**Chapter 182: Rest (2)**

Denshi blankly stared at the scene before her.

Today, she had felt a chilly unease all day long.

It was as if her position was on the verge of crumbling.

The feeling that her position as the master's only slave was precarious.

An intuition that the master might have acquired another slave.

But that was, literally, just intuition.

Perhaps it could be called a woman's intuition.

It might simply have been due to poor condition or the loneliness caused by the reduced concentration of the master’s saliva in her body.

Therefore, she couldn’t be certain of her bad premonition, and that uncertainty turned toward the women around Balkan.

"......"

Denshi silently gasped in shock.

Women who were dead drunk collapsed next to Balkan.

Cow woman. Heavily armored bun-head woman. Cat woman. Harpy woman. Human woman. Little girl woman. Slime woman. Woman. Woman. Woman!

Wherever she looked, it was all women.

But if you thought about it, it wasn’t surprising.

In dangerous professions like being an adventurer, women naturally formed the majority, and Eden was a place where only those of at least mid-rank among adventurers could come.

‘Now that I think about it, it was all women the last time too⋯’

It was only natural that most of the master’s party members were women.

On usual days, it might have bothered her slightly but she would have let it pass, yet for some reason today, the feeling was off.

‘Danger⋯’

Denshi, knowing Balkan’s bare face, swallowed nervously.

Fortunately, he always wore a helmet, but if the other party members were to see Balkan’s bare face?

Denshi knew its devastating power.

After all, there was a time when she had lost her mind over it and could think of nothing but assaulting her master.

It wasn’t something that could be endured with reason or friendship.

She could vividly imagine trusted party members suddenly turning and attempting a collective assault, leaving her master hurt.

‘Although my master isn’t someone who would be easily overpowered⋯’

As someone who serves, worrying about him was inevitable.

Moreover, in Eden, men weren’t always treated well.

“Is he drunk?”

“Whoa⋯ Look at those arms⋯ Are you sure he’s just drunk?”

People gazed at the master’s body with ominous expressions.

It was obvious they were plotting something.

With men being rare, lust starved individuals acted that way.

Long-unfulfilled, sticky desires would naturally turn toward a man passed out drunk on the street.

Click!

“Eek! Hey! Are you crazy?! Put that crossbow away!”

“Shut up. Back off!”

Denshi growled like a madwoman, aiming a crossbow at those leering at her master. The vultures reluctantly retreated, swallowing their disappointment.

After driving off the ominous hyenas, Denshi quickly approached her master.

She had to wake him and take him to a safe place. Staying here could lead to an unexpected attack.

“Master. Please wake–”

Thump!

A hand grabbed hers as she reached for Balkan.

Squeeze!

A powerful grip tightened around her wrist.

Denshi’s gaze turned toward the one who restrained her.

“Do not touch the consort carelessly.”

Denshi frowned at the strength displayed by the slightly thin and youthful-looking girl.

And instinctively, she realized it. Her intuition sounded the alarm.

“It’s you, isn’t it?”

“What are you talking about?”

“The master’s new slave.”

At those words, Belle’s expression became wide-eyed.

Her hostility turned into a questioning look.

“How did you⋯ figure that out?”

There was no clear answer she could give. It was pure intuition.

But, if there was one thing she was sure of⋯

“I am the master’s first slave.”

By now, Denshi even felt a strange pride in that fact.

Belle understood the meaning behind Denshi’s words and hardened her expression.

–What the hell. Don’t you dare act up. How dare some newbie try to take my place?

That was the impression, slightly exaggerated.

Or perhaps not so different after all.

The two slaves glared at each other with hardened faces.

Denshi’s hand moved toward her crossbow and knife, while Belle’s mouth began to open.

“Oh, is it Denshi?”

“Ugh⋯?!”

Click!

In a drunken tone, Balkan tugged on the leash around Denshi’s neck.

Squeeze!

The slave, yanked abruptly, was drawn into her master’s embrace.

Denshi’s heart dropped.

“Gasp, huff, M-Master⋯?”

“Yes, yes. Fancy meeting you here again. Been a while.”

Balkan, happily drunk, tugged at the leash around Denshi’s neck while roughly ruffling her hair.

Thump. Thump.

The reassuring heartbeat of his solid, sturdy pectoral muscles resonated in her ears.

The thick, intoxicating pheromones of a dominant female filled the air.

His rough hand tousled her hair.

An arm that pulled the leash to just the right intensity.

A grip familiar in strength and hold.

It felt as though not only the leash on her neck but also the leash in her heart had been seized completely.

With just one gesture, he had imprinted the difference between master and servant.

As she soaked in her master’s dependable touch, the sharp wariness in Denshi’s heart melted away.

“Say hello. She’s your junior.”

