**Chapter 101: The Day Before the Storm (3)**

It was a day like any other.

I woke up and said good morning to Diana as usual.

I sat at the same table as usual with Diana and we ate breakfast together.

It's nothing special, but enjoying the simple things in life has a positive effect on your mind.

Even after showing my face, I ate with my helmet on.

“Ho, just in case other customers barge in⋯”

For some reason, Diana seemed to be more cautious than me.

Anyway, after eating, it was time for coffee.

Without thinking much, I drank the milk coffee that Diana served.

[Diana Ordia's breast milk]

[Random stats increase by 1 due to Diana Ordia's 'Curse of the ■Milk Climax ■Tat de■■]

[Strength: (11+10) → (11+11)]

[Nam Soo-Jin LV.23]

[Stamina:(8+11) Strength:(11+11) Dexterity:(10+10) Wisdom:(1+4) Finesse:(2)]

[Stat Bonus from Stat Drain: +1 Stamina, +1 Strength, +1 Wisdom]

[Free Points: 0]

I stared blankly at the status window that appeared out of nowhere.

“What's wrong?”

I turned back to Diana.

She stirred her baby milk into my coffee and looked at me as if something was wrong.

Her hands fidget with her plate, and she can't quite make eye contact.

Diana pretends not to notice.

A similar yet different situation to the last time I drank a milk latte.

That time, I asked if I could breastfeed myself. It was a free stat boost and an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

This time, on the other hand, Diana served herself a breast milk latte.

Sure, it was the milk she'd pumped in Arachne's miracle locker room, but it was ⋯!

'⋯Isn't that, in effect, tacit permission to serve her own breast milk?’

I was stunned for a moment.

“Hmm, do you not like the taste?”

“⋯No.”

Oops.

I sipped my breast milk coffee again.

The savory, sweet flavor of breast milk and the rich, aged female smell washed over me.

A concentrated liquid secreted by a woman of childbearing age for the child that will one day be born.

 I apologize to the children, but I must preempt them.

“I could eat this every day.”

“⋯hmm, is that so⋯?”

“Yeah, but the coffee flavor kind of gets in the way. I like the flavor of the milk so much that I just want to eat the milk.”

“⋯⋯”

Diana blushed for a moment, biting her lower lip slightly, and bowed her head deeply.

“⋯Ma, if there's milk next time⋯I'll make it again⋯”

“⋯⋯”

The milk is gone.

Feeling strangely embarrassed, I gave a silent affirmation.

‘Ha. A labyrinth city where it’s nice to live.’

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I drank Diana's breastmilk coffee and headed to the guardhouse in the early morning hours.

I walked for nearly an hour and a half, familiarizing myself with my surroundings and gazing at the massive walls that stretched out before me.

The wall that separates the noble district from the explorer district.

'This is the first time I've ever come this far,' I thought.

The guards are divided into branches along the massive wall that separates the east, west, south, and north sections, and I was visiting the eastern explorer's guard.

As I approached, the guard, who had been looking around, straightened her back and straightened her spear with a grunt.

“What brings you here?”

The blue female guard at the front of the wall stiffened as she saw me.

She must be new, because her face hid her nervousness as her eyes scanned my muscular body warily.

“Hey. Come out here.”

 “Uh. Sorry.”

The other female guard shoved the newcomer out of the way.

“Are you the man in the helmet⋯Mr. Balkan?”

“Yes.”

“Show me your explorer's badge.”

The process went quickly.

“Junior Explorer Balkan. You have been identified. I'll escort you to the platoon leader, if you'll follow me.”

The guard led the way into the guardhouse, and after walking straight through the entrance, I could see the stairs leading down to the basement.

The dank, humid air of the basement hit me like a ton of bricks.

-Kaang!

A harsh clang rang out as soon as I stepped on it.

I turned my head toward the source and saw a bushy-haired woman glaring at me over the bars, the corners of her mouth twitching upward.

The clanking of the bars against the restraints on her wrists was the source of the sound.

“You can ignore them. They're outlaw scum who won't do the world any good if they stay alive.”

“Hee-hee.”

-Bang! Bang!

The bushy-haired woman continued to hit the bars with the restraints.

“She’s whining for food. If I starve her for a few more days, she’ll come to her senses and realize her place.”

 -Boom.

The big-haired woman stopped. It must have been true.

“Now, wait-! I was wrong-”

The guard didn't look back, but continued on to her goal.

The basement reminded me of a cramped prison cell.

Human rights were a luxury to the outlaws, and there were no walls for privacy, only a gaping black grate separating them.

This meant I could see the guards walking down the hall and myself in plain view.

“Hmph, cock!”

“Hey male, don't just go away, just give me one, please, please, I've been rotting in here for a year already, I can't even masturbate because of the restraints!”

So it wasn't easy to ignore the outlaws who were throwing their hands up and screaming at me from both sides.

The guard in front of me bowed her head in embarrassment.

“⋯Sorry, sir. The guards are mostly women, so this hasn't happened before⋯”

“It's okay. I'm used to it.”

“⋯Yes?”

“Let's go.”

The outlaws, who were having a seizure because they couldn't release their pent-up lust, forced their arms into the bars and swung.

-pop.

One of the outlaws' fingers lightly touched my arm.

 “That little punk! I had a full orgasm and peed my pants just from touching that guy!”

 “Bitch.”

“⋯Four-day fast for all.”

The guards chastised the outlaws for their sudden behavior.

Further down the hall, another set of stairs appeared.

“From here, the outlaws are comparable to mid-level explorers. I can guarantee your safety, but I want you to be on guard just in case.”

I nodded, and we descended to the second floor of the guardhouse.

It was much smaller and quieter than the first floor, probably because of the number of intermediate level outlaws.

This time, I reached my destination without incident.

“Ah. Welcome, this must be a strange place for you.”

The guard platoon leader greeted me from the corner of the second floor, peering over the bars.

“I think I saw a world I didn't know, so it wasn't too bad.”

“I'm glad you think so, sir. Normally I'd have to serve you coffee upstairs, but the bitches started freaking out this morning.”

The guard platoon leader turned her head again to the figure beyond the bars.

Following his gaze, the rabbit-headed man and a plain-looking woman came into view.

“Hiiii!”

The woman who immediately convulsed with a frightened expression upon seeing me was Gurmimi, an executive of the Blood Clan.

 “⋯You're here.”

The woman who stares at me with an ostensibly polite but fearful expression is Reichem, a crazy graduate student who holds a ten-year grudge.

Why the hell did she call me all the way here?

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Reichem stared at the man in front of her.

A huge body filled with muscles and a helmet that added to his intimidating appearance.

As soon as she saw him, a paroxysm of memories pressed on her mind.

A man who was mercilessly tearing apart an unidentified monster that appeared on the 5th floor with an axe.

 Reichem and Gurmimi had been captured and witnessed the scene.

And as he swung his axe, they saw a figure more like a beast than a man, a terrifying beast.

The scene of the battle was burned into their minds.

“Hoo, hoo, hoo!”

Gurmimi, the rabbit woman, exhaled in horror as soon as she saw Balkan, her eyes falling to the ground.

“So. Why did you suddenly ask me to come?”

Balkan asked, and Reichem looked away from Gurmimi for a moment before looking back up at him.

“I am a woman who knows how to wait. I was exploited for ten years by an evil professor.”

Reichem nodded in respect.

Unconsciously, she crouched down in front of the predator.

“You waited long enough to become an outlaw, but that's none of my business. Tell me what you want, I don't have time to waste in a place like this.”

“⋯Haha. Before that.”

Reichem glared at the guard platoon leader and the rest of the guards.

“Ha. Are you telling me to get lost?”

The guard platoon leader laughed with glee, but Reichem remained silent.

If she wasn't going to make a statement, it was on the guard platoon leader.

“⋯I apologize for entrusting you with such a task. They're a bad bunch, so be careful.”

“It's okay. Just make sure I get paid well.”

At Balkan's reply, the platoon of guards moved away from them.

They left a safe distance between them, just in case, but no sound of conversation could be heard.

‘⋯Shit. What the hell?’

At this point, Balkan had a strange feeling.

Balkan didn't understand why Reichem wanted to talk to him alone.

‘What's the point of this asshole? Why is she trying to drag me into this?’

Maybe it was because she was a graduate student, but he didn't know what she was thinking.

“You. What's your purpose?”

“Nothing in particular, but⋯”

Reichem spoke up immediately.

“I'm a woman who knows how to wait. I had the patience to rot under that bitch for at least ten years, and my sentence is no more than ten years.”

Being an outlaw doesn't come with a mandatory death sentence.

For Reichem, there were mitigating factors.

Reichem filled Balkan in on her background.

She was an illusionist from the Academy who worked as a slave under Professor Arpo, a labyrinth ecologist.

Professor Arpo, who built up quite a reputation with the research results she dedicated and even succeeded in creating relic artifacts by supplementing them.

 Balkan threw up his hands.

“So. What, you're telling me that you're so talented that you have the backing of a professor, and that without you, the research would suffer, and that she'd bail you out?”

“Maybe, but that's not what I was going to say.”

‘I'll kill myself if I have to go back under that professor's thumb again.’

Reichem saw great promise in Balkan's behavior in the Labyrinth.

The way he'd seen through her illusionary magic so easily recognized by the few enemies, and his terrifying power.

He may be a low-level explorer now, but one day he will soar while she is here to pay for her sins.

Her sentence was ten years and in that time, he could have soared and reigned in the sky.

It might seem like a leap of faith, but Reichem could still see the image of Balkan tearing at the abomination.

Ten years from now, when she emerged from this horrible prison could someone who once antagonized him live a normal life?

 Wouldn't he remember his grudge and unleash all sorts of retribution that would make a normal life impossible?

Reichem lifted her head slightly and looked up at him.

Behind his helmet, a pair of spine-chillingly menacing eyes stared down at her.

‘This means retribution.’

Alarm bells went off in Reichem's survival instincts and there was one way she could save herself.

In order to not incur the wrath of the man who would grow into a man of considerable influence in the Labyrinth City after she served her sentence and to appease his wrath, she would have to do everything in her power to make him feel better.

However there was one card in her hand.

“Wouldn't you like to take out a whole clan of outlaws?”

“Hey, you asshole!”

Gurmimi, who was beside her, looked at Reichem in disbelief.

“⋯Hmm?”

Balkan laughed bitterly at the betrayal in front of him.