.

Suppressing that anxiety deep within my chest, I headed towards Adelias lodgings.

Hey.

Yeah?

The voice, strangely familiar, dug into my ears. The low, seasoned, yet pleasant tone of a woman. Just hearing the voice was pleasant, but the owner of that voice happened to be someone I really didnt want to meet.

Wondering, I turned my head in the direction of the voice. To my surprise, there stood Hiriya.

Princess Hiriya?

She was the royal family member I considered an enemy, and I didnt even want to be associated with her. She was dressed in a school uniform, likely attending a theory class just now. Despite my dislike for her, her figure and face carried an elegance even in the school uniform.

However, her character inside was inversely proportional. While pondering this, Hiriya, staring directly at my face, opened her mouth with her distinctive seasoned voice.

Where were you going?

I was on my way to meet an acquaintance.

If I said I was going to meet Adelia, it would undoubtedly lead to an unfavorable situation. Despite my displeasure with her, I am still the ordinary son of a baron.

I may be far from the level of someone like Princess Hiriya, but I have to keep my identity hidden, especially from the Ters royal family. Revealing my true identity would only complicate matters.

An acquaintance Could it be youre not referring to that troublemaker, are you?

I responded as bluntly as possible, but it was clear that Hiriya noticed. At the same time, her gaze sharpened.

I dont understand why this woman keeps bothering me when she should just focus on her own work. Could it be because of the humiliation she suffered in the last sparring session? Honestly, if thats the case, the word pathetic suits her well. Even Adelia, a bastard child, has a correct and upright character. Maybe its a problem with her upbringing.

I blinked without any response to her question. Its better to appear dull and stupid than to let the situation turn into a mess.

Fortunately, it seems like that thought got through. Hiriya chuckled and, with a sly grin, said.

Seems like being dense is a common trait for both you and your bodyguard. Its written all over your face.

Caught red-handed. I felt a bit awkward.

I avoided eye contact, scratching my head as I replied.

I apologize. If the princess is uncomfortable with her presence as my bodyguard, I will apologize if it upset you.

Apology

Hiriya mumbled something and slowly approached me. With each step she took, an indescribable atmosphere began to emerge.

I wanted to take a step back, but Hiriyas momentum held my ankles like an invisible force. It felt like she was silently warning me not to think about escaping. As she got closer, Hiriya came right up to my face.

After confidently wearing a smile that seemed both self-assured and sinister, Hiriya extended her hand slowly toward my face.

Grab-

Because she wasnt someone close to me and due to my unfavorable impression of her, I grabbed her wrist to stop her.

Upon my intervention, Hiriyas smile vanished instantly, and her expression hardened. While such behavior might be considered rude when interacting with a princess from another country, I am unequivocally Maries boyfriend and fianc.

Unlike Cecily, who I am secretly dating, the fact that I am involved with her is widely known within the academy, so I need to be cautious about public displays of affection. Moreover, Hiriya is the princess of the Ters Kingdom, a rival to the Minerva Empire. Carelessness could lead to diplomatic disputes.

Therefore, I flashed the most gentle smile possible and rejected her advances with a polite remark.

I apologize for the rudeness, Your Highness. However, I am engaged to someone else.

What if I can treat you better than your betrothed? What would you do then?

Why is this woman suddenly acting like this? Did she lose her mind after being defeated by Adelia?

For a moment, I wore a bewildered expression upon hearing her proposal, then slowly released her hand that I had been holding. Stepping back a couple of steps, I maintained a perplexed expression.

Apologies. Considering the distinguished lady I am already involved with, this is more than enough.

You dont have any ambitions as a man? A wife from a royal family would be better than a nobles, wouldnt it?

Ambition, was it? Right now, the world is clamoring that I am a saint and a prophet, but its all nonsense. I never had such intentions from the beginning.

I responded with a warm smile, suppressing my true feelings.

Princess, caterpillars should eat pine needles, not oak leaves, or they will die.

(TL: A proverb meaning that one must know ones purpose, position, and role.)

This statement is not directed at me but at Hiriya. Although she doesnt know my true identity, she seems to have some idea of why I am behaving this way.

