

Esper 411

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Chapter 411: Sealing Maria's Lips

While Rudy was eating dinner, a thought suddenly crossed his mind that filled him with regret.

'If I had realized this sooner, or if such an event had happened sooner, I would have made more progress. Now Lucy is with us, and Joe will also return from his business trip in a few days.

If I had been alone with mom like all these years, there was a high chance that I would have already done something to her. Well, no such thing happened in the past life, so I have no idea how all this is going to work out.'

Rudy promised himself that he wouldn't waste time or wait for some 'opportunity' to make progress with the girls. He didn't want to regret it later like he was at that moment, but it still left him with an unanswered question.

'How many girls?' Rudy was a teenager like any other, and who wouldn't want multiple beauties clinging to them?

Rudy's presence and his domineering aura were enough for them to submit themselves to him. But of course, that only worked on those who could feel his aura, which wasn't applicable to humans.

So far, the only girls in Rudy's harem were the ones he was already acquainted with one way or another, except Reina and Nyxia, whom he had never met in his past life.

His intentions were pure, but he was conflicted now that he could have as many girls as he wanted in his harem. Not that it mattered much to him since, in the end, it all came down to whether he loved or liked being around them.

After eating dinner, he washed the dishes with Lucy and went to his room to sleep after two days.

He spent the next day as usual and returned from school to prepare to leave for the underworld.

However, there was a big problem. He had no idea where to go.

Rudy looked at the underworld casino card, but it had no address. In fact, it had nothing major on it. Not his name, contact information, or even a picture. That made Rudy wonder how exactly that was important.

"Wait a minute..."

He activated his see-through ability and saw the hidden information on it.

"I see. Yeah, that makes sense for it to be like that."

RING~ RING!

Rudy's phone rang, but he knew who it was without even looking at it since only one person would call him at that hour.

He picked up the phone and said, "Yes, Maria?"

[Thank God, you picked up. I tried to contact you half an hour ago, but your phone was unreachable.]

'Yeah, because this pervert used up the battery.'

"Yeah, it was... out of battery. What's up? Why did you call me?" Rudy looked at the time and said, "There is still an hour left for the tournament, right?"

[Yeah, but since today is the first day, you will have to come early for the... well, formalities. Where are you right now? I will be waiting for you at my brother's casino. I will take you to the underworld with me in my car.]

Rudy quickly teleported near the casino and said, "Oh, I am there too. I was thinking of warming myself up by playing a few games in the casino before the tournament."

[We don't have time for that. Where are you? I can't see you.]

"Look behind you."

Maria turned around and saw Rudy standing there with a grin on his face.

Maria hung up the phone and quickly rushed to Rudy in a hurry.

"Come on, let's go."

"Okay."

She grabbed Rudy's hand and took him to the car parked in front of the casino.

"Oh!"

Rudy was expecting a limousine like the last time, but it was a different car.

"I just got this car as a gift from my father!" Maria said cheerfully and hugged Rudy in joy.

"The one you won in the bet?"

"Yes!"

It was a gorgeous-looking black Mercedes.

"It's... dazzling..." Rudy muttered. "Maybe I will get one too after finishing all the tournaments."

"Do you want me to buy one?" Maria asked gleefully.

"No."

"Why not? I want to thank you for everything you have done for me!" she insisted.

"And what have I exactly done for you? I don't remember anything."

Maria looked into Rudy's eyes before glancing around. Then, she looked past Rudy's shoulder and pushed him against the car.

"...?"

She pulled his face closer and kissed him on the lips as if it was her first and the last time she was kissing him.

She kissed him again after saying, "This is my punishment you asked for."

After a minute-long kiss, she hugged Rudy and said, "Don't leave me."

"I never said anything about leaving you, though."

"Once all the tournaments end, we won't meet each other again so often. And even if we do, nothing will change. I am going to miss this tournament week, and it's going to be the most memorable moment of my life," she said in a rather sad and low voice.

Rudy gently smacked Maria on the head and said, "No, you idiot. I know I have access to the underworld, so I can come and go any time."

"But you will be busy with your life, and I don't want to be annoying."

"Listen here." Rudy turned the table and pushed Maria against her car. Then, he moved his hand to her waist and trapped her in his grasp.

"I am listening."

"I feel the same as you. And when I tell you nothing will change, then I mean it."

"But... you are a normal citizen, and I am a mafia..." she murmured.

"And?"

"We live in different worlds! There are so many—"

Rudy shut Maria up by sealing her lips with his lips. He kissed her and kissed her again until Maria kissed him back.

"I thought you were the type of girl who would go to any length to get what she wants," Rudy commented.

Maria puckered her lips and said, "That's not me. That's my niece."

"Listen, you don't have to worry about anything. Just be yourself and enjoy your life. I am not a—"

HONK~ HONK!

The car suddenly honked, which surprised Rudy.

'It wasn't the alarm that rings when someone tries to unlock your car; it's the car's horn. But Maria is outside, so who...?'

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Chapter 412: Lilim || Land of Mafia

Rudy raised his brow in confusion and asked, "Who is in the car?"

"Umm.. my driver?"

"...I thought you were the one who drove the car..."

"No way. I don't even know the D of driving."

"Are you fine with that?" Rudy asked calmly. "The driver must have seen us kissing. What if he tells your brother or father?"

"Don't worry. It's a lady driver, and she is cool."

"Cool?"

"She won't snitch on me. She is my personal bodyguard as well, and I have already told her everything about you. And actually..."

Maria knocked on the window, and it rolled down.

"She also wanted to meet you."

Rudy looked at the lady driver and smiled nervously. It wasn't as though he cared if she had seen them kissing, but he didn't want his plan to fail.

If the lady driver ends up telling Rusher about this, then the rest of his plan will be ruined. Rudy wasn't ready to take such a risk, but he believed Maria and trusted her words.

The lady driver was wearing black glasses and a black suit. Her black hair seemed long, but she had knotted them on her head with a sharp pointy blade.

"My name is Lilim. I am 26 years old and single. Professionally trained in all sorts of hand-to-hand and weapon combats. I was an assassin before I was appointed as Lady Maria's bodyguard.

