**Chapter 39: Farewell, Meeting (3)**

"Deal⋯Yes?"

I muttered in confusion, and the woman waved her hand impassively.

"You're too embarrassed to say it. Maybe you are. I'm a woman, too, so I get it."

No, that's bullshit.

"That's not what my relationship with Diana is."

I didn't have a physical relationship with Diana.

Diana? Of course I’m attracted to her.

To be honest, I still often think about the time I squeezed her breast.

I remember the feel of her large breasts, leaving wrinkles in her gray dress, and the soft moans that would escape her lips.

Diana's toy? I'd welcome it. If I could, I would.

‘But I can't.’

I must look to the future. I have a firm goal: to find my sister. To accomplish that goal, brute force is the least I can do.

If I allow myself to be swallowed up by lust like that while I'm still floundering as a junior explorer, I'll never progress.

If, indeed, if, I ever have a relationship with Diana.

I'd wake up in bed with her, stretching, making small talk, eating delicious meals, running an inn together, going on the occasional fun date, playing gambling until I passed out every night, and having enough babies to make a soccer team.

That kind of life would be nice and I'd be happy.

I'm sure I'll miss my sister every night when the clock strikes dawn and I'll regret it.

I'll wonder why I didn't try harder to find her then.

At least I didn't want to regret it then.

The woman's expression raised a question in response to my answer.

"Hmm? Is that so? Considering Diana's curse, I thought she was going to use you as a toy. I must be mistaken."

She has no filter.

‘Diana's curse?’

I asked, very curious.

"No way. You know about the curse on Diana?"

I had a status window, but it was filtered due to the level difference, so I didn't know the details of Diana's blessings and curses. I only had a rough idea of the number.

The woman nodded absently, then turned back to me.

"You don't know what curse Diana has?"

"Yes."

The woman's question seemed to be answered. She was still expressionless, but I sensed a subtle change.

"Well. It didn't make sense for a man, let alone a woman, to be around Diana, knowing her curse."

At this point, I had a question.

What kind of curse did she have that made her think I was a sex toy the moment she saw me? And what was her reaction?

"Aren't you a friend of Diana's?"

"Not so much a friend as a former party member. Until she got cursed and had to retire for the baby."

The woman in front of me was indeed a former party member of Diana's. Someone who knew her from her days as an explorer!

But that wasn't the point right now.

"Now, wait a minute. A baby? A baby?"

"Yeah."

"⋯Diana has a baby?!"

Diana was married? I didn't see a wedding ring or anything on her hand.

But the color radiating from her whole body far exceeded that of a beautiful woman with a child, so it was strangely convincing.

I was dizzy with shock.

"Ah. You must have misunderstood. It’s not Diana's child. She adopted the daughter of a dead party member and is raising her."

Fortunately, the woman was quick to correct my misunderstanding.

Diana's party member died of mysterious causes.

Diana adopted the daughter, who had lost both parents in one fell swoop, and raised her as her foster daughter.

"So it's a foster mother and foster daughter relationship.

It made sense, even if I thought about it for a moment, especially since Zernier had just told me a few months ago that Diana was a virgin who had never held a man's hand.

"Phew.”

I let out an involuntary sigh of relief.

I wasn't exactly sure why I felt this way, but a deep sense of relief rose up inside me.

At the same time, it made me feel even more admiring of Diana.

Adopting and raising a child after the death of a party member is not something most people would do.

For me, who had just had my second party, it seemed impossible.

‘If only Diana had been mine.’

Abandoned by my parents and raised in an orphanage with my younger sister, I had always fantasized about having a parental figure.

If a woman like Diana had been my parent and had opened the way for me, I would have had a better life.

Of course, it's a meaningless fantasy.

"I haven't seen her since she was sent to the Academy, so I don't know how their relationship is now. But enough about that, let's get to the point."

Diana's adopted daughter was apparently at the Academy now, which is why I hadn't seen her during her stay at the inn.

I became even more curious about Diana's backstory, but the woman didn't seem to care.

"Would you like to take my lessons?"

She offered again.

"I can make you hard and big."

For a moment, the woman's body came into view.

