

Shota's Isekai NTR Adventure #Chapter 941: Nothing gained - Read Shota's Isekai NTR Adventure Chapter 941: Nothing gained

Chapter 941: Nothing gained

These vibrators were all the motivation that the dark elves needed to agree to whatever I asked of them.

In the end, there was nothing that was gained since the dark elves didn't know anything different from the ones that we had captured before. It seemed that they had only been restricted with the same contract as the dark elves that we captured previously.

So even when holding them like this, they couldn't give us anything new.

However, they agreed to work with us to break the contract that was placed on them just like the other dark elves.

This would be helpful since we could at least see that the dark elves came from what seemed to be different tribes.

The prime minister and I remembered the clothes that the dark elves captured in our kingdom wore. The clothes that the dark elves captured in the Midra Kingdom were completely different from those clothes.

That should mean that they came from a completely different group.

So there should be at least some kind of different information, it would just take some time to coordinate between the two groups.

That would be left to the prime minister and regent.

My job was done as soon as the dark elves broke.

Well, there was still one more thing that I had to do.

Since I was the one that broke them, I should at least be the one that took them out.

That's what I did with the other dark elves, so it should be the same this time.

Though the main difference was that I didn't even know the name of the two dark elves that I tortured this time. I had chosen not to ask them their names since I didn't want to know their names, but that just made it seem a bit uncaring...

Well, they were enemies of our kingdom in the first place.

It wasn't as if I would grieve over these two dark elves.

It was more of a conviction thing to take care of them with my own two hands.

The prime minister looked at me with a strange look and said, "Your majesty, you don't need to do this personally. There are others that can handle this matter for you."

The regent on the other hand was silent as he watched and waited.

It seemed that he was actually in favour of this, but that wasn't strange in the first place since the regent was someone that had executed his own father. He was someone that clearly approved of something like this.

I just took the axe that was brought to me and went forward towards the two dark elves that were mumbling their own things.

"More, give me more!"

"I curse you! I curse you!"

It was two completely different things that they were mumbling, but it seemed like they were completely obsessed with what they were saying. It was as if they didn't notice a single thing around them, even though they had been put in the execution stand.

I just walked right up behind them and lifted the axe up before bringing it down on the male dark elf.

With how heavy the axe was, it was more the axe doing the work than me doing the work.

It was a clean cut that separated the male dark elf's head from his body, but when it landed on the ground...it was turned around so that the eyes were looking up. It had landed in a position where those eyes were looking right up at me.

They were wide open and bloodshot, as if they carried the grudges of his entire life.

It was as if they wouldn't forgive whoever he held his grudge against.

I gave the axe that I held to one of the guards on the side and went forward to close the dark elf's eyes before dropping the head into the basket.

Then taking the axe back, I cut off the head of the female dark elf.

Her final look was completely different from the male dark elf.

There was only emptiness in her eyes, as if she had completely given up.

That was the difference between the two of them.

Once it was over, I didn't bother staying here any longer and left the clean up to the guards.

I went back to the royal study with the prime minister and the regent to discuss our next move.

"In the end, we've gained nothing."

That was the first thing that the prime minister said after we sat down.

Neither of us denied this since it was the truth.

We already had dark elf captives that were under the same contract as these dark elves in the Kite Kingdom. As long as we kept working with them, we would have eventually figured out a way to break the contract.

So there was no real need for these other dark elves.

Still, it was better to have them than to not.

At the same time...

"We can't say that we haven't gained a single thing. After all, we've learned more about the crystals and what happens if they were left alone for a long time." I said in a serious voice.

The prime minister and regent both looked at me with serious looks after hearing this before slowly nodding in agreement.

They had already heard about what happened and had seen the crystals that had been brought

back.

When they saw these things, there was no denying what had happened.

They naturally recognized that things were much more serious than it seemed.

But at the same time, there was something else that they had to address.

After all, it wasn't just the Kite Kingdom and the Midra Kingdom that had to deal with the increased monster activity.