At Balkan’s words, Denshi’s gaze turned toward Belle.

“Junior⋯?”

“Belle, you should greet your senior, too.”

“⋯⋯”

The two women, with their master at the center, stared blankly at each other until Belle bowed her head slightly and extended her hand to Denshi.

Her posture in the consort embrace was natural.

There wasn’t a trace of hostility in her demeanor, and the leash on her neck only emphasized the difference between the ruler and the ruled.

“I didn’t realize this woman was serving consort. Let us work together for his glory.”

“Oh, uh⋯”

Caught off guard, Denshi took Belle’s outstretched hand.

For a moment, she felt flustered by the sense of respect, but then, Belle’s words brought her sudden realization.

A slave exists to serve her master.

A slave’s purpose is to be her master’s faithful limbs.

But what had she been doing until now?

She had left for training to protect her master but hadn’t been there when he walked the path of hardship.

What was the point of becoming stronger if her master disappeared?

Up to now, her actions had no meaning.

It wasn’t about becoming stronger but about protecting her master.

“⋯Yes. Together. For the master.”

While losing her status as the only slave was bittersweet, her master’s safety came first.

Having realized this, Denshi’s sharp gaze softened as she firmly shook Belle’s hand.

Belle felt the same.

The disheveled black-haired woman before her seemed deeply loyal to the consort.

For the creation of a more bountiful world of indulgence, the consort needed to grow even stronger. Only then could she also regain her original strength.

It would be good to have even one more competent pawn by the consort side.

“Exactly. For the consort!”

“For the master!”

United by a common goal, the two slaves quickly bonded, smiling in satisfaction as they firmly held each other’s hands.

Balkan watched the scene with contentment.

It seemed they would get along without causing trouble.

Now, the remaining issue was⋯

“Heh.”

Someone chuckled while staring at Denshi.

[Inter■t LV.6■]
[Currently, the blessings held by Intert■ ■■: ■ items]

Intertt.

A figure who is like a mentor to Denshi and follows the puppeteer, referring to them with reverence.

From the cloak she wore, four mechanical arms emerged.

Alongside them were four swords attached to her waist and back.

One pair of arms crossed over her chest, another rested at her waist, and the last one positioned itself near a sword handle, ready to draw at any moment.

Her movements, both wary of her surroundings and defensive, flowed naturally, like water.

"Should I say it's been a while? Intertt."

"With this face, we would have only passed by each other briefly, yet you recognized me so well."

"I'm quite sharp, you see."

"Kuh..."

Intertt smirked faintly, running a hand over her face.

*Shhhh.*

Intertt, who had the blessing of disguise, began shifting her face to resemble someone else stored in memory.

Her appearance changed to that of an ordinary woman whom Balkan had once encountered at Zirnier's workshop.

Of course, neither the face she was now showing nor the one just moments before was likely her true face.

"When I looked like this, I never told you my name."

"I happened to get a chance to hear it."

"A chance... Could that chance be the creature clinging to your side now?"

*Rub, rub.*

Intertt's gaze shifted to Denshi, who was snugly pressed against a pectoral muscle, subtly rubbing her cheek against it.

Denshi’s gaze also turned toward Intertt.

"I told him about it. It wasn’t that big of a deal, right? Mentor?"

"...…"

At Denshi's words, Intertt shook her head, exasperated, as though looking at a mischievous, uncontrollable child.

"...You really like Balkan, don't you? I've heard plenty about you."

"From Denshi?"

"...That's one way to think about it."

Balkan tilted his head slightly, puzzled by Intertt's ambiguous response.

It was a curious answer.

*‘After all, there wouldn’t be anyone besides Denshi who could tell him about me... Ah.’*

No, there was one more.

The puppeteer.

During their time in the Outlaws’ Zone, they had encountered something akin to the puppeteer’s possessed forms—

"…What?"

Balkan turned his attention to Intertt, who was now staring into empty space with a puzzled expression.

"Suddenly, what are you… Is that really true…?"

The wary expression she had just moments ago completely crumbled, replaced with confusion and astonishment.

She was gazing into the void, conversing with someone unseen.

It felt as though she was using a long-distance communication artifact or a blessing.

"...Phew…"

As if the communication had ended, Intertt let out a sigh while looking down at the ground, then turned back to face Balkan.

"Suddenly, but I have a proposal, Balkan."

"...A proposal?"

"...Yes."

*Swish.*

Intertt gestured toward something.

Her trained finger stopped, pointing somewhere specific. Naturally, everyone’s gaze followed it.

At the end of her gesture was Denshi, looking bewildered.

"…Me?"

"From now on."

Before the abruptly pointed-at Denshi could voice her confusion, Intertt’s lips parted.

"Make that wench reach her peak as a female."