

# NORTH X NORTHWEST

## Chapter 5

“Ack!”

Her nose bumped into something unexpected, immediately her eyes stirred sourly and tears flowed down her cheeks. Only after a couple of steps back, was she able to check what it was she walked into.

It was a very tall man who just stared blankly at the suffering woman.

“Uhh... What’s going on... You suddenly came out... Oh, I’m sorry I didn’t see...”

Her eyelids trembled. Lil squinted her eyes, trying to make eye contact with the man’s face that was far above head, but he didn’t respond.

*‘No matter how careless I was, it’s unfair that I’m the only one apologizing.’*

“Uh... What’s wrong with you?”

“...”

“If you hit a person, isn’t it right to apologize?”

“...”

“You’ve got some guts! Here, take this!”

She put her clenched fist close to his ear, but the man remained motionless.

*‘My fists aren’t that weak.’*

Only then did Lil see her wrist wrapped in white lace and muttered,

“...Oh, right. I’m a woman right now...”

She awkwardly lowered her hand.

*'It wouldn't have been a grand threat anyway. Amiaeng has a lot of rough people, so if one folds first, they'd likely get hit by something else in return. Especially for women. But I can't just let go of his rude manners.'*

Lil tapped the man on the side of his face with the tip of her fan.

"Apologize when I'm still being nice. You think I can't do anything to you just because you're a man?"

"This is amazing."

"Yeah right... Wait, what? Amazing?"

Lil almost nodded, initially thinking it was an apology. She raised her head again and stared at his arrogant face which had a shaggy beard, messy hair, and an eye patch. It can be said that almost half of the face was covered, but despite the unnecessary things, she didn't think it was too sloppy.

*'No, don't get distracted.'*

"I'm surprised to see you, no, I'm happy to see you."

Somehow the man's mouth seemed to smile. He wasn't laughing, but he looked quite pleased, maybe even amused. Lil had a bad hunch about this and frowned.

*'Is he crazy?'*

She let go of the collar she was holding and stepped back.

"Last warning, apologize politely."

"Well... It may be partly my fault, but if you look at it, your fault is bigger because you suddenly jumped out into the hallway. Besides, I'm happy, so why are you angry?"

"According to Sesbron's etiquette, both parties should apologize when they're both at fault... No, what's your problem? You're happy that I'm holding my nose while crying? Are you a pervert?"

This time, Lil poked his chest and emphasized each word. The man playfully tapped the end of the fan. She raised her eyebrows as she looked down at her fist covered with thick lace sleeves.

*'Is he looking down at me because I'm a woman?'*

Lil grabbed her skirt.

*'I must kick him in the shin.'*

"Huh?"

Surprised at her failed attempt, Lil looked down at her leg. The knee that was raised through the rolled-up dress was suddenly blocked by the man's hand.

"Hey... Take your hand off!"

She couldn't move when he twisted her leg. What he used was a sophisticated technique. Her eyes widened at the terrifying realization. With a smiling mouth under his bushy bangs, the man was still very relaxed.

*'Damn it. I made a mistake.'*

Suddenly, "Ack!"

– *Bang!* –

Her whole body was forcibly pushed against the wall and the man's elbow was pressed against her neck, blocking her airway. Even before her shock subsided, the man moved closer.

"That's funny. This is not the outfit of a noble lady."

"Ugh..."

"I don't know where the Sesbron etiquette comes from. But why does a prostitute wish to be treated that way?"

Lil twisted her back in an attempt to escape from the man and the wall, but her leg was still being held. She exerted more force on her knee to pull her leg out

but instead, his hand slid into her dress. Surprised by the touch on her thigh, Lil threw her fist.

“Oh? The prostitute isn’t open for business?”

“...”

“Why didn’t you tell me that directly? With that big mouth...”

After the man easily blocked her fist, he suddenly brought his face nearer. A calm, clear, and green eye. There was no sign of burning lust reflected in it, only seriousness. With eyes hardened by seriousness, his thin lips opened.

“Or do you agree with my touch?”

As the man licked his lips with his tongue, a shocked voice rang out at that perverted expression.

“You pervert!”

With her free left hand, Lil tried to stop his hand from going up any further.

“Get off, get off, get off!”

She wanted to take out her weapon, but both her hands were trapped.

*‘This damned dress.’*

She couldn’t move even after she gave strength to her wrists.