Seeing that neither the prime minister and the regent said a thing, I asked, "What do we do about the other countries? Should we send help to them or leave them to their own devices?"

Chapter 942: Bigger fish

The prime minister had no hesitation as he answered, "Why should we help them in the first place?"

The regent was silent, but the look on his face made it clear that he agreed with the prime minister.

It seemed that neither of them had any intentions of helping those neighbouring countries that were also suffering the same fate as us.

It seemed that they didn't care what happened to those countries.

I slightly knitted my brows hearing this, but I couldn't help saying, "What if they can't contain the problem and that problem spreads to our country?"

The prime minister just calmly said, "We have our wyverns, it won't be a problem."

I couldn't disagree with this since if this world was based on the H-game, there would be a certain level that the monsters would reach before they stopped growing. That was how the setting in the game was, but there were things that could change now that this game was the real world.

It was possible that these monsters would keep growing until they reached a level that would be hard to stop even with wyverns.

After all, I had never expected the dark energy to corrupt all those bosses like that...

If they could make the bosses that strong, there was no telling what else the crystals could do...

So it felt like it would be safer to take care of these monsters before that happened.

It was just that there was the problem that these monsters were in the territory of other kingdoms and it wasn't possible for us to go to those kingdoms.

If we were to go to those kingdoms, all that would happen is that a war would start.

They were different from the Midra Kingdom where we had already expanded our influence. They wouldn't take the approach of these wyverns that kindly and would most likely fight it out with us.

So in the end, it really seemed like there was nothing that we could do...

The prime minister suddenly said, "Regardless, we have bigger fish to fry."

The way that he said this was as if he could already guess what I was thinking, so he was saying this to distract me. However, I couldn't help slightly knitting my brows when I heard what he said.

After all, I was confused why he would say this.

After waiting for a bit, the prime minister said, "We've heard back from the Tide Empire's side."

My brows immediately jumped up in surprise before I turned to look at the regent who was also with us.

This was a matter that concerned our kingdom's future.

At the same time, the regent should be considered an outsider at this point.

Maybe he might enter the inner circle in the future depending on how he acted, but this certainly wasn't the time for it.

The regent could see the way that I looked at him and he tactfully stood up to leave, but the prime minister raised his hand to stop him. He looked at the regent and shook his head before looking back at me with a firm look.

I was certainly surprised to see the prime minister standing up for the regent like this, but since he did it with such conviction...

"I never thought that you would become this close." I said with a faint smile.

The prime minister also revealed a faint smile as he said, "Well, we have similar ideas, so it was quite easy to become friends. At the same time, we have our fair share of things that we have to deal with."

The two of them were both looking at me when they said this.

I didn't like the way that they were looking at me.

It was almost as if they were looking at me like I was some kind of troublemaker...

Well, they didn't keep looking at me like this for long as they went back to what we were talking about.

The prime minister said with a more serious look, "In the future, I'm looking forward to leaving more of my matters to him and letting him act as my assistant."

I was certainly surprised by the prime minister's appraisal of the regent.

Well, if he thought that he was trustworthy, then I would trust him.

He was my brother in law after all.

Once that was settled, the prime minister said, "It seems that our fears have been realized and that Viper really is related to the royal family of the Tide Empire."

The regent deeply knitted his brows when he heard this, but I was rather calm about this news.

After all, didn't that just mean that our plan would be easier to put into action?

No, I could tell that something was off based on the way that the prime minister was acting.

It seemed that there was something else that was mixed into this news that was making him worry.

Seeing the way that I looked at him, he knew that I could already guess that there was more. With a bitter smile and a shake of his head, the prime minister said, "As you'd expect, there is more."

I wasn't surprised since I figured that there would be more for the prime minister to be acting this way. So I just gave a simple nod in response to this and waited to see what else he had to

say.