When she mentioned you for the first time, I thought you were taking advantage of her. Especially when she told me, she gave you the black card, but you colored me surprised. I saw your VIP tournament matches, and I was amazed.

I can see why Lady Maria likes you. She always loved gambling, so having someone with the same hobby as her must have been delightful. I will not tell you everything she said but rest assured, Lady Maria's happiness comes first for me.

I will keep it a secret that you are a male and you are having an affair with lady Maria. However!"

She frowned her face and continued, "If you ever made her cry, that will be your last day. I will find you from any corner of the world and give you the most painful death possible!"

"Lilim!" Maria slapped Lilim's mouth and yelled, "What do you think you are saying?! We finally managed to kiss, and you are trying to scare him!"

"Oh, don't worry." Rudy smiled gently and said, "I am not scared in the least. In fact, I like her."

Rudy shook hands with Lilim and said, "I have a feeling that we will get along well, Miss Lilim."

"I introduced myself, so now it's your turn."

"But Maria has already told me everything about me, right?"

"She told me everything 'she' knows. And she knows nothing about you," Lilim commented.

"My name is Rudy. I am... not single. I also happen to know a bit of fighting, and I apparently have super luck."

Rudy purposely made his introduction awkward as that was the best way to give the least amount of information.

"Well, you are a commoner, so I didn't expect anything from you," Lilim remarked. "Now, hop into the car, or Lady Maria will kill me for talking with you."

"Hmm?"

Maria and Rudy got into the backseat and sat comfortably beside each other.

Lilim turned on the car and began driving it while looking at Rudy from the rearview mirror.

"You don't look bad, to be honest. You are quite handsome, if I have to say. Now I am curious why Lady Maria took a liking to you. Was it because of your looks or because of your super luck?"

"It's none of that!" Maria punched Lilim's seat from behind and said, "I like him because of how he is!"

"Oh? Lady Maria, you still act like a kid. Why are you so gullible?"

"What do you mean?"

"You don't understand, huh?" Lilim sighed softly. Although she was talking with Maria while looking at Rudy from the rearview mirror, her attention was on the road, and she was driving properly.

"What are you talking about?" Maria asked with an annoyed look on her face.

"Anyone can pretend to be someone. They can act kind if they want, but they can be assholes from the inside. You should love someone for who they are. Humans are... nasty. They will act like a beggar when they need something and act like a master when they are done.

Of course, I am not saying that Master Rudy is that type of person, but you should genuinely grow mature. You are already twenty, and it's about time you learn how the world works.

You are a mafia, and you should act like one. You can't care for everyone, Lady Maria. But I guess your father and brother are also to be blamed. They kept you like a caged bird to protect you, but they never realized that the caged bird can't learn to fly."

"..." Rudy was even more curious about Lilim.

Typically, the bodyguards, drivers, and maids; in other words, the servants would keep their mouths shut and never dare to state their opinion unless otherwise asked.

Even Niti was the same, who never spoke against Jane, although their relationship was more like a mother and daughter rather than that of a maid and a master.

However, Lilim and Maria seemed different. To Rudy, they seemed more like sisters who teased each other but still cared for them and gave wisdom to them.

"I agree with what Lilim is saying," Rudy quipped. "I would be lying if I say you aren't gullible. But I am myself with you. I don't pretend to be someone else."

"Are you saying that you are not hiding anything from her?" Lilim asked with a judging look on her face.

"I could be hiding a thing or two from her. But that has nothing to do with what or how I act. If I wanted to fool Maria, I would have taken advantage of her innocence long ago."

"Hmm~ You don't seem to be lying."

Around thirty minutes later, the car entered the underworld and passed through various security measures.

"Ross Syndicate is the first location you would see after entering the underworld. Every other syndicate and organization has different tunnel gates to enter, which are located in various parts of this country."

The car stopped in front of a massive estate as the Ross Syndicate's members surrounded it from all sides.

Lilim got out of the car and opened the door.

"Welcome to the land of the Mafia."

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Chapter 413: Stepping into the Underworld

Rudy and Maria got out of the car and looked at each other.

"Well, this is my home." She pointed her hand to a massive estate in the distance and said, "This is where I live with my family and a few of the top syndicate members who are close with my father and brother."

'That estate is bigger than my town...'

It had pools, a garden, a river, over a thousand rooms, and more than a hundred thousand gang members. Of course, not everyone was present there. They were spread in the Ross territory.

The gate of the state and the actual building had a five kilometers distance between them. And it was well guarded with various armed guards, machines, and traps in the case of an emergency.

There were ten check posts in between from where everyone had to pass, and the security got tighter as they got closer to the building.

Rudy turned to Lilim and asked, "So you guys walk this entire path whenever you need to enter or leave the estate?"

"No. There are vehicles on the other side of the gates for the family members, but since it's tournament week, everything has been transported to the 'Gamling Ground'," Lilim calmly explained.

"I thought the tournament was in this estate..."

"Of course not. The tournament is in the 'Green zone' or one might call it 'Safe zone'. It's a place in the center of the underworld that doesn't belong to any of the syndicate or the organizations, and that's where the meetings, councils, and the tournaments happen."

"To avoid the conflicts and unnecessary drama?"

"Yeah," Lilim nodded.

"But logically speaking, wouldn't that safe zone be the most dangerous place in the underworld then?"

Lilim chuckled and said, "You got that right. But it's heavily guarded, so nothing can go wrong."

"How? The guards must belong to one of the syndicates or something, and they can easily massacre anyone inside if they want to."

Lilim shook her head and said, "To avoid such scenarios, the forefathers of the underworld had formed a team of a total of one hundred troops called 'Under Blades'. Those guards are the most trained in the underworld, and they don't follow anyone's order.

Their real identities have also been kept secret, and every year, one of them retires, and a new one joins them. You may think of that as a secret organization which is not a secret but mysterious."

"Hmm~" Rudy hummed in amusement and muttered, "The underworld is more organized than I thought. The movies and news show such a bad image of them."

"Well, they are not entirely wrong. The mafias are indeed barbaric at times."

Meanwhile, Maria was walking in front of Rudy and Lilim with puffed cheeks. She was angry at Lilim as she talked with Rudy, and he hadn't been paying attention to her since then.