Perhaps having tasted a lifetime of humiliation from Adelia, she is trying to repay that in some way. If she takes away my position as Maries fiance, naturally, I will be separated

from Adelia. In that case, Adelia will taste a terrible sense of despair.

Hiriya, after hearing my remark, widened her eyes and once again arrogantly clenched her fist.

Caterpillars should eat pine needles; thats a pleasing phrase.

Im glad you liked it.

You, too, have the same sentiment.

No, I have no interest in you, even in the slightest. Regardless, Hiriya continued to lick her lips with her tongue, looking at me with desire. The sky-blue eyes filled with lust were truly dull compared to Adelias pure ones, making the contrast staggering.

Lets give up this time. Instead, I will appoint you as the guide for the exhibition. Can you manage that much?

As I mentioned earlier, I

The second princess of the Ters Kingdom, Hiriya Duked von Coutres, will officially request it.

As soon as I heard those words, my eyelids twitched. Officially requesting means its not a personal-to-personal request but a request to the empire from the kingdom. In other words, if they order me from above, I have no choice but to obey. Its just as awkward for the Minerva Empire. If I accept, it will be displeasing to me, and if I refuse, the Ters Kingdom will harbor suspicions. Its a kind of dilemma.

First, Ill defend myself with the date with Marie, but the chances of success are low. I sighed deeply, feeling a profound frustration inside.

Understood. Ill accept it as it comes from above.

You thought well. Then, lets meet at the exhibition. Isaac Ducker Michelle.

Hiriya approached me, patted my shoulder, and then left. Her ponytail swayed as she walked away.

I quietly looked at her back and then looked at my shoulder. It was the place where Hiriya had just touched with her hand.

Pat Pat

I casually brushed off the area around my shoulder with my hand and walked away. I want to quickly meet Adelia and relieve this feeling.

Recently, as mentioned by Marie before, Adelia was receiving maid training. She doesnt have a separate instructor and is learning only through books. I heard that its books Marie recommended. Although my mother will personally teach her when she goes to the mansion, she was preparing in advance.

Knock knock

Who is it Oh! Cutie!

Hello, Noona.

As the door opened, Adelia greeted me with a joyful face. The memories of meeting Hiriya just now seemed to have completely vanished, as my mood lightened to the point where it felt like nothing happened.

Following her guidance, I entered the lodging. While the scattered exercise equipment is still present, there were some noticeable changes.

Thats the books. From the familiar Xenon series to educational books here and there.

It seems to be the maid training books that Marie mentioned.

Studying hard?

Yeah. Ill learn properly at the mansion, but I have to study hard.

In response to my question, Adelia nodded vigorously and answered energetically. Even though she exuded reliability and dignity as usual, shes putting in even more effort to be helpful to me.

Thanks to that, her face, smiling happily and radiating warmth, appeared even more lovely. Why does she choose to do only beautiful things like this? Im truly a fortunate man.

I picked up a book, likely the one she was studying until a while ago. I flipped through the pages and asked her.

Can you show me the most important thing youve learned so far?

Thats easy. Sit here first.

Adelia listened to my question and tapped her bed with her hands. What on earth was she telling me to sit on the bed for? I briefly entertained such a question and sat on the bed as she demanded. Once I did, Adelia cleared her throat and stood in front of me after coughing softly.

After neatly folding her hands, she opened her mouth with a gentle tone, as I had learned from the book.

Hello, young master. Has today been a comfortable day for you?

Her husky voice and gentle tone synergized, creating a peculiar charm. I admired her silently and watched for her next move.

You must have had a difficult and tiring day today. Easing that fatigue is the duty of an exclusive maid.

Huh?

Something seemed odd. I blinked and looked at Adelia.

Meanwhile, Adelia had been smiling gently, looking down at me with her sky-blue eyes.

Eventually, her sweet and utterly charming voice, unique to Adelia, penetrated my ears.

Tonight, I will personally attend to your bedtime routine.

How is it? Wasnt that good? There was nothing more after that, so I dont know what it means, but wouldnt just a massage be enough?

What kind of book did she read?