The prime minister didn't speak right away as if he was hesitating over something, but he eventually said, "There seems to be movement from the Tide Empire's royal family. It seems like there is something that is going on behind the scenes that no one knows about. They just know that it's big enough that the Tide Empire's royal family has stopped seeing others these

days."

I slightly knitted my brows hearing this and thought about it before saying, "Then you're saying that it's related to Ariel and the matter that she mentioned before?"

The prime minister slowly nodded to confirm this.

That made me knit my brows even more.

Chapter 943: Private consultation

The regent looked confused when he heard this, so he asked, "What are you talking about?" Even though the prime minister trusted him and told him a few things, that didn't mean that he knew everything.

He was very confused as he listened to them talking about this and he couldn't hold back his curiosity anymore.

I didn't say anything as I was still deep in thought, but the prime minister turned to explain everything to the regent. Though I was surprised how little the prime minister held back when he told this story to the regent.

It seemed that other than a few core things, he had basically told the regent everything.

Did they really get that close in these few days?

After the regent heard the whole thing, he just said, "What are you hesitating for? If you have the advantage, then you might as well take it."

This time, it was my turn to be confused as I had no idea what the regent was referring to.

But the prime minister suddenly revealed a smile after hearing this.

He looked at the regent with that smile, almost as if he was appreciating the regent for saying something like this. It even seemed like he was saying, "So you were thinking the same thing as me."

As for me, I just had no idea what they were thinking at all.

The regent just looked right back at the prime minister with a smile on his face.

After the two of them acted this way for a bit, it was my turn to say in a confused voice, "Alright, stop staring at each other like lovers already and tell me what you're thinking."

The two of them were a bit surprised to hear this and they looked at me with strange looks, but I didn't say anything as I looked at them and waited for them to explain what they were talking about.

The two of them were silent for a bit before the prime minister said, "Well, the advantage that we have is that we have Ariel, right?"

The regent slowly nodded in agreement.

I looked at them with one brow raised when I heard this, but then I slowly understood what they were talking about.

They were planning on using Ariel to mess with the Tide Empire's plans?

While I didn't know what kind of reaction she would have to this, it was obvious that it was unlikely that she would have a good reaction.

After all, this would certainly be bad for the Merman Empire if we were to do anything.

Still, it didn't seem like it would hurt to ask her...

So I just slowly gave a nod in the end to show that I agreed to this plan.

I could already guess how this was going to go.

...

"Of course I'll play along with you." Ariel said without any hesitation when we asked her about this.

I was completely caught off guard by this, but it didn't seem like the prime minister and regent were surprised at all by her answer. It even looked like they had already expected her to say this with the smiles that were on their faces.

I slightly knitted my brows before asking, "Won't this be bad for the Merman Empire?"

I had to admit that I felt strange asking this question.

I should be the last person that cared about something like this, but I still felt like I had to ask this.

Ariel looked at me with a surprised look like she wasn't expecting me to ask this, but then she said with an unhappy look, "Who told them to try and interfere with my life like this? It's clear that those dumb parents are planning to push this issue, so they can't blame me if I take some drastic action."

I was even more surprised to hear this.

Was she even the mermaid princess when she was saying something like this?

It felt more like she was on our side rather than on the side of the Merman Empire.

Ariel just ignored the way that I looked at her and turned to the prime minister to ask, "So are you planning on using that person that you captured before? The one that was related to the Tide Empire's royal family?"

The prime minister slowly nodded in agreement.

Ariel quickly said, "Then you should bring him to see my parents. That should be the easiest way to solve this matter."

All three of us were surprised to hear this.

Though I was more surprised by the fact that the prime minister and regent were surprised.

It seemed that even they hadn't gone as far as involving the king and queen of the Merman Empire in this matter. It seemed that they had only been planning on using Ariel to ruin the relationship between the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire.

Ariel didn't care at all as she said, "All we have to do is tell my parents that this person offended me and it should make them hold it against the Tide Empire. I at least have this value in the hearts of my parents."

All of us looked at her with even more shock.