She wanted to tell everything to Rudy about the underworld, but Lilim ruined it.

Lilim noticed it and smiled from the corner of her lips.

"Oops, I guess I made Lady Maria mad," she said with a chuckle. She then stepped forward and walked beside Maria to get her attention. "I would like to say that it was Master Rudy who approached me, so if you are going to get angry at someone, it should be him."

Maria puckered her lips and muttered, "You know I can't get angry at him."

Rudy couldn't hold his grin after talking with Lilim. He had taken an interest in her in a weird way.

'If I have to say it in simple words, Lilim and I clicked right away as soon as we first exchanged words. She is just like me in many ways, and I don't know how to explain it, but... I sort of feel a connection between her,' Rudy uttered inwardly.

After walking for a while and passing through the check posts, they finally reached the door of the building.

Rudy, obviously, wasn't tired and nor was Lilim. But Maria seemed a little tired.

The door automatically opened as Maria touched it, and they were greeted by butlers and maids. However, they were actually professionally trained hitmen and assassins.

Maria pushed Lilim away and grabbed Rudy's hand while glaring at Lilim.

"I will show him around."

"Are you sure?" Lilim asked with a knowing look on her face. "You know how big this estate is, and you look out of breath after walking the five kilometers. Maybe I should show him around, and you should go dip in a hot bath or something?"

"No. But yeah, go prepare my bath. Once I show Rudy around, I want to dip for a while."

"As you wish, Lady Maria." Lilim turned to Rudy and asked, "Would you also be joining her in the bath?"

"I wouldn't say no," Rudy replied instantly.

"Of course, he won't." Maria glared softly at Rudy and said, "What are you saying?"

"You don't want to take a bath with me?"

"I didn't say that, but..." Maria lowered her gaze as her face went full red.

"Heh." Lilim and Rudy chuckled at the same time in the same manner.

It was almost as though they had grown up together and knew each other very well.

Lilim left shortly after while Maria showed Rudy around the estate.

"Where are your brother and father?" Rudy asked curiously. "They didn't come to welcome me, although they are not obligated to do so. But I assume they are at the tournament?"

"No. They live in the innermost area of the estate. I live there too, of course."

'To be honest, I have no interest in meeting her family members, but I want to gain some information from there. But first...'

Rudy acted naturally and asked, "Who is the current leader of the syndicate again? Is it your brother or your niece?"

"On paper, it's my niece, but my brother is handing everything," Maria responded.

"I see."

Rudy scanned the area using his see-through ability to track them down.

'Found them.'

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Chapter 414: Mafia Estate | | Ross Syndicate

'I don't think I will get anything from the niece. She is the same age as Maria so she wouldn't know anything. Rusher is old, and he should know. And it would be a jackpot if I could meet the father, or should I say, grandfather.'

He is the oldest and must know what I am looking for. But...'

Rudy shot a glance at Maria and thought, 'Asking her to take me there would be obvious. I have to get a workaround.'

Maria and Rudy were holding hands, so he pulled her close and said, "I want to see your room."

"Absolutely not!"

'Wow. That's... not the response I expected.'

"Why not?" Rudy asked curiously. "I was so looking forward to seeing your room."

Rudy wasn't lying. He was indeed interested in seeing the room of the mafia princess.

"I will show you one day, but that day is not today!"

"Alright."

Rudy didn't feel like pushing the matter as Maria was against it, which was rare for her. She was usually so friendly and curious, like a baby.

'Now I need to find a way to somehow run into Maria's grandfather. Would he be at the tournament? If yes, then there is no need for me to try so hard. I can just wait.'

After touring around the estate for a while, Rudy slowed down and said, "I am thirsty. Can I get water?"

"Oh!" Maria suddenly exclaimed and covered her mouth in shock. "I am so sorry. Guests are supposed to ask to eat and drink, but I did none of that!"

'Because Lilim and I teased you, so it's our fault!'

"That's okay. I wasn't thirsty before, so I wouldn't have drunk something even if you had..."

Maria rushed to the hallway and grabbed a shotgun from the wall. Then, she aimed it at the giant bell on the ceiling and fired the shot.

The bell rang, and butlers and maids lined up in front of Maria. And she ordered them to bring water, alcohol, juice, soda, and various types of drinks of different flavors.

'Wow. So dramatic. I kind of want to do the same.'

Rudy wasn't actually thirsty. He thought Maria would go to fetch water, and he would use the chance to slip into the inner area of the estate, but he should have expected something like that to happen.

Still, he had a backup plan which was undoubtedly going to work.

"Maria!" he called out to her and waited for her to come to him.

"Yes? Is there something you need?"

"I want to go... you know..."

"Oh...." She pointed her finger in a direction and said, "The washroom is that way..."

"No. It's number two..."

"Ooo... you can go to the inner area then. There is one at the entrance."

"Thank you!"

When Rudy scanned the area earlier, he had already seen where everything was located. And he noticed the washrooms were located at specific places, with different types of washrooms.

Rudy waited to pass through the other washroom and acted when the nearest washroom was in the inner area of the estate.

Rudy was on his way there, but Maria followed after him and said, "I changed my mind. I will take you there."

'Oh, come on. Why are all my plans failing today?'

Rudy had no other choice but to spend a good five minutes in the washroom, doing nothing. However, it was neat and clean, so he had no complaints.

He flushed and left the washroom while pretending to wipe his hands with a tissue.

"Thank you. It was kind of embarrassing to ask at someone's home, so I thought I would be able to hold it, but..."

"Yeah, that happens. Bad luck strikes at the worst time. So let's hope you don't get unlucky in today's matches," Maria uttered while chuckling nervously.

"Oh, by the way, I just got a call from my father, and he asked to meet you. Are you okay with that?"

'Oh. Oh! Oh!!'

"Well, if the big boss has asked, I can't deny it."

Maria and Rudy made their way to the inner area of the estate

'Is my super luck at work again?' Rudy wondered. 'Come to think of it, do I actually need to plan everything if I can simply wish for it from the bottom of my heart, and my super luck would do the work one way or another? Like how it did just now.'

Rudy pondered for a while and came to the conclusion that he shouldn't rely on super luck much.