'⋯Surely⋯'

I guess if I let my guard down, I could get hard and big but aside from that, I looked at the woman with a doubtful expression.

She didn't look like she was trying to flirt and was still expressionless.

⋯No, I honestly don't know. The ‘sex toy’ declaration was too shocking.

"When you say "the teachings," which teachings are you referring to?"

So I just asked her outright. Was my head stuck in the gutter from all the shocking statements and wordings?

It sounded like she was trying to teach me how to have sex, and I was confused as to what she was trying to teach me.

"The only thing a warrior teaches a warrior is how to fight. I'm going to teach you how to fight."

"Why would you suddenly want to teach me that?"

"Because you sensed it."

The woman pointed her finger at me.

"You were freaking out, weren't you?"

"No, I wasn't."

When I first made eye contact with the woman, I felt something visceral, but it wasn't a jolt.

I was just surprised by the sudden sensation of almost dying.

I wouldn't say I freaked out, but more like I twitched.

"Don't lie to me. I saw you pull the axe out of your pocket."

"⋯⋯"

The woman laughed, a rare, bloodcurdling laugh. The corners of her mouth lifted ever so slightly from her usually expressionless face. Even her tail wagged, and it looked like she was really smiling.

My face, on the other hand, was rotting in the opposite direction. Never in my life have I ever been teased for being a dork.

I wanted to teach her a lesson for this humiliation someday.

Even if I can't do it now and even if I can't imagine it.

"Don't be ashamed. On the contrary, you should be proud. It's a great thing that you felt my energy at your level in the first place."

I vaguely understood what the woman was saying.

Just as a third-rate swordsman would not be enlightened by looking at a Swordmaster's sword path, the difference in levels would be too overwhelming for them to sense any danger.

'However, I sensed the mysterious energy that the woman had sown and reacted immediately.’

I guess that's what intrigued her.

-Meow.

A cat's meow came from somewhere. Suddenly, a black cat appeared, climbing up the woman's toned body and perched on her shoulder.

The woman casually unfolded the paper the cat was clutching, and a slight smile creased her face as she spoke to me. The black tail thrashed on the floor like a whip.

"Tsk. Guess I'd better get going. I was going to grab a beer."

Her scowl widened slightly from her original expressionless face.

Her expression was stern, but she looked like an office worker who had been ordered back to work because something had gone wrong on the way home.

Given her level, I realized she was probably an executive, not just an office worker.

‘No, maybe more than that.’

"Disciple, you have talent. Look for Idelbert at the Explorers' Union tomorrow morning. Tell them the name and they'll know."

"No, I haven't even accepted yet."

I didn't finish my sentence, and she was gone in a flash. She was a woman of her own accord.

Her first name was Idelbert. Her last name is Adeline, like Serif.

She has a tail but no cat ears, so it's hard to tell if she's feline or human.

I'm her pupil from now on, and she’s a strange, powerful woman who says what she wants to say.

As an added bonus, she has a way with words that seems to come out of her mouth without any filtering in her brain.

"Before I go."

And then Idelbert appeared in front of me again as if she had forgotten to tell me something.

She gestured to a piece of paper taped to the inn’s door.

"If you wish to preserve your manhood, I recommend that you do not enter that place for the next three days."

"What?"

‘But I'm an employee here.’

A piece of paper with the words "Closed for the next week" written on it. The date made it look like it was written four days ago. Three days to go.

Apart from that, Idelbert's words were quite contradictory.

Shouldn't I be staying at Diana's inn to keep my sanity in this dangerous labyrinth city?

"You still don't understand, apprentice, listen carefully."

Idelbert looked at my dumbfounded expression, then continued with her characteristic expressionless face.

"The cursed Diana is the most dangerous female in this labyrinth city."

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- If you want to live as Diana's sex toy for the rest of your life, I won't stop you.

With those words, Idelbert left.

I thought for a moment about Idelbert's offer to become her apprentice, made my own decision and returned to reality.

Perhaps she had scared me unnecessarily, but Diana's inn, which had always enveloped me in its warmth, had been transformed into the dungeon where the final boss slept.

‘Should I go in or not?’

I opened the status window to check my newfound blessing and after a moment of deliberation, I made my decision.