After all, we had been planning on using a more subtle method to handle this matter, but Ariel wanted to directly involve the king and queen of the Merman Empire...

It didn't seem right...

I couldn't help asking, "Are you sure that you want to do this? You should know what the consequences will be."

Ariel just said with a happy smile, "It's fine, you don't know my parents as well as I do. I can tell you now that this will be the simplest way of handling this matter."

None of us could say a thing since she made a very good point.

It wasn't as if we were close to the king and queen of the Merman Empire, so we couldn't really say what they were like.

In the end, the prime minister gave a slow nod as he said, "Alright, we'll leave this matter to you."

Chapter 944: To the Tide Empire

It turned out that I was destined to see this matter through to the end.

We had made a decision to let Ariel bring Viper to see the Merman King and Queen, but it turned out that I was being dragged along as well.

As for the reason...

It was simply because I was the one that had made a contract with Ariel.

This was an important matter in mermaid culture, so I was being brought along to report this matter to the Merman King and Queen.

While this wasn't something that was in the game, so I really couldn't comment on this, I didn't think that she would lie about something this important. The one thing that I was worried about was how the Merman King and Queen would react to this matter.

In the game, this event never happened.

After spending some time with Ariel on land, the player would discover a plot in the Merman Empire and would find a way to go to the Merman Empire with Ariel. But that involved turning Ariel back into a mermaid and finding a way to go underwater.

The matter of Ariel turning into a human was brought up later, but it was at the point where the player would become friendly with the mermaids, so it was accepted quite easily.

If the matter of Ariel becoming a human was revealed to the Merman King and Queen before the relationship with the mermaids was built up...what kind of consequences would I be facing?

But it wasn't as if I could back down now since this was something that was related to the safety of my country.

Even if I didn't want to go, I still had to go.

In a worst case scenario, I would just be able to abandon my position as the king and escape to avoid the consequences falling on my kingdom.

The former fourth prince and the current prime minister would be able to take the throne since it would have been his in the first place.

Though I seemed worried, Ariel didn't seem worried at all.

She just patted me on the shoulder and said, "We're just going to see my parents, it's not anything special."

"Where are we going?" I couldn't help asking.

I had been so worried about meeting the Merman King and Queen that I had completely forgotten to ask about this. After all, it wasn't as if we could just bring Viper and the wyverns under the sea.

We were all currently flying on the wyverns, heading in a direction that Ariel pointed out.

Ariel just said with a teasing smile, "Well, it's a secret."

There was a bitter smile that appeared on my face when I heard this before I couldn't help shaking my head.

It really seemed like there was nothing that could be done against this mermaid princess. She really was someone that just did whatever she wanted to do...

I even couldn't help feeling a bit sorry for her parents, though I would never say that out loud.

Eventually, there were some people that figured out where we were going.

As those that were trained to ride wyverns, they had been trained on recognizing territory and reading maps. They would be in charge of scouting along with acting as main forces in the future, so it was easy for them to figure out where we were heading.

"We're heading for the territory of the Tide Empire." The royal guard who figured it out reported this to me.

Even they hadn't known where we were going since Ariel just gave a general direction.

The moment that we figured out that we were heading to the Tide Empire, we all immediately stopped and landed in the forest beneath.

Ariel, who had been enjoying the flight on the back of the wyverns, immediately felt the feeling of air rushing past her disappear. So she came off the wyvern and over to me to ask, "What's wrong? Why did we suddenly stop?"

"We're heading to the Tide Empire?" I asked her without answering her question.

Ariel's brows raised in surprise when she heard this before she said with a smile, "So you figured it out?"

The guards wanted to reach for their weapons, but I stopped them as I asked, "You want to tell me what's going on?"

Ariel gave a nod as she said, "Well, it is the Tide Empire, but it's also not the Tide Empire." All of us looked at her with a confused look when we heard this.

I looked at the royal guard that reported this matter and he gave me his map to look at.