'Logically speaking, if I can have all the abilities including super luck to help me out, then there are high chances that I also have super bad luck that can fuck me up.'

After walking for a while, they finally reached the innermost area of the estate. It seemed more like a house at first glance, and Rudy realized what Maria meant by what she said earlier.

'It's like their personal space. This entire estate is like their house, but this inner area is like their bedrooms. If I had guests over at my house, I would show them around, but I don't think I would let them in my room if I don't know them well.'

I might be a friend to maria...'

Rudy remembered the kisses from earlier and rephrased his thoughts.

'I might be close to Maria, but I am a stranger to the rest of the people here.'

Maria pointed her gaze at the couch in the living room and said, "Please sit here. I would inform my father that you have arrived."

"Yeah."

Rudy sat on the couch while glancing around as much as he could to take notes.

'It's surprisingly down to earth. There were guns and swords on most of the walls of the estate, but this place has no weapons. This is the living room, there are other rooms, there is a freaking separate kitchen too.'

A few seconds later, one maid and one butler came and served the drinks to Rudy.

"Please, excuse us. You can ring the bell at any time if you need anything," they said calmly and left.

Rudy drank a few drinks while waiting, but his wait soon ended when he heard multiple footsteps.

Maria, Rusher, his wife, and Maria's grandfather entered the living room and greeted Rudy.

He shook hands with Rusher and his wife and then turned to the boss to do the same.

"Nice to meet you. I am—"

Before Rudy could even finish his introduction, the boss took out a gun and shot Rudy in the head.

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Chapter 415: Shot Dead

SHOT!

"No!" Maria shouted.

The boss took out his gun from his coat and shot Rudy in the head. Rudy's body fell flat to the floor with a loud thud on his face.

"Father!" Rusher yelled at the top of his lungs with a baffled face. "What the fuck did you just do?!"

Rusher snatched the gun from the boss and threw it on the other side of the room.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?! She was the champion of the VIP tournament and an important guest of ours!"

"Demon! Demon! It has come to drag me to hell! Demon! Hell! Hell!" The boss began to behave oddly, as though he was going through a traumatic experience.

"Calm down, father."

"I won't go! I won't go to hell! I have been good for the last twenty years of my life! I don't want to go to hell! I don't want to die!"

Rusher grabbed the boss and turned to his wife with an anxious look on his face.

"Bring mother here."

"Right away!" Rusher's wife rushed out of the room to bring the boss' wife.

"I won't go! I won't go!" the boss kept mumbling.

A few butlers came rushing in after hearing the gunshot, and they saw Rudy on the ground with Maria weeping on his dead body.

"Hey, you. Take him to his room and call the doctor immediately!" Rusher ordered.

The butlers did as Rusher asked them to do and carried the boss out of the living room.

SIGH!

"I shouldn't have allowed my father to come out of his room or meet a stranger." Rusher covered his face with his hands and muttered, "How the hell did he get a gun?"

Rusher glanced at Maria from the corner of his eyes and bit his lips.

'I don't know what to say. This was obviously my fault for not stopping my father. I really don't know what to say. But I have to do something before Maria gets into a mental breakdown again.'

Rusher gulped down anxiously and sat beside Maria.

"Maria..." He placed his hand on Maria's shoulder. "I know it's not the right time to say this, but I—"

"It's all my fault!" she lamented. "I shouldn't have brought him to the inner area! I should have taken him directly to my room!"

'Him...?'

Rusher raised his brow in confusion.

Maria quickly grabbed the gun Rusher had thrown and pointed it at her head.

"Maria, what are you doing!"

"I will also kill myself!" she moved her finger to the trigger.

"Calm down, Maria. You have to think about others. What would father do? What would Ruby do?"

"I don't care! I don't want to live if Rudy is not with me!"

Maria pressed the trigger and shot herself in the head, or that would have happened, but the trigger was stuck for some reason.

PHEW!

Rusher let out a big sigh in relief and snatched the gun from Maria's hand. He checked the bullets and gulped down nervously after seeing it was fully loaded.

He placed the gun under his coat and said, "I will take care of the rest. Tell me her address so I can visit her family and give them money as compensation."

"Do you think money can solve everything?!"

"No. Of course not. But it can help. She was a gambler, and gambler only gambles for one thing—money."

"No! Rudy was different!"

"You should go to your room." Rusher looked at Rudy's body and muttered, "I have to take care of many things now."

"No! I won't leave! I will kill myself! It's all my fault!" Maria glanced around in anger to find a weapon she could use to kill herself, but there was only one place she could find a weapon, and that was the kitchen.

Rusher realized what Maria was going to do, so he stepped in the way and said, "Listen, Maria. We are Mafias, and you are one too. You have to get used to losing your loved ones. It happens all the time."

"Is that so?! Then let me kill myself so you can lose me!"

Rusher facepalmed himself at his stupidity and muttered, "My mind is not working."

Suddenly, Rudy sat up and stared at Maria with a dazed expression on his face.

Maria was facing Rusher, and Rusher was facepalming himself, so neither of them saw Rudy get up. But when they realized someone was standing in the room, their eyes widened in shock but for a different reason.

Rusher's face turned pale when he saw Rudy was unscathed. While Maria's face turned bright and she rushed to his arms.

"Rudy! You are alive!" she said cheerfully without caring for anything in the world.

"Wha..t?" Rusher was still baffled, and he couldn't believe his eyes. "How... why... why are you alive?"

'Why are you shocked?! You should be happy, you motherfuck— you sister fucker!' Rudy yelled inwardly.

"Actually, the bullet never hit me. It scraped me a little on the side of my head, that's all. I just passed out from a sudden shock," Rudy responded while showing his blood-stained hand to Rusher.

"That's impossible! Before becoming the Mafia Lord, father was the number one hitman of the underworld, and he has never missed a target in his lifetime. He shot you from a distance less than an arm. There is no way he would have missed it!" Rusher retorted.

"Perhaps he is getting old?"

'Putting all that aside, if someone else shot me, that person would already be having a space trip by now. But it was Maria's family member. Although I am pissed off right now, I will forgive the old man.