Translators note:

Chapter 249: Vacation Again (1)

After hearing Adelias offer to stay up late with her, my mind became hazy, but fortunately, I managed to recover. Until now, she had been focused solely on martial arts, so she hardly knew any euphemisms. Euphemisms are not something taught in books but rather acquired through interpersonal interactions, so its an unavoidable aspect.

I cant blame her, as I, too, have no room to speak, having casually invited Marie for coffee during the previous exhibition without knowing anything. Proposing to have coffee late at night was the equivalent of suggesting, Shall we eat instant noodles in our next life? It meant the same thing.

Still, thanks to that, Ive been enjoying happy days, and now I can laugh it off. However, Ill have to explain it to Adelia. I first asked her to provide detailed information about euphemisms. It seems that the situation arose because Marie only conveyed it vaguely to Adelia.

Once Adelia learns about euphemisms, she might complain to Marie, but thats a matter for later. It might be tough for her to look at my face for a while.

Regardless, some trivial incidents occurred, and I also informed Adelia about what to do during the exhibition. This includes the recent meeting with Hiriya. To prevent interference from the royal family or unnecessary actions from the Ters Kingdom, it might be possible to assign someone else. Just as Hiriya formally requested, if people from other countries make similar requests, that should be enough.

Nevertheless, even so, Adelia must stay by my side. Ive somewhat relieved the trauma, but it hasnt been completely resolved.

Adelia was taken aback when she heard the story, but with her characteristic confident smile, she replied.

With you around, I dont have any worries.

Touched by this, I responded with a deep kiss. However, her confident smile disappeared instantly, leaving only a bashful blush.

Adelia, not the usual dignified knight but now a woman, exuded an indescribable charm. Persecuting someone like her so much only intensified my resentment towards the Ters Kingdom.

After expressing affection to Adelia a few times and advising her on what to watch out for at the exhibition, I returned to the dormitory. Before going back, Adelia mimicked something she learned from a book.

While I am looking forward to the exhibition, the most anticipated moment is when Adelia, dressed in a maid outfit, appears. I briefly explained this to my mother in a letter.

So, the moment we return to the mansion, Adelia undergoes maid training while donning a maid outfit. As a bonus, she will likely receive martial arts training from my father, fulfilling the fantasy of a perfect combat maid.

In this fantasy world, combat maids actually exist. Since the conditions to become an exclusive maid are extremely stringent. Basic martial arts skills are a must, and being a secretary is also a requirement.

It can truly be considered the epitome of being both cultured and martial. Moreover, Adelia, being a royal-born despite being a bastard, received a high-level education, making it possible for her, but for the average commoner, its incredibly challenging, almost like an impossible dream.

There probably isnt a more suitable job for Adelia.

It feels strangely fitting.

The meeting with Adelia was over, all thats left was to finish my work until the vacation comes.

The task of submitting exam questions was also done, so the assistants work was almost over. I still had to stay in the research lab even after 5 oclock because I had to do the grading as well.

There was also the fun of finding out which student submitted a unique answer. By the way, the content of the exam questions was about explaining history that I received a year ago.

I wrote the answer as History repeats itself, and through that answer, I became Elenas assistant.

And maybe because the number of literature students has tripled, there were quite a few students who wrote creative answers.

Among them, the most unique answer was History is a mirror talking to itself. The student who wrote this answer is a male student like me who has a deep interest in history. Elena seemed secretly pleased when she saw that students answer, so it seems like she may appoint him as an assistant. Finally, it seems like Im getting a junior.

As for Cherry

I also checked Cherrys answer, and she wrote such an answer that its hard to say if its clever or strange.

[History is red.]

What does she mean red? Elena was perplexed while giving scores as she couldnt understand the meaning of the answer at all.

Her looking at my hair, while I was grading the answers, was an extra challenge. I deliberately ignored that gaze and scored according to the standards Elena had taught me.

I didnt have the task of grading my acquaintances scores for the second-year exam since Elena was in charge of all the exam questions. After grading all the exams, I returned to the dormitory and had dinner promptly.

After settling dinner, I immediately sat down at my desk and started writing. I had to write quickly; otherwise, I would forget what I intended to write.

