**Chapter 43: Disciple (which means a growth-type sex toy) (2)**

Half the world is dark.

A shimmering darkness, like a mixture of latex and leather, obscured half the world in front of me.

Combined with the limited vision of my helmet, all I could see was the right half of the world.

It felt like a strange heat. A humid, sticky heat.

I sniffed and smelled a scent that made me dizzy.

It rose and fell a little with each breath, often flinching and shuddering, and then crashing against my helmet like a warm steamed bun that had spread, blocking my view completely.

I watched it for a while and then opened my mouth.

“These are unfamiliar breasts…”

"You're awake."

A casual voice with no sign of exhaustion came from above.

I'm exhausted but how can she be so well by herself?

"You don't know how to exert yourself at all, you just swing as hard as you can like an unintelligent beast."

"That's because that's usually how I get a one-hit kill with an axe⋯"

"Do you think you can send me to the ground with a single blow?"

"⋯No way."

"I see. You should have known what you were up against and hunted differently."

That’s right.

"The physical ability is there, but the technique is nowhere to be found. If there were an objective score for technique, you'd be a zero."

‘How did you know⋯!’

[Nam Soo-jin LV.12]

[Stamina:(8+10) Strength:(7+10) Agility:(7+10) Wisdom:(0) Finesse:(0)]

[Free Points: 0]

As expected, experienced explorers have a different sense of perspective.

 My level has risen dramatically since the Hobgoblin Village explosion, and I'm up to the fourth floor.

'It's a shame I didn't have the opportunity to save my free points⋯'

At the time, I was so desperate to survive that I invested in the stats I needed right away after I leveled up, and in hindsight, I regretted the lack of Finesse.

I lifted my head and removed my helmeted head from Idelbert's lap.

"⋯But why did you give me a knee pillow?"

"Because the floor is uncomfortable, and when you've passed out from exhaustion, you need to be as comfortable as possible."

I see. I fainted in the duel with Idelbert.

Ten shots? I could have had thirty and not landed a single one.

That short duel was much harder than fighting dozens of hobgoblins, in fact, it was hardly a duel at all.

One simple punch from Idelbert and I was knocked out.

Even though we were supposed to be fighting with similar specs, the difference in movement was vast. Or should I say, different stances.

'I expected a gap, but⋯'

I didn't think I'd be able to touch her.

'Does she think I can be as strong as her?’

I'm honestly skeptical. The power of Idelbert's strength was phenomenal. I couldn't imagine a future where I could be as strong as her.

I jumped to my feet, axe in hand.

I didn’t have the luxury of time to dawdle. If I have time to dawdle, I'll swing the axe one more time.

"One more time. Can we duel?"

"I like challenges. Very curious. But."

Idelbert gestured to my battle axe with her hand.

"That one. Are you going to keep it?"

The axe. At first, I'd just grabbed whatever I could find when I fell into the goblin lair.

I've been using it ever since because I'm so good with it.

"A mere axe will eventually reach its limits. The simple reach alone is far inferior to a sword or spear, and it doesn't harden with age like a fist. You don't need to be attached to such a weapon."

"I'm not necessarily obsessed, it's just that, like you said, I don't have any finesse, so I use what I can wield."

"Hmm⋯ I see."

I'd love to learn how to wield a sword or spear or something, but it was clear from the start that I didn't have that kind of skill based on my finesse stats.

I'm also intrigued by Deluna's magic, but I'm afraid it's probably beyond my wits.

In that regard, axes and other blunt weapons were an excellent choice. All I needed to do was make good contact and wield it with brute physicality.

A strong body is a great weapon on its own.

Just like Idelbert, who used her flesh and fists as a weapon of immense power.

"That gives me an idea of how to teach you."

Idelbert hesitates for a moment, then points at me. It's her signal to fight.

"Will you?"

"Come quickly."

I immediately raised my axe and lunged at Idelbert.

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‘Too inexperienced.’

That's what Idelbert thought as she watched the axe swing in front of her.

The axe, clenched tightly in his hand, swung straight and true without hesitation, but that was all. There was nothing special about it beyond that.

No paint, no softening, just an honest blow with full power.

It's a great strike, if you limit it to simply cutting down monsters or trees that are easy targets.

In a "real battle" with all the hand-to-hand combat that entails, it's just a stupid way to drain your stamina quickly.

-Boo-boo-boo!

She dodges with a slight shake of her head. The axe misses, and he immediately aims for a second strike.

And that's when Idelbert realized that his grip on the axe had loosened slightly.

His arm, tense as a virgin's for his first time, relaxed a little, whereas before, he was swinging his axe with a rigid motion of flailing arms.

-Boom.

This time, it was a more concise swing, with a bit of ease.

Idelbert dodged a little faster this time.

The axe immediately drops to the lower left and swings diagonally toward the upper right.

Bung-!

