**Chapter 265: Who are you? (5)**

Earth Mother Goddess Order, Eden Branch.

Even here, where available resources were more limited than on the ground in Valerus, the pure white temple stood tall.

It was only natural, being one of the most influential forces in this labyrinth city, but it was truly difficult not to exclaim in admiration at the majestic building.

While admiring the temple that seemed to fill one with faith just by looking at it, I asked.

"What kind of person is Louis Jellicy? I only know their name."

In response to my question, Beer and Hope explained while rubbing their chins.

"They oversee the Eden branch of the Earth Goddess Order, successor to Senior Bishop Coolid. Oh, and additionally, they're a lion beastkin."

"...A lion beastkin, you say?"

"Yes! They're a person with beautiful, lush golden fur who is both beautiful and brave!"

A lion beastkin. It was unexpected information.

As evident from Serif and Hitolis, the Earth Goddess Order had a surprisingly high ratio of beastkin. Especially feline beastkin.

"Although they're currently a mid-rank bishop, in just a few more years, they might follow behind Serif, who became the youngest and most recent high-rank priest."

Louis Jellicy must have quite a good reputation within the temple, as Hope and Beer continued with sparkling eyes.

"Moreover, as a personality that values gratitude, they even asked a swordsman who saved their life in the labyrinth to become their guard paladin!"

"Hmm. Priest Hope. Are you perhaps talking about Giltear?"

"Yes!"

"Certainly, Ms. Giltear's skill with a rapier is amazing, but honestly, I find her rather off-putting. It's like she's difficult to approach... No matter how skilled she is or how much trust she receives from Jellicy, something about her feels suspicious."

"Isn't that simply because Ms. Giltear is prettier than you, Beer?!"

"......"

Beer, who was already rumored to like Hope by the Amel party, maintained silence for a moment, then cleared her throat and continued.

"Ahem. Anyway, Jellicy is a veteran bishop who has experience going down to the lower entrance. I've accompanied Jellicy several times when they went on expeditions. They're someone you can fully trust."

However, the words of the two followers became suspicious the moment I sensed the faint magi at the door.

[Kuk. As expected of those who believe in the likes of the Earth Mother Goddess. Both their eyes and noses for smelling are completely messed up.]

Bunny snorted in derision, mocking Hope and Bier, but I couldn't bring myself to blame them.

'Hope and Beer told me the truth.'

I couldn't detect any of the unstable gazes or gestures typical of those who tell lies in their behavior.

Everything they told me was sincere, coming from their hearts.

It was a pure answer, not thinking at all that someone hiding magi had infiltrated the temple. Moreover,

'If I hadn't raised my Finesse, I wouldn't have noticed the magi at all.'

It was quite different in texture from the magi I had encountered so far.

For example, the Elder Lich or the demon worshipper Gott who worshipped anger.

Unlike that sticky magi that caused disgust and revulsion just by encountering it, and instinctively felt unpleasant.

The magi emanating from the reception room where Louis Jellicy and their guard paladin were said to be gave the impression that such disgust and repulsive energy had been thoroughly excluded.

In terms of scent, it was colorless and odorless.

Not a clean absence of scent, but closer to the feeling of numerous fragrances overlapping to numb the sense of smell.

Even I, whose Finesse stat was approaching 30 and whose perception ability had greatly increased, only felt a sense of discomfort, so ordinary people probably wouldn't have noticed at all.

But on my back now was Bunny, who had absorbed the magi of sloth and had several additional abilities strengthened... for instance, a stronger sense of smell for detecting magi.

[They've hidden the magi well, but they still couldn't escape the limitations of a lesser being.]

Her mockery added certainty to my feeling of discomfort.

'In there is a minion of a demon worshipper.'

I had come with a light heart, but now the situation had changed and I made a small resolution internally.

Perhaps a battle might break out here.

Creeeeak—

Finally, as Beer opened the door, the scene of the reception room came into view.

It was a reception room that gave a neat and luxurious atmosphere like Serif's secret lesson room.

My eyes fell on a golden-haired lion beastkin sitting on the sofa next to the table, and a woman with green eyes standing behind her as if guarding.

After examining the golden-haired lion beastkin sitting on the sofa, I tilted my head inwardly.

[Louis Jellicy LV.46]

[Current blessings and curses possessed by Louis Jellicy: 4]

'...What is this?'

Something was strange.

"Grrrr...! Finally, you've come!"

The golden-haired lion beastkin, wearing a neat priest's robe and making beast-like sounds with every breath, approached me.

Louis Jellicy removed their gloves and extended a hand to me.

"A bishop who will become the brave light of the great Earth Mother Goddess Order. I am Louis Jellicy! Grrrr!"

I stared blankly at the hand that was no different from an actual lion's, with a much higher animal ratio than an ordinary beastkin.

"Grrrr. Are you perhaps a racist who doesn't shake a beastkin's hand?"

"Ah, no, that's not it. I'm Balkan."

Feeling somewhat bewildered by the atmosphere that was quite different from what I had expected, I shook her beast-like hand.

Then Louis Jellicy raised the corners of her mouth and squeezed my hand firmly.

A grip strength that was hard to believe from a bishop with almost no combat ability.

'...With this grip strength, she'd be right below Jubeel.'

Although Jubeel, who handled the swift sword technique, had more technique stat than strength, she had above-average strength even among mid-rank explorers.

It was certainly surprising for a bishop to have such strength.

Could she perhaps have strengthened herself with a miracle?

"...Hoho? Your expression doesn't change at all."