And this time, what Im writing is not the main story but a side story. Moreover, its the past story of Jin and Lily written for the demons.

Honestly, I didnt expect to gain popularity to this extent.

At the time of the first writing of Xenons Biography, the perception of demons was at the very bottom. So, when my family first read it, they were worried about the aftermath.

And as expected, as soon as the romance between the demon man and the human saint came out, there was a flood of attention and criticism.

People asked how a devil and a human could cultivate love. No matter how you look at it, they couldnt understand forming a relationship with a demon. Considering the current status of Xenons Biography, the reaction was very different.

There were even occasional requests for the series to be discontinued. Fortunately, the ratio of readers who find it interesting was higher, and from the fifth volume onwards, the evaluation has completely changed.

The disdainful and hateful gaze towards demons has been uprooted, and naturally, the romantic route of Jin and Lily has also risen. Furthermore, as Xenons Biography continued to be published, real demons also got a rise in reputation, and now, they are no more than a race included in the category of humans.

As it turned out, people were curious about the past of Jin and Lily. How did these two meet, and how did they confirm each others feelings?

While their past was mentioned intermittently throughout the story, it was not detailed. The only explanation was that Jin, who had a miserable past, met Lily and was redeemed. Originally, the side story was planned to be written after completing the main story, but for the sake of the demon who even invented the typewriter, there was a need to hurry.

Although there are still about two weeks left until the exhibition, it is more than enough time. The 20th volume is scheduled to be released during the vacation after the exhibition.

This is all thanks to the typewriter. Even if it breaks down, there is a great AS (After Service) knight named Gartz, so there is no need to worry.

Tap-tadada tap-tadadak

The sound of typing on the typewriter echoed throughout the dormitory. I paused for a moment while looking at the spectacle of sentences appearing on the holographic window.

Its good to write the side story, but the perspective and atmosphere are crucial. Jins past was so depressing that even the expression miserable falls short. On the other hand, Lily, destined to become a future saint, received love and grew peacefully.

The inevitable clash between the two sharply contrasting backgrounds is bound to happen. Especially, the psychological changes in Jin, who has become crooked in his own way, are the most important.

In the main story, Lily teased Jin that he was a really disobedient child in the old days.

It couldnt be helped. Jin was a devil born from the rape of a human woman by Belzebub of gluttony.

Parental affection couldnt exist, especially since it was an unwanted pregnancy and, on top of that, from a demon. As a result, Jin suffered severe abuse from his mother since he was young.

If he had been a human child, he probably wouldnt have survived the abuse and would have lost his life. The robust physique characteristic of demons manifested from a young age.

I should portray a sense of true salvation

Even now and in my past life, I was a fantasy writer. I naturally focused more on adventure than romance.

While there are works in the fantasy adventure genre that depict emotions well, compared to those works, mine were lacking in various ways.

I paused my writing for a moment and opened the desk drawer. Instead of the manuscript for Xenons Biography, there was the draft of Cherrys work, Once Again, the Red Sunset.

I kept it because if Cherry keeps it, there might be an unfortunate situation. The torn and patched draft was also here. It symbolizes her dreams, hopes, and scars, so I plan to keep it as much as possible. If a slump comes, I will show her this draft to stimulate and help her.

Doesnt Cherry write romance well?

Although only the first volume has been released, Cherrys psychological descriptions were truly outstanding. If Xenons Biography captivates with an exciting development, Cherrys work captivates with detailed psychological descriptions.

In reality, most of the praise for her work revolves around her excellent psychological portrayal.

The characteristic of a regression work is like the finest ingredient in cooking. Depending on how it is prepared, it can either become a masterpiece or a failure.

Finally, the type of dish varies depending on how it is cooked. In other words, if I want more detailed psychological descriptions, its better to seek help from her.

Of course, shell listen, but

It feels like receiving this for free goes against my conscience. Judging by Cherrys behavior, she seems to be acting as if shell give me everything.

So, I also feel the need to repay her, but Im unsure of what kind of repayment is appropriate. She seems to have everything despite her family situation.