With the path that we were taking, it didn't seem like we were heading to the center of the Tide Empire. It seemed like we were heading to the coast of the Tide Empire, which would make sense since we were going to see the Merman King and Queen.

When Ariel saw this map, she also came over and looked at it for a bit.

After looking at the map for a bit, she pointed at a spot that was in the middle of the ocean and said, "That is where we are heading."

All of us looked at her with a brow raised, as if we were questioning her on this.

Ariel just said with a smile, "It's interesting to see your maps. It's completely different from our maps."

We looked at her with even more confused looks hearing this.

Ariel just looked at the map with a smile for a bit longer before looking up to say, "There's an island there that only the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire know about."

"Huh?" We all had surprised looks on our faces hearing this.

Ariel continued by saying, "It's a secret place that we use to negotiate things when we need to meet with the Tide Empire."

I looked at her with a strange look before saying, "Is it really alright for you to be telling us

this?"

Ariel just gave a simple nod as she said, "It doesn't matter since we'll be heading there anyway."

I couldn't help thinking that she was right.

Chapter 945: Peace Island

Since we were traveling on the backs of wyverns, it wasn't as if we could just fly right into the territory of the Tide Empire.

The Tide Empire wasn't an empty vase, they would immediately find out if we entered their territory with wyverns. Once they found out, there was no doubt that there would be many consequences for us.

There was no doubt that they would be able to easily find out which country we came from.

The Tide Empire was one of the four empires of the human race, so their information network couldn't be looked down on.

They would certainly be able to find us and take revenge for flying our wyverns into their territory.

Though the territory of the kingdoms around the Tide Empire was a different story.

It was because the kingdoms that were around the Tide Empire were nothing more than cannon fodder in the first place. They were the first kingdoms that the Tide Empire had subdued as vassal kingdoms, but they hadn't taken these kingdoms into their fold for a reason.

The Tide Empire was completely surrounded by these vassal kingdoms for a reason.

It was because these vassal kingdoms were used as shields by the Tide Empire.

That was the only reason why they still existed.

Of course, since their only function was as a shield, they had been weakened by the Tide Empire to the point where they could barely function as a kingdom. They naturally didn't have the capability to track us as when we arrived in their kingdom.

Using this kingdom, we were able to make it to the ocean and then it was a matter of flying to the island that was in the middle of the ocean that Ariel pointed out.

This island was far enough from the Tide Empire that they wouldn't send anyone to watch over it.

According to Ariel, other than the times that it was in use, it was mostly abandoned.

Only by being abandoned would it not attract any attention at all, so that others wouldn't notice it.

When we arrived in the vicinity of the island, we couldn't help being surprised by it. First, there was the surprise that came from the fact that there actually was an island.

It wasn't on the map, so of course we were skeptical of its existence.

Second, we were surprised by the appearance of the island.

The island didn't seem like an island that was used for peace talks, but rather it seemed like an island that was abandoned. This seemed like an island that didn't have any facilities that could be used by people.

It seemed like one of those natural islands that formed on the ocean that was completely untouched by people.

So much so that I couldn't help asking Ariel, "Are you sure that this is the place?"

Ariel didn't seem discouraged at all by my words, she didn't even bother to answer as if she didn't hear my words at all. Instead, she just looked at the island for a bit before suddenly reaching into her chest.

All of us were shocked to see her do this and we couldn't help covering our eyes, though it wasn't just me that peeked out from between my fingers to look at her. She was a beautiful red haired girl with a full figure, so it wasn't as if she wasn't attractive at all.

Ariel just ignored all of this as she seemed to dig around in her cleavage for a bit, but then she suddenly pulled something out.

It was a small clam shell that she pulled out.

It was the kind of shell that would normally be on the chest of a mermaid, but she was holding it in her hand like some kind of purse.

That was because this thing was a purse in a sense.

The moment that I saw this, I recognized what this thing was.

It was something that was unique to the mermaids, but it was also similar to something that the elves had.