"Should I pretend to be in pain?"

"What did you say? Grrrrrrrr!"

When I calmly asked if she had expected me to show pain while holding my hand, Jellicy howled in a boisterous voice.

Seeing her grab their stomach and lean backward, it seemed like she was laughing hard.

"Grrrr! Beer's words weren't completely nonsense after all! I was honestly half-skeptical when she said you caught an Elder Lich that handles magi on your own!"

"When did I ever talk nonsense? I only spoke the truth."

In response to Beer's retort, Louis Jellicy laughed heartily again and looked at me.

"Grrrrrrrr! I'm sorry. I couldn't contain my curiosity. I squeezed your hand as a sort of test, but I never expected this kind of reaction! The strength I felt was extraordinary! You have an incredible body!"

"Um... thank you?"

Setting aside how to take body compliments from a bishop, it was a much more positive reaction than expected.

And above all.

'I can't feel any magi.'

I couldn't feel a speck of magi from the bishop in front of me.

[It's not that one.]

Bunny murmured slowly to me as I was puzzled.

[It's that one over there.]

"Grrrr! Giltear! What do you think of this fellow?! In my opinion, he seems quite good!"

Louis Jellicy turned around and asked.

Only then did my gaze turn to the other person in this space, the red-haired, green-eyed guard paladin who was protecting Louis Jellicy from behind.

[Cleassia LV.52]

[Current blessings and curses possessed by Cleassia: 5]

She, with a name completely different from the one Jellicy called her, stared at me with green eyes.

[Despite trying hard to hide it, the stench of a follower of envy is wafting strongly to me. Look. That woman is targeting me.]

More precisely, me and Bunny whom I was carrying on my back.

A gaze that seemed to say, 'Why is that thing here, and why is it with you?'

I've seen that gaze before.

When I first met Belle, the worshipper of gluttony, I saw that expression then too.

Cleassia, who quickly erased her surprised expression, spoke in a polite voice.

"...Indeed, he's an interesting person."

"Right? I thought you would think so! You pretend to be indifferent, but you like tests of strength! Grrrrrrrr!"

Cleassia, who approached me past the heartily laughing Jellicy, naturally extended her hand.

"I am Giltear. With Jellicy—"

"It's a connection we've maintained for over 2 years already! Grrrrrrrr!"

"Haha. Yes. Well... that's right."

Cleassia, who introduced herself as Giltear, smiled awkwardly at Louis Jellico’s words, but.

Her green eyes were watching only for my reaction, without a trace of laughter.

"...I'm Balkan."

I answered in the calmest voice possible.

As I naturally shook her hand and checked Cleassia's status window, my suspicion became certainty.

[◆ Blessing of the Three Pieces of Envy]

— You can induce emotions in targets who think deeply of you.

— However, it is limited to three targets who have affection for you.

[◆ Blessing of Deception]

— You can store up to five appearances.

— You can change your appearance according to the stored appearances.

— Maximum usage 3 times per month. Remaining uses: 2.

Most of it would have been censored if I were as I was before catching the Elder Lich, but thanks to my significantly increased level, some of the blessings and curses she possessed were exposed nakedly.

'It wasn't Jellicy.'

The one harboring the magi of envy is this woman and, the moment I recalled her name, a spark flew in my mind.

'I've heard it somewhere.'

I remember seeing the name Cleassia in none other than in the notebook Serif gave me.

—Please find a person for me.

A mysterious individual with numerous aliases and faces, whom Serif had asked me to report if I ever encountered.

—She was the successor to the high bishop who brought me to the temple, but now as you can see... she's a foolish one who has fallen into the path of corruption.

Someone who was once highly regarded but now has fallen to be treated as trash even by outlaws who are considered trash in the labyrinth city.

A person whose alias was on the Explorer Union's wanted list.

'...This is truly messed up.'

Such a person had gained the trust of a mid-rank bishop with various expectations... and secured the position of guard paladin.

It meant she was openly spying, relying only on the Blessing of Deception, which could change appearances.

Of course. In a normal situation, there would be no way to discover her blessing or alias...

Cleassia, who felt the grip strength of my hand and smiled grimly, said.

"I've heard rumors many times, but this is the first time meeting you in person."

"You've heard rumors about me?"

"I've been consistently hearing stories ever since Balkan came to Eden a few months ago. The prodigy who is the disciple of the great Idelbert and single-handedly annihilated an outlaw clan."

"I was just lucky."

"Haha. How could that be done with luck? It's all impossible without your excellence. How it's possible... I'm really, really curious about many things. I'd love to have a time to talk honestly with you, Balkan."

"...Haha. I welcome that."

I nodded outwardly, but there was no chance that this criminal's wish would actually come true.

Cleassia And I held each other's hands tightly, having such a conversation with expressionless faces.

"Grrrr. What, what is it with you two? Did you fall in love at first sight?"

Taking advantage of the confused Jellicy who noticed the subtle atmosphere between me and Cleassia.

I rummaged through my pocket and pressed the button on the notebook Serif had given me.

-Zzzzing.

With a small vibration, a signal that an enemy had been found was transmitted to Serif.

"Nate Elin."

"Yes! Serif!"

"Prepare for departure."

Serif, holding a wand, glared at the labyrinth with cold eyes.

The location from which the tracking device and security bell she had given him sent a signal was the Eden branch of the Earth Goddess Order.

Serif knew very well what that meant.

Sincerely hoping for his safety, she commanded in an icy cold voice.

"We're going to execute a renegade who has abandoned her faith."