For now, I should talk to Cherry about it when we meet tomorrow, and for now, it seems better to write whatever comes to mind.

Wouldnt my mother like this the most?

Since she liked Jin and Lilys relationship so much, she would really enjoy the spin-off.

But the problem is the 20th volume. As mentioned before, a big twist is revealed in the 20th volume: Gluttony is actually Jins biological father. Jin hears this fact and collapses mentally, revealing everything until hes on the verge of a breakdown.

Lily arrives late, and Jin is already subdued by Gluttony, mentally and emotionally devastated. Gluttony, having deduced Jin and Lilys relationship, maliciously laughs and delivers the final blow.

While Lily screams while witnessing it in real-time, Jins heart is pierced by Gluttony.

Should I release it after Mothers postpartum care?

It might be quite shocking. Of course, Jin wont die immediately, as hell make a surprise appearance as the final boss, but unfortunately, the volume ends at that scene.

I plan to use the forbidden technique known as early-stage severance perforation once again.

Ill just have to take a few hits on the back of my neck and itll be over.

I shrugged my shoulders and continued typing.

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While Isaac was diligently writing a prequel for demons, in the Michelle Territory, news of not only the Luminouss Temple but also the Moras Temple being erected has spread. Since then, the Michelle Territory has become much busier than before.

Naturally, the workload of Baron Hawk has also increased exponentially. The place where both the Luminous and Mora Temples are simultaneously erected has attracted attention from all quarters, as such a phenomenon was unprecedented anywhere in the world.

Already gaining attention due to the exhibition, the situation exploded when the news spread. From Hawks perspective, the development of the territory was a positive thing, but as the overtime increased proportionally, fatigue did not dissipate.

As a former commander of the knights, he was robust, but if it were someone else, they might have collapsed from exhaustion long ago.

Sigh

How about taking a break for a bit?

In the study of the Michelle Manor, sitting at the desk, Hawk rubbed his eyes and sighed, expressing his exhaustion. Anna, concerned, suggested he take a break. The development of the territory is good news for the owner of the Michelle Manor, but whats most important to her is the health of her family.

From the first meeting until now, after decades have passed, her burning passion towards Hawk has not cooled down, making her even more worrisome.

You dont have to worry about me. Its just that Im a bit tired.

Thats exactly what worries me. I know how robust your body is, and seeing you tired concerns me.

In response to his loving wifes concern, Hawk let out a wry smile. Every word she said was completely accurate.

In his heart, he wanted to push everything aside, but delaying work didnt suit Hawks temperament. The habit of preparing in advance had been with him since his days as a

knight.

I should be the one worrying less. It hasnt been that long since Lily was born.

Why worry? Cardinal Kate blessed us generously. Could there be anything wrong?

Hawk fell silent after hearing Annas response, left with nothing to say. Indeed, as soon as Kate heard the news of Annas childbirth, she bestowed her blessings upon her. Since the blessing was cast by a cardinal, Anna quickly recovered her health. Not only that, but Kate also imbued Lily with sacred power.

Thanks to this, both the mother and the child were not just healthy but could even flutter about energetically. All of this was thanks to Kate.

Thats true. I want to pass the duty to Isaac and go to the child quickly, but

No, you cant. If you do that, Isaac will have less time to write. Please endure a little longer.

Anna. Are you on my side, or on Isaacs side?

Im on our familys side~

Hawk shook his head with a playful smile as Anna extended her chest and gave a witty reply. It seemed that he couldnt win a verbal battle against Anna.

Deciding to take a break and spend some intimate time with Anna, he rose from his seat. Anna, in response, approached him with a gentle smile and hugged his arm.

So, lets go see Lily. At this rate, she might not recognize her Dads face.

But hasnt it only been a short time since she was born?

Her eyes have been open for a long time.

Hawk looked at Anna, who exuded youthfulness, audacity, and beauty, with an affectionate gaze. Anna, in turn, responded to his gaze, creating a sweet and charming atmosphere.

Both of them were beyond the age of adolescence, yet they boasted a passionate love reminiscent of young couples. Thanks to this love, a latecomer, Lily, was born.