*‘This pervert is so strong!’*

Lil was terrified by the man’s approaching face. No matter how lowly she was being treated as a prostitute, she couldn’t believe Lil Schweiz was so helpless.

“Get lost! This crazy...”

Their lips almost touched. No, his lips were trying to reach hers.

*‘That’s my way out.’*

Lil determinedly leaned forward and bit the lips that were approaching her. The man's body flinched audibly. He wanted to let go, but Lil shook her jaw from side to side, biting his lower lip as hard as she could. After cutting it open, a fishy taste quickly spread into her mouth. Blood flowed into his mouth, as well.

When she pushed his shoulder with all her might, the man finally backed off. He touched his lips with a frowning face, checked the blood, and jerked his head up.

Lil quickly pulled out her dagger and aimed at him.

*'If he tries to move any closer, I'll cut him.'*

She glanced downstairs to see if he had any male companions, but only heard a chuckle. Lil looked back at the man, wondering what the hell that was.

*'Why is he smiling? He's crazy.'*

"This was dangerous, wasn't it? It hurts a lot."

"That's a lot of talk for a crazy pervert."

The man scratched his neck and shook his head.

"This is fun."

His lip was still bleeding, but he didn't seem to care at all. He didn't frown much despite saying it hurt a lot. Lil crumpled her face thinking about how unlucky she has been.

*"Lunatic."*

*'A person with unknown intention is much more dangerous than a pervert with a clear purpose.'*

With a look full of reluctances Lil took a few steps backwards. She kept the dagger aimed towards the man till she reached the stairs, then she quickly

turned around and ran down. As she kept looking back, she noticed that he didn't follow her, allowing her to safely escape the inn.

The man, who was watching from above, raised his hand and lifted the eye patch over his forehead. He swept his long bangs away revealing his normal eyes and mumbled.

"...I finally found you..."

Only then did he become aware of the pain in his lip and frowned. But soon after, a smile was raised on his face.

"Do you know how surprised I am, Liloa?"

The man happily muttered the name a few more times. Not long after he let out a sigh, remembering her bitter eyes.

*'She was definitely dressed as a prostitute, but seeing how she bit my lip, I don't think she was actually doing prostitution. Maybe she's just pretending to be something else.'*

"What should I do now?"

The man rolled his eyes full of eagerness, like a child distressing over what to get as a gift.

"That's right. I still have some time, and I wasn't intending to keep my promise anyway... Let's play a little longer."

Seeing Lil turning left after leaving the inn, he fastened the eye patch again. Without further delay, he descended the stairs and quickly followed her.

He ran lightly and soon caught up with Lil.

"How much?"

The man appeared to be having fun as he looked at the surprised Lil. It was an amusing sight, seeing her react as if the soles of her feet were on fire.

“Who are you? Ugh!”

“I’m Ed.”

“ Hey! You followed me! You crazy guy!”

Lil took out her weapon again. She slashed his hand with the dagger when he tried to shake hands as an introduction.

“Isn’t this a bit too much?”

“Now you’re acting normal?!”

Lil took a quick step forward and snapped. Ed scratched his earlobe and opened his mouth.

“Oh, I’m sorry for the rudeness just now. You wouldn’t have gotten angry if I asked you first, right? I’ll ask seriously. How much?”

“I’m not a prostitute.”

“Are you kidding me? With that outfit? You’re sending the wrong signals.”

Lil, unable to reveal her true intentions, bit her lip.

“It’s just my style.”

“That’s interesting. I don’t intend to nag at other people’s clothes, but this taste is usually popular among pervs.”

“What?”

“Hmm. Anyway, I’m sorry that I misunderstood you.”

Lil ignored Ed and walked past him.

*‘This strange guy acted without manners and talked about strange things before, now he apologizes and talks like a normal person. It doesn’t look like he’d turn away anytime soon.’*

Lil grunted and strode forward. She tried to get rid of him by squeezing through the crowd of people, but she was easily followed. Seeing that the distance didn't widen either, she turned around and shouted.

"Why do you keep following me?"

"What's your name?"

*'What the hell is that kind of answer?'*

"What are you doing? Why are you following someone you don't even know?"

"I fell in love with you."

"What?"

"Is this what people call love at first sight? I followed you because I didn't want to lose you. Why don't you tell me your name?"

Lil used her dagger again this time. The sharp tip of the blade touched his neck.

"I hate people who stalk others, saying they like them, without asking for their opinions. Only perverts do that."

"But it's true..."

-----

Next