This was simply the Storage Ring of the mermaids.

This thing was known as the Storage Shell and it had the same function as the Storage Rings of the elves. It created a space inside of the shell that could hold things just like the Storage Rings could.

After pulling out this Storage Shell, Ariel opened it up and dug around inside of the Storage Shell for a bit before pulling something out. It seemed like some kind of token, but looking closely, one could see that it was a sand dollar that had something carved on it.

At the same time, with my sensitivity to mana, I could tell that this wasn't a normal sand dollar.

It seemed that this was some kind of magic item with the mana that was released from this sand dollar.

Ariel pulled this sand dollar out of her Storage Shell and then raised it up in front of her before saying, "In the name of the mermaid princess, reveal yourself."

Right after she said this, it was as if there was some kind of mist that cleared up in front of us. That mist spread out in front of us and soon revealed the true form of the island.

This wasn't an abandoned island at all, but rather a well developed island with many different buildings placed together like some kind of town.

This seemed more like a place that would be used to negotiate between two countries.

It seemed that the creators of this place had put an illusion spell on this island that hid its true appearance. Only when those with the proper items willed it would that illusion array disappear and the true form of the island would show itself.

Once she had cleared out the mist, Ariel gave a satisfied nod before turning to me to say, "Welcome to Peace Island."

Peace Island.

Was it a name that really fit this island where two powerful nations discussed matters that

would decide the fate of smaller countries?

Well, it wasn't my place to comment on this.

Chapter 946: Where is it?

Once the illusion array had been released and the true form of the island was revealed, Ariel had us land in the main square of the island.

The facilities of the island were built around this main square. With the way that everything was built, it was almost like a small town on the center of this island.

After landing, we could see the buildings more clearly and it was a surprise to see how well designed these buildings were. They weren't built with wood like most buildings would be in this medieval world, but rather they were all built with carved stone.

With the construction technology of this world, it was certainly strange seeing a town completely made from stone buildings.

For most kingdoms, it was only the important facilities like castles and churches that were made of stone.

It wasn't easy carving stone with the technological level of this world after all.

Even with magic, it was hard to do such a thing.

So a town that was completely made of stone was certainly a strange sight to behold.

But at the same time, this just went to show the power of the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire that they could construct such a thing.

This was the power of two of the two empires in the world.

After landing, it didn't seem like Ariel had any hesitation as she jumped off the wyvern and headed into the town. With the way that she walked around here, it was as if she was already familiar with this place.

That wasn't strange since she was the princess of the Merman Empire.

She should have already come to this place before in earlier negotiations with the Tide Empire. That was most likely why she even knew how to open up the illusion array from before.

Though if she had come here before, didn't that mean that she already had a way to become human?

Why had she been so surprised by the legs that she gained after making that contract with me?

It didn't seem to make any sense at all.

There was even a part of me that wondered if she was leading us into a trap...

But that part of me quickly disappeared when I saw what she did next.

Ariel went into one of the buildings near us without any hesitation. She even threw open the door with how quickly she went into the building.

After entering the building, Ariel started throwing all kinds of things around as if she was searching for something. She even seemed to be muttering to herself, "Where is it? Where is that thing?"

It seemed that I had been wrong about her.

Even though she knew the way to open up the illusion array, that didn't seem to mean that she had been here before. The reason why she had been so comfortable jumping into the building like that was just because of her personality.

I had already seen what kind of personality she had, so it wasn't strange to see her acting this

way.

I didn't get in her way since I didn't know what she was searching for, but it seemed like she was quite determined to find whatever it was.

After searching for a while, Ariel suddenly turned around and left this building.

She went into the building next door and did the same thing where she threw all kinds of things out of the way.

But looking back behind her, it seemed like she was leaving a trail of destruction with how messy things were left. She didn't seem to care at all as she just continued to search for the thing that she was looking for.

After five different buildings, it seemed like she finally found it.

"Ah, here it is!"