I hope the kids come soon. They havent even seen Lilys face yet.

I agree with that.

It would be nice if Isaac also released a side story. I dont know what kind of gift he received, but Im really looking forward to a book every two weeks.

It seems that what Anna was most looking forward to is Xenons Biography. If Isaac heard this, he might feel disappointed, but she truly loves her family more than anyone else.

Suddenly, a funny thought crossed his mind. It was about the prequel that Isaac is releasing for the demons, featuring Jin and Lily. Currently, Anna was eagerly anticipating that prequel as an avid fan. To the extent that, on occasion, she jokingly asked Isaac when Jin and Lilys story will continue.

As soon as this thought came to Hawks mind, he asked Anna.

More than that, Anna. Do you like the romance between Jin and Lily?

Of course. It seems like their passionate feelings are even transmitted to me. How could I not like it?

Well What if. Just what if they

Stop right there.

Did she sense what kind of question he was about to ask? Anna cut him off with a tone not as cheerful as before, but rather significantly lowered.

Even Hawk seemed slightly startled by that voice. It was a voice and an atmosphere that could tell the cold north wind to go away.

Meanwhile, Anna continued to speak with a still cheerful face.

Isaac probably wouldnt do that, but if, really, truly, hypothetically, he were to tear those two apart

I might seriously consider excluding them from the family. Of course, such a thing will never happen. Hoho.

Following that, she emphasized once again.

Right?

Uh, yes. Thats right.

Hawk answered with a somewhat uneasy expression.

Translators note:

Its me guys!

Sorry for the long break but I got seriously burned out and then started playing games on my back burner Long story short Baldurs Gate 3 is amazing and I have finally some motivation to resume so riding on it Ill translate a lot next couple days. Great to be back!

Chapter 250: Vacation Again (2)

The long-awaited vacation has finally arrived. For freshmen, its a break like a refreshing rain after a drought, while for sophomores, its a period of ordinary rest. The fact that the vacation is approaching also means that theres about a week left until the exhibition. I wanted to hurry and arrive at the territory to see my family.

I should also check how things are progressing in the territory. Just hearing bits of news brought to mind the image of my fathers tired appearance. Still, since the territory is steadily developing, theres a lot to look forward to. The Michelle territory, which was originally just a quiet rural area, is now growing into a city of culture.

First, with the help of Cecily, Ill teleport straight to the Michelle territory. However, I asked for the opinions of those around me first. Marie and Rina plan to visit officially after thorough preparation, but others have different circumstances.

First is Leona. Surprisingly, she told me shes going separately. When I asked for the reason, she said she wants to spend some quiet time with her mother, whom she hasnt seen in a long time. So, during the carriage ride to the Michelle territory, they plan to have various conversations. Understanding her heartfelt desire, I agreed.

Instead, I covered the carriage fare for her journey to make sure its a comfortable trip. Meeting family after a long time should be a relaxed and pleasant conversation.

Leona is a student who has to work part-time throughout the vacation to sustain herself for the next semester. When I offered to cover the expenses, she happily agreed, bouncing around with joy.

While the money was important, the more significant part was the time she dedicated to a harmonious relationship with her mother. Calling me hubby with a voice full of charm was just an added bonus.

Leonas turn was over now, and the remaining one was Cherry. Although she said she would attend the exhibition, I wonder how she prepared.

If Cherrys family, the Roseberry family, finds out about this, it could lead to trouble, so its better to pass on that information. In this situation, its best if she just comes without revealing too much.

Currently, Cherry is publicly known as an acquaintance of Xenon, under the pseudonym Mary. Introducing her to my family wont be difficult since they already know about it, but it requires some preparation.

With her cherry blossom-colored hair attracting attention, wearing a dress would draw even more eyes. However, wearing a robe would be more suspicious.

Although the chances of Cherrys parents attending the exhibition are very low, rumors have a way of spreading slowly.

If someone among the nobles recognizes Cherrys pink hair and mentions it, the situation will become very complicated.

Given the awkward circumstances, I asked for help from those around me. Ideally, I would like to change only the pink hair.