A much simpler and cleaner axe strike than the second. However, he uses his entire body to pack more power than before.

'One word of advice, three axe strokes, and the problem is fixed.’

This was quite remarkable, even if the simple axe strokes did not contain the intricacies of the sword-like martial arts.

The first duel confirmed that the student didn't have any particular skill with the weapon, but the change was nevertheless remarkable.

'He had begun to gain more and more control over his body.’

Idelbert read the aura and information radiating from her apprentice's entire body.

He was excited for the battle at hand but he didn't seem to be moving with the control of a single muscle fiber.

If he had to think about every detail, he couldn't react this quickly.

In other words, he was doing everything instinctively.

‘If only I could control that body to my will.’

-Gulp.

Idelbert swallowed hard.

Her apprentice was brilliant and talented, but inexperienced and immature.

‘If I can give them a taste of proper intense combat and sparring, and mix in a spoonful of my own preference for martial arts...It might be possible.'

Idelbert's lower stomach rumbled slightly. Her leotard tightened slightly as her womb quivered in anticipation.

-Kaaaaang!

"Crazy."

Nam Soo-Jin paled and stared at the axe dented along Idelbert's waistline.

Idelbert, who had so far dodged or deflected every axe blow, suddenly stopped.

"Apprentice."

"Ah, yes. Master."

"From now on, you will come here every morning, except on the day you go to the Labyrinth and the day before."

Idelbert's words made Nam Soo-jin pause.

Every day was a bit hectic. In the evenings, he has to help Diana with the tavern.

“Well, if you want to get stronger at a snail's pace like a slug, I won’t stop you from coming every other day.”

But I fell for that cheap provocation. "Yeah. I'll sleep less.”

The truth is, this kind of training is best practiced as a daily routine.

And best of all, it's for my own good. The more time I spend practicing, the faster I grow.

"Can I come tomorrow?"

"Sure. For today, let's stay another hour just to get a taste."

"Ah. By the way, is that axe-"

"Axe? Throw it over there. I'll get you a better one later. And from now on⋯"

-Pfft!

Idelbert slammed her fists together, and a tremendous shockwave exploded out and filled the training room.

“It’s time for martial arts sparring.”

Nam Soo-Jin saw Idelbert approaching with her tail flicking like a whip and sensed that something was wrong.

"I'll teach you the 'real battle'."

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The leg didn't move properly. Not just my legs. None of my limbs are moving the way I want them to.

"Don't be silly. You used an advanced potion, it should have healed those bruises."

"No, I mean, I can't even walk⋯?"

Surprisingly, it wasn't a bruise or injury, but muscle pain.

I'm not kidding, I can't even stand on the ground.

I tried to walk, but my thighs immediately wobbled and I fell to the ground.

I hadn't felt this much muscle pain since the first time I went out for a run, so it was quite a shock.

But I stayed positive.

I thought to myself, "This means I've gained a lot of dueling experience today.”

The biggest thing I lack now is experience and knowledge.

Until now, I had been able to overpower any opponent quickly thanks to my boosted stats and enhanced cognitive abilities from my helmet, but I couldn't expect this to always be the case.

If I'm inexperienced in combat and face an opponent with similar stats, I'll start to lose ground, and if I face an opponent with the same stats, I'll struggle.

In that sense, it was a good choice to make a master-disciple relationship with Idelbert.

I'll be able to gain quality combat experience in the future, although it's a bit much.

“We're here. But you managed to calm Diana down. For her to regain her senses after going berserk...”

"I had my methods."

Idelbert was very surprised that Diana had regained her senses and opened the inn.

After carrying me around her waist to the inn, Idelbert opened the door and entered.

"Ah. Welcome, Se⋯e⋯"

I locked eyes with Diana, who was wiping down the tables in preparation for the evening's business.

Her eyes traveled to Idelbert's hand on my stomach, and then to my trembling limbs.

-Poof.

The dishcloth in Diana's hand fell to the floor and I felt a strange sense of déjà vu at that moment.

'I'm sure I'll be in a similar situation to this one day⋯'

Diana's gaze shifted upward from me to Idelbert, who was hugging me.

"It's been a while. How'd the runaway go, Diana? I borrowed your staff. Oh, and this one. He's my apprentice from now on. Every day from now on."

I remembered.

Her reaction was similar to the one she had one day when I brought Grumpy to the inn.

But Deanna's reaction now, it was nothing compared to then.

-Kaaaaaah!

Something flashed behind Diana's back, and Idelbert's reaction was instantaneous.

-Pfft!

"Thud!"

I fell to the ground and looked around dazedly.

"⋯What the hell, where did you both go?"

What the hell just happened?

After a moment of panic, I glanced back, and my mouth dropped open.

"Crazy⋯"

A giant ice pick, dozens of meters tall, soared into the sky.

It was stuck at the entrance of the inn.