His one leg is already in the grave, and he will die soon eventually. What I am surprised about is his reaction. The expression on his face was real. He was genuinely afraid of me.

His fear was justifiable. And why did he call me a demon? Come to think of it, when I met Maria for the first time and dropped me off, she mentioned in the car that her father was an evil piece of shit but suddenly turned saint.

I am pretty sure I triggered his old trauma or something. He was yelling nonsense earlier too. Tch! I am tired of all this. I will just resort to my final plan.'

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Chapter 416: Turning the Tables

The moment the boss had taken out his gun, Rudy used telekinesis to divert the bullet and later made a cut on his hand when he fell to the ground on his face on purpose so they wouldn't see his face or injury. He had to make everything look realistic to convince them. Otherwise, he would raise suspicions.

Not only that, but when Maria grabbed the gun and pulled the trigger to kill herself, he used telekinesis to stop the bullet from coming out.

'Still, I never expected Maria to act so suicidally. Why are all the girls I met like this? But well, I am the same. If I saw the love of my life die in front of me, I would go insane too.'

Rudy patted Maria's back and said, "Maria, I am okay."

"I know."

"So let me go."

"No. I am not letting you go."

"You have to take a bath, right? We also have to go to the tournament, so you should hurry," he said calmly.

"What will you do?" She looked up at him with teary eyes and asked, "I was so scared."

Rudy gently smiled at her and said, "I will talk with your brother in the meantime. Don't worry, I have super luck, right? Nothing can go wrong."

"But you said I am your lucky charm.... so I have to be close to you..." she muttered with a slightly flushed face.

"You are close to me."

Rudy eventually managed to send Maria off to take a bath so he could have some private talk with Rusher.

"Can we go somewhere where we wouldn't be disturbed?" Rudy asked with a serious look on his face.

"Sure, follow me."

Rusher led Rudy to an open balcony room and stood by the balcony.

"So, what did you want to talk about?" Rusher asked with a judging look on his face.

Rudy leaned on the ledge and sighed softly before uttering, "I believe you have something to ask me first."

"..." Rusher turned to Rudy and asked, "You and Maria seem pretty close... as if you two are more than friends."

"Yes, you are right."

Rusher clenched his fist and asked, "So... Maria is into girls?"

'This man is an idiot!' Rudy uttered inwardly. 'I have stopped talking in a feminine voice ever since the VIP club tournament, but he is in denial.'

Rudy took off his hoodie and revealed his short hair.

"Oh, you cut your hair? You look like a boy now."

'What the fuck is wrong with him? How much denial is he in? He doesn't want to admit that I am a boy.'

Rudy shrugged his shoulders and said, "I 'am' a boy."

"Haha!" Rusher laughed fakely and said, "You are not good at jokes, are you?"

"..." Rudy was in utter disbelief. It wasn't as though Rudy had tried to hide the fact that he was a male. Even in the casino, when he officially met Rusher for the first time, he wasn't trying to hide anything.

Rusher didn't want to see Maria with a boy, so he pictured Rudy as a girl and engraved it in his mind.

"If you were a girl, I would have pulled down my pants and showed you my dick, but I don't want to do that to a middle-aged man," Rudy commented.

"I see..." Rusher uttered calmly and immediately pulled out the gun from his pocket. "How dare you trick me?!"

"Trick you? I never actually said that I am a girl."

Even though Rudy was at gunpoint, his face showed no fear. In fact, his face was expressionless.

"You..." Rusher moved his finger to the trigger and prepared to shoot Rudy.

"You were the one who automatically assumed I was a girl."

"But you had long hair, and you were wearing strange clothes!"

"And? Since when did long hair become a characteristic of a woman?"

"I didn't say that! It's not rare for a man to have long hair, but yours were long, reaching your waist! That's not common! And how do you explain that outfit?"

"The hair was a wig, and the clothes were also for a show. I was cosplaying as a character," Rudy replied nonchalantly.

"Then you should have corrected me when I referred to you as a girl!"

"Maria fears you. She was afraid that you would pull her away from me if you got to know that I was a boy, so she never denied it," Rudy shrugged.

"Damn right, I would have! Why shouldn't I?"

"I don't want to get involved in your family matters, but Maria now belongs to me." Rudy furrowed his brow and uttered, "If you don't want me to turn her against you, give her freedom."

"She already has enough freedom! I am just trying to protect her as a brother!"

"Oh?"

"Tell me one reason to not kill you!"

"I can tell many, but let's go with 'Maria will be devastated, and she would hate you for killing me.'"

"She would never learn of your death. I will tell her you ran away. I will get rid of your body, and no one will ever know anything! And as for your family, I will give them money and close the matter," Rusher asserted.

"That sounds legit." Rudy stretched his hands in the air and yawned before saying, "What if I tell Maria about who she really is?"

Rusher gulped down anxiously and asked, "What are you talking about?"

"I am talking about your incestuous activity with your twin sister. I am talking about Maria, who is not your sister, but your biological daughter."

"What nonsense are you spouting?! No one will believe you!"

"That excuse would have worked if this was some movie, but it's not. Nowadays, you can easily find out the truth with a simple DNA test." Rudy snatched the gun from Rusher while talking by taking advantage of the situation. However, he could easily do that using his powers if he wanted to.

"Knowing Maria, she would be curious to find that out, and she will learn the truth." Rudy tilted his head to the side and smirked as he said, "What do you think Maria will do once she finds out the truth of her origin?"

"You... bastard." Rusher gritted his teeth. "How do you know about all this?!"

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Chapter 417: Rudy Ross

"How do you know all this?!"

Rudy pointed the gun at Rusher and said, "There are five bullets in the gun right now. If you let me press the trigger once, I will tell you the truth. If you don't, I will tell everyone about your incestuous activity with your sister. What do you think will happen to the Ross Syndicate after everyone finds out about it?"

"You are truly a demon!"

"It's your choice. Would you rather risk your life to discover the truth and save the Ross Syndicate from falling, or be a coward and let everything get destroyed in front of your eyes?"

"Ross Syndicate is now under my daughter. I can't let her future get destroyed like this!" Rusher stood still and looked into Rudy's eyes as he said, "Go ahead and shoot me."

"At least you are not a full piece of shit."