The solution to this problem was surprisingly simple, as Cecily suggested.

Why not use magical dye?

Is that possible with magic?

Yeah, you can even change eye color if you want.

According to her explanation, before the publication of Xenons Biography, some demons considered disguise essential to come out of Helium. Black hair and blood-red eyes like features were distinctive characteristics unique to demons, and even if horns were covered, they were easily noticed because of these features.

As a result, disguise magic also developed, allowing a variety of color changes. It would be a great help for Cherry.

Thank you so much. Magic is truly amazing.

If youre grateful you know? Ill be expecting it in two months.

Was she really serious? Cecily gave me a mischievous smile and a wink, making me look somewhat troubled.

She is usually playful, but considering her recent actions towards me, its not just a joke. It seems that Arwens reincarnation statement and Volume 19 have brought about a lot of changes in her feelings.

Anyway, with Cecilys help, Cherry was able to change her pink hair and eyes, to a completely ordinary brown. Cherry looked at her now brown hair and eyes with a curious gaze. Seeing curiosity in her usually somber eyes somehow made me proud. With this change, she could also enjoy the exhibition without any worries.

However, with naturally outstanding beauty and noticeable large bust, wherever she goes, shes likely to catch peoples eyes. Moreover, Im currently in a situation where Ive been nominated by Hiriya. Perhaps during the exhibition, I may not have time to pay attention to her. Although Id like to show her around, the situation is not quite favorable.

Even though Rina assured me that she would take care of it, I have no idea how things are progressing. To restrain Hiriya, Leort and Rina might also nominate me.

Considering these aspects, I explained it to Cherry. Maybe I wont be able to go around with her, but Ill try to be with her as much as possible, but it might be difficult due to circumstances.

Cherrys response to my question was

Yes.

Is that it?

What more do you need? Its your request, senior.

No. Dont you think its irresponsible? Im the one who invited you to the exhibition.

Is there a problem with following your request, senior?

I was wrong. Our communication was completely off. Even a yes-man wouldnt give such an answer.

If I ordered her to die, she seemed ready to end her life. The dark, sunken eyes add credibility to that hypothesis.

Although I wanted to ask her right away, I postponed it for later. Whats important now is introducing Cherry to my parents.

I suggested teleporting together with Cecily, but surprisingly, she vehemently refused, saying she needed to buy a new dress.

The originally brought dress was a pink dress that suited her hair, but now it had changed to brown, so she replied that she needed a dress to match it. If I only see things like this, she is not a doll who obediently follows my words but a person with autonomy. In many ways, she is strangely unique

If you ask me to, Ill come wearing it as it is. If you want, as I mentioned before, even naked

Thats enough.

A bit too much. Her screw was loose. Besides Adelias case, Cherry, given her extreme nature, made me realize how important the family environment is.

Anyway, the conversation with acquaintances was over, whats left is Adelia. Considering Adelias personality, she had prepared in advance, so it was over as soon as we met up.

The travel naturally relied on Cecilys help. Teleportation is always amazing. With a blink of an eye, you are instantly transported to another location.

Ill come back in a week, so see you then.

Ill be preparing hard.

Isnt there anything to do before that?

Before Cecily left, I didnt forget to give her a light kiss. Soon after Cecily left, only Adelia and I remained at the entrance of the territory.

Adelia was looking at us kissing with envy in her eyes, but whether she thought she hid it well or didnt know, she didnt say anything.

Honestly, with curving lips and sky-blue eyes filled with envy, it would be stranger if I didnt notice. I confirmed her reaction and chuckled.

Jealous?

W-What are you talking about! Who said Im jealous

At first, Adelia was flustered, but soon her voice softened. Seeing her blushing face and the way she playfully pouted at me, it seemed like she wanted something unconsciously.

With mischievousness still lingering, I smiled and whispered close to her ear.

I can do it if you want.

Hey!

Adelia twitched like a fish for a moment, then sat down on the floor. It seemed like her legs momentarily lost strength. If my reflexes were sharper, I would have grabbed her hand to prevent her from falling, but unfortunately, I didnt have that ability at the moment.