We all looked over in her direction when she shouted out and saw that she was holding a conch in her hand.

This seemed like an ordinary conch, but I could tell that it was anything but ordinary since I could feel the magic fluctuations coming from it. It should be some kind of magic item, though I had no idea what kind of abilities it had.

After pulling that conch out, Ariel just waved her hand at us with a smile on her face as she said, "Come on, let's go and call them."

"Call them?" All of us repeated with confused looks on our faces, but we still followed Ariel to the beach.

She walked right up to the edge of the sand, standing where the waves were able to reach her feet. She had even taken off her shoes and socks to stand right in the waves, letting the water wash over her feet.

She didn't go too far that she was swept out by the waves though

Once she was in the shallows, Ariel suddenly raised the conch and blew into it to let out a powerful toot.

This sound spread out all around us and it seemed like it was resonating with the waves itself. She blew on the conch for a bit until she suddenly stopped and looked expectantly at the ocean in front of her.

Only there wasn't a single thing that appeared in the ocean in front of her.

It was only Klein who had sharp eyes that said, "There are a few bubbles."

I narrowed my eyes to look at where he was pointing and found that there were indeed a few bubbles that were there, but they soon disappeared as well and everything went silent again.

As we were wondering what we should do, there was a sudden splash as the water of the ocean burst upwards and there were several figures that came out.

These figures jumped onto the beach and then pointed the tridents in their hands at Ariel who was standing there. Some of them also pointed their tridents at us, as if they were wary of us

as well.

Klein and the others went to draw their weapons, but I stopped them with a wave of my hand as I wanted to see what would happen.

Ariel didn't seem scared at all by the fact that tridents were pointed at her.

She just looked at the one that seemed to be leading this group and said, "Sebastien, do you really not recognize me?"

"Huh?" The one she called 'Sebastien' was shocked to hear this, but then an even more shocked look appeared on his face as he said, "Princess, what are you doing here?!"

Chapter 947: Doting parents (1)

As soon as Sebastien said the word 'princess', all of the others who had been pointing their tridents forward suddenly shook in shock.

All of them looked at Ariel before slow looks of recognition appeared on their faces.

Even though Ariel now had human legs, it wasn't as if they would fail to recognize her top half since her top half had never changed. Mermaids were humans from the waist up after all.

After looking at Ariel for a bit, Sebastien suddenly said, "Princess, where have you been? We've been searching far and wide for you all this time!"

Ariel just waved her hand casually before saying, "Don't worry about that right now. Can you just go and call my parents? There's something important that I want to discuss with them."

Sebastien and the other merman soldiers all had strange looks on their faces, but he eventually nodded in agreement. Though he didn't go back into the sea after agreeing to her request and rather came to her side as if he was protecting her.

It was one of the other soldiers that went back into the ocean.

When I looked closely at these soldiers that were now guarding Ariel, I was surprised to see that they actually had feet. Instead of having a large tailfin like Ariel did when I first met her, these people actually had human legs.

If they could have human legs, then why did Ariel need me to form that contract with her in the first place?

It was the same for in the game, why did they put that kind of setting in?

Was it because it seemed romantic, like in the Little Mermaid?

I couldn't help feeling that I really didn't know this world as well as I thought I did as I found all kinds of different surprises the more that I explored this world. It really seemed like what I had encountered in the game was nothing more than the tip of the iceberg...

Still, that knowledge from the game had given me quite the advantage in this world, so it wasn't as if I could complain.

It took around half an hour before the water burst once more and people appeared.

During this, the soldiers that had been protecting Ariel hadn't even let their guards down for even a second as they looked at us with wary looks. Even when Ariel tried to convince them that we weren't bad people, Sebastien just wouldn't accept this at all.

Finally, there was a large group that appeared from the sea.

When they landed, I saw that all of them had human legs...

It seemed that the mermaids really did have a way to gain human legs.

But it also wasn't strange the more that I thought about it since they had built the facilities on this island for a reason. If they couldn't gain human legs to come up here and negotiate, then this island was built for no reason.