Rudy pulled the trigger and shot Rusher.

SHOT!

However, it turned out to be an empty shot.

PHEW!

Rusher sighed in relief and opened his mouth to ask, "Now, tell me—"

SHOT! SHOT! SHOT! SHOT! SHOT!

Rudy shot five more times and emptied the gun.

Rusher's legs grew weak, and he fell to his knees. He sweated as heavily as his breaths and tried to comprehend the situation.

"Oops." Rudy loaned the gun to Rusher and said, "Looks like I missed."

He patted Rusher's shoulder and smiled at him before saying, "Let's get along, brother-in-law. Or should I call you father-in-law?"

After saying that, Rudy walked through the door.

Rusher looked behind him at the wall and saw the bullets were in a pattern of the shape of his head, seemingly barely missing him.

"Did he... really miss it...?" he stuttered while muttering.

He grabbed the gun and rushed after Rudy, only to find him standing outside the room as though he had already predicted that to happen.

"What's wrong, father-in-law? Missing me already?" he scoffed.

"What... do you want from Maria...?"

"Nothing. Not a thing. I want to give her a happy life which you couldn't give her in spite of being the wealthiest syndicate in the underworld."

"I did all that to protect her! Ever since she was a kid, there have been several attempts to assassinate her! Even last week, someone tried to kill her. The same with my daughter. You have no idea how scared I feel all the time.

I can't sleep at night thinking about their safety. My father has lost his mind and barely speaks something that makes sense. My mother is sick. This syndicate is dying. I have so many things I need to take care of!

You would understand if you were in my shoes. You are trying to take advantage of my each and every weakness. You might have won, but what will you do next?"

He asked while scoffing wryly.

'Damn, this just got serious all of a sudden. I thought he was a tough dude, but he just had a breakdown in front of me. Well, I am partly to blame, but I did what I had to do.

If I had not acted how I acted, he would have shot me, although it's not like I would have died.'

"Listen, I don't mean any harm to anyone in your family or in the syndicate. I genuinely want to protect Maria just like you do. I like her, and that's why I want to gamble alongside her.

And I didn't know about the assassination attempt on her. She never talks about herself much, even when we are together. However..."

The guns from the hallways dropped to the floor because of the sudden rumble from Rudy's fury.

"Rest assured, father-in-law. Your syndicate is now under my protection. I will find the ones trying to kill Maria and bring their heads to you," Rudy asserted with a furious look on his face.

"I... will be indebted to you if you do that."

"I have a feeling that I will find them in the gambling tournaments. If not in tonight's matches, then surely in the next ones."

"Can I ask for your name? Who are you, exactly? Are you from another Mafia organization?"

"I took Maria's name. From hereby, I am officially taking the family name Ross. I am Rudy Ross, the benefactor of the Ross syndicate. The guardian who doesn't need guns or weapons. I am Maria's gambling buddy and probably her lover."

Rusher lowered his gaze and asked, "Can I trust you?"

"You don't have to trust me, nor do I need you to trust me. Don't get the wrong idea. I am not doing this for your syndicate or because of your sad story. I don't give a shit about all that.

I am doing this for Maria. She will be sad if something happens to you, your family, or this syndicate. I am doing this because I want to do that. I am doing this for me, to sate my selfishness.

If Maria was from another organization, I would have let you all perish for all I care. And yeah, I don't expect anything in return, but if you want to give me something, then you already know what I want."

"..." Rusher raised his gaze to look at Rudy and asked, "Money...?"

"No, you dumbass! How did you get that wrong after I said it so many times?! I am obviously referring to Maria!"

"Oh..."

"How did you run the syndicate with this small brain of yours?" Rudy sighed in disbelief.

"..."

"Whatever, I will wait for Maria in the living room. The tournament starts at 9, right?"

"Yeah, but the first matches are for the citizens of the underworld. And it will take two to three hours for your match, so you can relax for a while. Maria will accompany you to the tournament ground," Rusher said calmly.

"Obviously.

"Hey, listen... don't tell Maria that I am her... you know..."

Rudy left without answering Rusher's plea and made his way to the living room, where another incident occurred with him.

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Chapter 418: Sit With Me

When Rudy returned to the living room, he found Lilim standing in the middle of the room.

He quickly got behind her and poked her on the back to surprise her, but she didn't seem surprised.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, acting normally.

"Lady Maria just went to the bath and asked me to keep an eye on you. But when I came here, you weren't there," Lilim replied. "But you seem okay, so I guess it's fine."

Rudy sat on the couch and tapped to the side to ask Lilim to sit beside him.

"Oh, I would never. I can't sit beside someone like you," she uttered in a repulsive manner that somewhat offended Rudy.

"Ouch. I got rejected by a driver."

"I can stand beside you and sit beneath you if you want me to," she then added.

"Sit beneath... me?" Rudy imagined sitting on top of Lilim and said, "If you are okay with that, sure."

"I am pretty sure you misunderstood what I said," she remarked.

"I didn't say a word." Rudy shrugged and chuckled softly before speaking, "How would you know what I understood that as?"

Lilim stared at Rudy without saying anything. She was still wearing sunglasses for some reason, but Rudy could see her gaze staring at him.

"Why are you wearing glasses inside?" he asked.

"It's a part of my character."

"Take them off."

"Why do you think I would do as you say? You are not my master, so what makes you think you can order me?" she asked with a slight grin on her face.

'See... I knew she would say that! She is awfully similar to me. Is this what they call the 'friend I didn't know I needed' type of thingy?' he wondered.

Lilim took off her glasses and tossed them at Rudy. Then, she walked to him and stood in front of him with a smile on his face.

"Your amber eyes are beautiful. Why do you hide them?" he asked calmly.

"It's kind of a rule for the bodyguards to wear glasses so one can't see where we are looking at," Lilim responded in the same tone.

"So... Maria is taking a bath, and I don't have anything to do. How should I pass the time?" Rudy asked her. Although he didn't expect an answer, he wanted to have a chat with her.

"What do you want to do?"

"I don't know. I have never been at someone's house, to be honest. Only at my friend's and that too to play games," he chuckled softly. He then looked into Lilim's amber eyes and asked, "How about we gamble? That's a good way to pass the time."

"Oh, I would love too. But unfortunately, I am not good at it."

"I didn't say anything about that. We are just gambling with nothing at stake. So it doesn't matter if you are good or bad or lucky or unlucky."

Lilim pondered for a few seconds and said, "That sounds boring."

'Dammit. So savage!'

"Then we can put something at stake. I will gamble... umm, one million?"

"Money doesn't matter much to me." Lilim sat on her knees in front of Rudy and said, "Do you know how much I get paid monthly as Lady Maria's bodyguard and driver?"

"Since Ross syndicate is the wealthiest, I guess one million a month?" Rudy made a random guess to keep the conversation going.

"Five million per month." She got up again and said, "I have been Lady Maria's bodyguard for a long time, and I have never used a single penny yet."

She shrugged and continued, "I live here, so I get free food, free room, and free everything. I would use the money for gambling, but I am not interested. Gambling is... hell's game."

Rudy raised his brow in confusion and thought, 'What is she on about? I just wanted to pass some time while talking with her.'

"Then how about you suggest?" Rudy grabbed Lilim's hand and pulled her on his lap.

"...!" Lilim tried to get off Rudy's lap, but of course, she couldn't. "What are you doing?"

"Nothing. Just getting to know you better," he responded with a cheeky smile.

"I believe this is called flirting?" Lilim smacked her lips against her teeth and said, "Even though you have Lady Maria, you are doing such a thing with me."

"What is such a thing? You refused to sit beside me and seemed tired as you just sat and got up again. I just gave you a seat to sit on."

Rudy tried to use the same trick Lilim used on him a while ago, which Lilim has realized already.

"So it's completely normal for you to let girls sit on your lap?"

"Depends on the girl, but yes." Rudy replied nonchalantly. "There is nothing wrong with that."

Lilim was smiling with Rud, but her face suddenly turned pale as she said, "Lady Maria. This is not what it looks like. He forced me to—"

Lilim stopped on her words when she noticed Rudy was unfazed by that and let out a soft sigh. She raised her brow with a curious look on her face and asked, "You didn't react, not even a bit. Did you know I was acting?"

"Yeah. I didn't hear footsteps, and you did something I would have done if I was in your shoes. We think a lot like each other, so I knew you were testing me out."

"Hmm~" Lilim hummed in amusement and said, "I have to admit that I am impressed. Too bad you belong to Lady Maria, or we would have made a fine couple, don't you think?"

"Whoa. Now, who is the one flirting, huh?" he chuckled softly.

"I was just playing along with your game."

"Is that so?" Rudy smirked from the corner of his lips and said, "Putting everything aside, you are pretty good at acting."

"Thank you."

"It makes me wonder about your true self. You could be acting right now too. You could be pretending to be a savage and straightforward girl."

Rudy looked into Lilim's eyes and asked, "What is your true self?"

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Chapter 419: Lilim's True Self

"What is your true self?" Rudy asked with a serious look on his face.

"I can ask you the same." Lilim got off Rudy's lap and asked, "What is your true self?"

"Yeah, I should have expected this response since that's what I would have done," he sighed softly and shook his head. "So, suggest anything we can do to pass some time while Maria is taking a bath."

"How about I show you around the estate? I believe Lady Maria couldn't show you the entire estate," Lilim suggested.

"Oh, that's a great idea."

Lilim took Rudy out of the inner area of the estate and showed him around.

"So, how old is this estate?" Rudy asked while glancing around.

"I am not privy to that."

After walking for around ten minutes, Rudy and Lilim entered the area where the maids, butlers, and bodyguards' chambers were located.

Rudy was confused why Lilim was showing him that area as it didn't contribute anything to their estate tour. But suddenly, Lilim pushed Rudy into an open room and locked him inside with her.

"What's the meaning of this?" Rudy asked with an unpleasant look on his face. He wasn't a fan of such tricks as he himself would never do such a thing to someone he didn't know that well.

That made Rudy lose all his interest in Lilim just because of her one action.

Rudy patiently waited for Lilim's answer, but instead of replying to him, she took off her clothes and stood naked in front of him.

Rudy stared at Lilim's naked body with an unfazed expression on his face. He still waited for Lilim to say something, but after giving her enough time, he asked her again:

"What is the meaning of this Lilim?"

"I thought you would realize it already." Lilim spread her arms and said, "I am inviting you to sleep with me."

Rudy glanced around the room and muttered, "So I assume this is your room?"

"Yeah."

"So your idea to show me around the house was all for this? So you could lock me in your room and seduce me?" he asked with a soft scoff. "Maybe this would be something I would do, after all."

"So you are ready to sleep with me?"

"No. I am here as Maria's friend, and you are her bodyguard. I would have accepted your offer if you had taken a different approach rather than doing something like this."

He walked past Lilim and unlocked the door. Before leaving, he glanced at Lilim for the last time and said, "Correct me if I am wrong, but this was a test, right?"

"Hmm?"

"You were testing me to check if I was suitable for Maria, am I right? I turned you down, so I guess I passed the test?" Rudy asked with a curious look on his face.

Lilim turned to Rudy with an amused look on her face and asked, "Before I answer your question, let me ask you my question. Did you turn me down because you weren't interested in my offer or because you thought it was a test?"

"Because I thought it was a test, duh!"

"What if I tell you that wasn't a test, and I did it because I was interested in you?"

"Oh..." Rudy closed the door and locked it.

"Heh!" Lilim chuckled and said, "So you are up for it now?"

"If you want to sleep with me, then I don't see a problem. I mean, I am interested in you, just not in a romantic way. It's still too early for that." Rudy pondered for a few seconds before continuing, "I don't do one-night stands, so perhaps we can become friends with benefits?"

"I don't care much, to be honest. If you ever feel like fucking me, you can call me anytime. I will come right away."

"Oh? Isn't this going way too fast?" Rudy walked to Lilim and touched her naked body. "Even I was interested in you as you are like me. But I don't think I would have invited you to sleep with me. Sure, I did flirt with you in the living room, but I wouldn't have done anything more than that."

"At least, not there," he added.

Lilim wrapped her arms around Rudy's neck and asked with a grin on her face, "What about now?"