I did my best to grab her hand and help her up. Adelia, who was still a bit dazed, stood up with my assistance.

That was really embarrassing.

Adelia muttered timidly while brushing off the dirt on her buttocks. Despite her tough expression, her face, as red as it could be, revealed her true feelings. I chuckled softly, observing her dissatisfaction.

Occasionally, in moments like this, Adelia felt more like a younger sister than someone I should be protective of. The more she expressed affection, the more apparent it became that she was starving for love.

Just you wait. Since I endure this every day, it looks like youre underestimating me, huh?

But you look cute.

Adelia, who tried to counterattack, ended up receiving only a counter and was gradually sinking. She tightly closed her eyes, wanting to hide any reaction, but her flushed face, as if about to burst, ruthlessly betrayed her efforts.

Finally, when her face turned so red that drops of red liquid would fall if pressed with a finger, her eyes slowly opened. In her watery sky-blue eyes, there was resentment towards me.

I shrugged my shoulders and moved leisurely. When I took a step, Adelia hesitated for a moment, then adjusted her stride to match mine.

Glancing sideways, I saw her adjusting her steps to match mine with restrained movements. Although she turned her head and grumbled, she naturally adjusted her steps when I shortened mine.

Regardless, her status as a sturdy escort knight remained unchanged. Perhaps shell also double as a maid in the future.

Come to think of it, can a maid attend the academy as well?

About a year ago, I visited a clothing store with Nicole to purchase formal wear. There, I coincidentally met Jackson, with whom relations were not good, and I remember a maid following him around.

Maybe Adelia will be like that someday. Imagining Adelia in a maid outfit walking beside me, I felt a strange sensation.

I want to see her wear it soon.

Adelia, wearing a maid outfit, emitting a certain charm. Even now, she is exuding a sufficient amount of unexpected allure, but if she were to showcase more charm here

A-again. Are you having strange thoughts again? You pervert.

Could she feel my gaze like that? Adelia pointed at my face, accusing me while covering her own face with her hands.

Her face was still flushed, but I was more concerned about the fact that my inner thoughts were exposed. Surprised, I asked,

How did you know?

With a face like that, how could I not tell?

Hmm

I mumbled in response and touched my face. I wondered if it was that obvious.

Not just family, but also Marie and Cecily, and now Adelia as well. People closely connected to me can read my inner thoughts. Although I might not be bad at controlling my expressions, Im curious about how they know.

How did you know?

I just felt it. Its a kind of intuition.

Adelia, like Marie, seems to have exceptional intuition. The difference between them might be whether they can grasp the other persons sincerity. However, I dont particularly care. While its a bit embarrassing that my inner thoughts were exposed, I can now confidently speak about it.

Yes, youre right. I was having strange thoughts about how good you would look in a maid outfit.

It was a question she hadnt even thought about. Adelia blinked her eyes without any embarrassment and then lowered her head.

It seemed like she was checking her own figure. Indeed, her height was on the taller side for a woman, so maybe she should consider getting a custom-made outfit.

However, she didnt seem to have any aversion to wearing a maid uniform, as she made a vague, nonchalant response, not showing any discomfort.

Well, I dont really know. Are there specific clothes for exclusive maids, not just regular maids?

Well, since Noona has to also be a bodyguard

As I pondered various thoughts, a vivid image began to form in my mind. A skirt that barely covered the thighs, not reaching the ankles for convenience. Specially made garters or garter belts for immediate use in unexpected situations.

Thinking that Adelia would wear such clothes

It would suit you really well.

Really? Honestly, I think a maid outfit doesnt match my face and body as much as a butlers

No, it must be a maid. No, it has to be a maid.

Originally, she wasnt the type to put a lot of thought into her attire. However, Adelias maid outfit was something I couldnt give up.

If this were Earth, she might have vehemently refused. But this was a fantasy world. Adelia had no complaints about wearing a maid uniform.

Look at her now. Even though she initially showed a surprised reaction when I emphasized it, isnt she nodding in agreement now? Seeing that, I couldnt help but smile with satisfaction.

This really is a fantasy world.

Once again, I was thankful for being born in this world.

Translators note: