**Chapter 117: Ego Axe Bunny (1)**

After my encounter with the strange girl named Celsia, the festivities at the banquet gradually cooled down.

I had been walking around the banquet hall, picking up food and enjoying the atmosphere.

“Hmmm. Hmmm. Excuse me.”

Then, there were people who spoke to me.

Delmitri Claudia, an executive at the top of the ladder.

Ellieo Rohardt, the Marquis of Rohardt's second daughter.

These were the people who had come up to me in hysterics at the sight of my deep kiss.

“Claudia, the one who distributes equipment to the Royal Knights?”

“Marquis Rohardt⋯a high-level explorer, a swordsman, who's been to the 28th floor of the Labyrinth!”

“I heard that she was recently struck by a curse and is currently recuperating⋯”

Furthermore, from the way the people around her were muttering, it seemed that the family behind her was quite famous.

'Such connections are good.’

Although the graduation ceremony was for Ellie, the purpose of attending the dinner party was to make connections.

It's not often I get the chance to make high-level connections, so there was nothing to lose by making the right connections.

In fact, I was okay with anyone, as long as they didn't see me hooking up with Diana and tried to take advantage of me.

It was a perfect situation for 'my connections'.

I opened the breast pocket of my blazer, took the business card they handed me, and slipped it into my inside pocket.

“Hmph?!”

“Uhhhhh!”

I could hear them holding their breath, and I looked up, causing them to jerk their gaze away from me.

“What's wrong?”

“Oh, it's nothing.”

“Hmm! It's nothing.”

Delmitri and Ellieo said that and nodded their heads in unison.

I didn't have a business card to give them.

“My name is Balkan. I don't really have a business card, so would you mind if I shake your hand?”

“⋯!!! Well, that's better for us⋯ Hmmm.”

“⋯Hmmmm!”

I shook hands with the two women with a moderate amount of shouting.

-Squeak.

“⋯⋯hmph.”

“Moo, what kind of man has such big hands?”

I didn't squeeze too hard, just enough to give them a firm handshake, but their reactions were more intense than I expected.

After I finished my statement, we talked for a while.

I didn't have to think hard to find something to talk about.

They've already found something to talk about.

“Merchant Claudia is a first-class merchant that distributes various items in the Labyrinth City. They also make direct contracts with explorers and take on commissions...Are you interested?”

 “Haha, yes. I'm an explorer, albeit a poor one.”

“Wow, you're an explorer? I can't believe it. Your body is so⋯ Oh, excuse me⋯”

“Hmph, my Marquis Rohardt is one of the biggest supporters of the Explorers' Union after the royal family and the Earth Mother Order.”

“Wow. You're really great.”

“Hmph. Well, it's not that big⋯hmmmm!”

I simply responded to their conversation but it seemed to be enough to get a good reaction.

Besides,

‘Is this a party for the upper class?’

High-level information that was difficult to obtain in the explorers' tavern was pouring out here.

I chatted with them as best I could, soaking up their knowledge.

I've been in the Labyrinth City for half a year now, but there's still a lot I don't know.

“Huh… Is that the beautiful scenery I’ve only heard of?”

“The kingdom⋯ the Labyrinth City is tilting⋯ someone has poisoned Valerus!”

"⋯Has everyone lost their mind? A guy wearing a helmet is a beauty that could ruin a country? Get a grip!"

 “You. Weren't you on the fourth floor earlier?”

“Yeah, but what does that matter?”

“If you didn't see 'the scene,' just stay put. Claudia and Rohardt didn't do this for nothing. If you're curious, go to the restroom on the fourth floor. You can smell the lustful stench just by walking by.”

“Boo, I'm embarrassed to admit, I'm a little out of it myself⋯ that kiss was so⋯ hehe⋯ oh, again⋯”

My and Ellie's kiss was becoming something referred to as “the scene,” but it wasn't a big deal.

‘It's not like it's some kind of non-consensual crime.’

I just had to be proud of myself, no matter what anyone else said.

“Ahem. Yes, it was fun. Let’s meet again sometime. I often go to the Explorers’ Union. If there’s anything you can do for me, I’ll submit a request.”

“Me too. If you visit Claudia’s shop, I’ll buy your stuff at a good price. Please, please come visit.”

 After I made a small connection with Ellieo Rohardt and Delmitri Claudia, another figure came to the door.

“Professor Mankostil?”

“Thank goodness you're still here.”

Professor Mankostil tapped the ground with her cane as she approached, and smirked at me.

I told her we'd talk after the party about the outlaws.

“I'm almost finished with the job. The other TAs had a hard time with it, but it's basically done.”

“Haha. That's good to hear.”

I was glad since I'd been so nervous about those crazy people.

I felt a rush of relief.

“By the way, didn't you say that some pesky guys were involved with Vesta?”

Professor Mankostil laughed bitterly at my question.

“Kk, kk. No. I can’t have you worrying about those guys. But.”

Professor Mankostil held out a piece of paper to me. It was wrapped in an envelope.

“It's not urgent, but you can read it later when you have time. Well, later⋯ when you're a top intermediate explorer, anyway.”

Or to put it another way, it's information I won't know until I become a top intermediate explorer.

What could it be? Information about the Labyrinth? A Hidden Piece? An organization or person to watch out for?

Whatever it is, it's probably too much for my current level.

“Thank you!”

“It’s just a reward for the work you've done. Oh, and I've sent you an additional small reward of my own. There should be a package on its way to the Explorers' Union soon. It's in your name, so make sure you get it in time.”

“Thank you!!!”

“If you're so grateful, perhaps you'd like to meet my granddaughter.”

Another meeting was arranged, but I just laughed it off.

“It's a shame. It's a shame⋯ What a waste of talent⋯”

It was only after I saw off Professor Mankostil with my tongue in my cheek that I got some breathing room.

The crowd around us began to die down and the ballroom began to clear.

The graduation ceremony was over.

I turn my head to see if Ellie and Diana's conversation is over.

Diana and Ellie were staring at me from the stairs leading upstairs.

Or, more precisely at Ellieo, Delmitri, and Professor Mankostil, who were talking to me just a moment ago.

“⋯Foster mom. I want to be a high ranking person when I grow up, so that oppa can depend on me.”

“⋯Hoohoo⋯ Don't worry too much. I'll work hard to help you.”

I walked over to Diana, who was stroking Ellie's head, looking pleased with her daughter's growth.

“Did you finish the talk well?”

I said it without thinking, and both Ellie and Diana blushed at the same time.

“It went well, didn't it, foster mom?”

“Uh, yeah. Of course.”

They looked at each other, smiled awkwardly, and then looked at me warily.

Ellie's gaze went to my lower half while Diana’s to my lips.

Their gazes were centered on my pelvis, divided up and down as if, together, they were about to split me in two.

‘What the hell were you talking about?’

The bond between mother and daughter seemed to have grown stronger, but somehow it also seemed to have gotten sticky in other ways.

Just as I was about to ask what they'd been talking about, Diana smiled awkwardly and spoke up.

“Well, let's get you home.”

The long, long day at the Academy had come to an end.

\*\*\*

Ellie became an adult and successfully completed her graduation ceremony.

Naturally, she moved out of the academy dorms.

What does this mean?

-Bam.

“Oh, oppa. Can I come in⋯?”

 It meant that she and I would be living under the same roof.

“Uhhhh, you can come in.”

I briefly answered Ellie's knock, rubbed my eyes, and pushed myself out of bed.

I felt strangely tired, and I still couldn't sleep.

-Bam!

The door opened and Ellie walked into my room.

She pushed the door open with her hips, holding a bucket of water for face with both hands.

Normally, Diana would have it for me before I even woke up, but it seemed like the freshly graduated Ellie was helping her out for a while.

“Hey, oppa. How much water is this⋯”

“Yes. It's enough. Leave it there.”

“⋯⋯⋯⋯”

There was a long silence, so I looked at Ellie.

Blushing bright red, she stood there, holding the bucket.

I followed her gaze down to my body, which was now shirtless and wearing only a pair of boxers.

Her eyes skimmed over my pecs and abs, then landed on my cock, which was hard against the side of my thigh.

The one she had instinctively reached for after our deep kiss.

“Hmph!”

Dropping the bucket with a cute scream, Ellie quickly covered her eyes and ran outside.

“I'm sorry⋯!”

-Bang!!!

I stared blankly at the closed door with a scream.

Clearly, this was an unexpected mistake.

This hadn't happened when Diana brought me the bucket.

At least the bucket didn't spill.

I warmed up with my usual meditation and stretching routine, then washed my face, thinking to myself.

‘Come to think of it, I've always slept in my boxers.’

Until today, it had been so natural that I hadn't even thought about it.

‘Until now, has Diana just opened my door and come in?’

 The thought stretched out.

‘What about the laundry she’s been doing?’

I pictured her carefully washing my panties, one by one, and laying them out.

“⋯⋯”

My cock felt healthy.

I gave my face one more unnecessary wash, dressed, and slipped out of the room.

Now I have to get busy again.

‘I guess I should go back in soon.’

 It was time to get ready to explore the labyrinth.