Rudy gently squeezed Lilim's breasts and said, "I wouldn't be a man if I rejected such a hot and sexy girl like you. I guess immoral relationships turn me on more. I am your master's lover, and we are doing this."

'Same with Niti. I wanted to taste her since she was so close to Jane,' he uttered inwardly.

"So shall we start?" Lilim asked calmly.

"Just asking but wouldn't Maria get suspicious?"

"She takes long baths when she is happy, anxious-slash-nervous, or sad. And currently, she is happy, nervous-slash-anxious, and sad at the same time. She takes at least an hour, so I think we have enough time to go a few rounds," Lilim replied with a resolute expression on her face, as though she was looking forward to that moment.

"I see." Rudy pushed Lilim against the wall and fingered her cave.

"Mnh~"

"You are tight."

"Well..." Lilim chuckled nervously and averted her gaze before saying, "This happens to be my first time."

"Oh, you are a virgin?" Rudy asked with a surprised look on his face.

"Yeah. I told you, didn't I? I am 26 and single."

"You never specified if you had previous relationships or not. But this is better." Rudy rubbed his thumb on her clit and said, "Let me make your first time memorable."

He then moved his face close to Lilim's face.

Lilim puckered her lips and got ready for the kiss, but instead, Rudy moved to her ears and whispered, "You are not a human, are you?"

Lilim's eyes widened in shock after hearing that. She gulped down anxiously and murmured, "As expected of you, my 'Lord'."

"As I asked you before, and I will ask again for the last time." Rudy locked her body against the wall and asked, "What is your true self?"

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Chapter 420: Not a Human

"When did you realize I wasn't a human?" Lilim asked with a curious look on her face.

"When I got out of the car? I used one of my powers to scan the areas to make sure everything was alright. And I accidentally looked at you.

Usually, my ability would let me see through the peoples' clothes or sometimes their bodies, but it didn't work on you as intended. I did see through your clothes, but I saw something else too.

You seemed as though you were wearing human skin. Honestly, I was surprised at first. I had taken a liking to you when we talked in the car, but I didn't know anything about you. I wasn't even sure if Maria and the others knew about your true self.

So I approached you with a question one would have asked, and you replied without any change in your personality. I asked you a few more questions, and I realized you don't mean any harm to anyone. You don't bare any hostility towards me.

I just acted normal, but now that no one is watching you, you have changed a little. I wanted to ask you who you were, but it seemed awkward to ask that all of a sudden. Not to mention, I would also have to expose my power and identity.

So I just asked you, 'what is your true self?', but of course, that was a vague question. However, now that we are alone in this closed room and you have stripped yourself, I don't think it matters."

Rudy had everything planned for that moment, even though he wasn't sure if he would get the opportunity. Regardless, it was true that he felt attracted to Lilim because of that reason.

"You knew everything all along and acted all this time?" Lilim asked in astonishment. "Who is the better actor now, huh?"

"That wasn't an act. I am not the type of person who would change myself for others. Unless, of course, it's necessary, and I truly want to change," Rudy remarked nonchalantly.

"I won't lie, I am a bit disappointed that it turned out like this. But you are the almighty Lord. I am in no place to argue with you. I don't want to face your wrath of the Lord. Moreover, I am but a lowly servant of yours."

"..."

Lilim looked into Rudy's eyes and said, "I would suggest you step back a little. I will change my form now."

Rudy stepped back a few steps and stared at Lilim with an amused look on his face. He was genuinely curious to find out who Lilim truly was.

Lilim closed her eyes and placed her hands on her navel. Her body glowed a little before slowly changing shape. Even the sound of her body shape changing was audible in the room because of how quiet the surroundings were.

A few seconds later, two medium-sized horns came out of Lilim's forehead, and her skin turned a slightly dark tone. Then, she opened her eyes that were once amber but now close to red.

She smiled nervously at Rudy and said, "This is my true form."

Rudy continued staring at her with an alluring gaze without saying anything. He was trying to figure out what race Lilim belonged to.

Lilim squirmed a little and asked, "How do I... look?"

"Wait... you are embarrassed?" Rudy asked with a surprised look on his face.

"Of course, I would be embarrassed. You are looking at my naked body. I am showing my true self to my Lord. I am just hoping my body is to your liking."

"You weren't embarrassed when you stripped yourself earlier, though," Rudy remarked.

"That was in my human form. I was wearing a disguise, and it was similar to wearing a layer of clothing for me. But right now, I am fully naked," she responded calmly.

"Well..." Rudy licked his lips and muttered, "You look absolutely stunning in both forms."

PHEW!

Lilim let out a sigh in relief and said, "I would have killed myself if you didn't like my body. I wouldn't have been able to forgive myself for showing you my unsightly body."

"That's not true. You truly look amazing. But... uhh..." Rudy averted his gaze and asked, "What are you, again?"

Lilim squinted her eyes and asked, "You don't know?"

"In my defense, it's my first time seeing a race other than the human and vampire. You have horns, and your skin turned a little dark after you changed your form, so you are obviously not a vampire since they all have pale skins.

And judging by your horns, I can only think of one race." Rudy paused for a few seconds and asked, "Are you a dragon?"

"Hehe." Lilim giggled while covering her mouth and said, "No. Dragons have a different shape of horns, and their eyelids and eyes' shape is also different."

"I see. I assumed that because I didn't want to depict the races I have seen in movies and stories. They are usually off the mark, but I guess I can't deny the similarities," he muttered while nodding.

"I am a demon," Lilim suddenly stated.

"Oh.. demons usually have a different skin color, no? And no offense, but I thought demons were only in hell."

"They do, and their ranks are decided by their colors too. Not only that, but their color changes when they evolve or get powerful, so it's a great way to rank them," Lilim politely explained.

"So why do you still look awfully similar to a human in spite of the horns?" Rudy asked with a curious yet calm look on his face.

"My mother was the highest rank demon who had gained the blessings of immortality from the Lord. And my father was... a human."

"I see. So the previous Lord gave blessings to your mother?"

"I am not privy to that. But whatever I have told you so far is completely true. And even if I wanted to lie, there is no way one can lie in front of a powerful entity such as you, my Lord."