It seemed that the event with Ariel really was nothing more than the bad design of the game. After this group appeared, the first thing that happened was...

There was a large man and a delicate and slender woman that came forward. The two of them immediately pushed aside Sebastien and his guards to head to Ariel's side.

Sebastien and his guards didn't say a thing and just let themselves be pushed aside, which showed the authority that these two had.

But there was nothing better than...

"Mom, dad!" Ariel said in an emotional voice when she saw the two of them running over to her.

As expected, these two were the Merman King and Queen.

After the two of them pushed past the guards, the first thing that they did was grab Ariel and pull her into their arms.

The beautiful and slender woman said, "My baby, where did you go all this time?"

The large man just simply cleared his throat and said, "Ahem, it doesn't matter. It's just good that you're back."

The two of them seemed like they didn't care about a single thing other than their daughter. There were tears that appeared in the corner of Ariel's eyes as she said, "Mom, dad..."

But then she calmed herself down and said, "It's all because you were trying to set me up with someone I didn't know at all! Did you think that I wouldn't find out about this?"

The Merman King and Queen were surprised to hear this before the Merman Queen said, "Darling, who said that we would do that? We were just listening to what those people from the Tide Empire were saying, we never had any intention of accepting this."

The Merman King cleared his throat again before saying, "Ahem, if there's anything that my precious baby doesn't like, of course we won't go through with it. All you have to do is tell us and we'll never force you to do anything you don't want to."

Ariel was surprised to hear this as she slowly looked up at her parents, as if she was seeing if they were being serious or not.

Seeing the way that they looked at her, she had no choice but to admit that they were indeed telling the truth.

Though it didn't seem like she was about to accept this that easily and give up on her plan to be free.

Ariel just slowly nodded before moving away from her parents.

The two of them looked a bit disappointed when they saw her acting this way, but they didn't force her to stay in their embrace. Instead, they just followed her as if they wanted to make sure that she was safe.

Ariel walked back over to where we were standing and then said, "There's something that I want to tell you."

The moment that the two of them heard this, they immediately narrowed their eyes and looked at me.

There was a bitter feeling that filled me when I saw this as I thought to myself...

"Please, can you not say it like that?"

Saying something like this to parents that were as doting as these two...it was a recipe for

disaster!

Chapter 948: Doting parents (2)

Ariel didn't seem to care at all as she came over to my side and stood there firmly beside me. The way that she was standing, it was almost as if she was about to introduce me to her parents. Especially with the way that she had said what she said just now...

But in the end, it wasn't that.

It was the other thing that we agreed on.

She gave a nod to Klein who had a hesitant look on his face, but he still gave the order to the other royal guards when he saw the nod that I gave him.

With that, Viper was led forward.

He was tied up and his mouth was gagged, but the look on his face made it very obvious that he had no idea what was happening. He even looked like he wanted to break free of this place as he kept looking around for a way to escape.

Once he had been brought forward, Ariel suddenly said, "This man offended me, so I captured him and brought him..."

Before she could finish, she was interrupted by a booming voice.

"What? He dares offend my precious daughter!"

"Execute him!" The Merman Queen quickly said right as soon as the Merman King's voice fell.

The Merman King didn't hesitate at all as he suddenly pulled out a trident that was different from all of the other tridents that the guards wielded. This trident wasn't different in the way that it was fancier than the other tridents.

This trident was different in the way that it was made of a strange material that seemed to be much stronger than the material used for the other tridents.

The Merman King's trident also released magical fluctuations which showed that it wasn't a normal trident, but also a magic item.

Sebastien and the guards moved after the Merman King pulled out his trident.

At first, I thought that they would stop him and hold him back, but...

It turned out that they had no intentions of doing that at all. Instead, they actually drew their tridents along with the Merman King and turned to look at Viper as if they wanted to rip him apart with their bare hands.

It seemed that it wasn't just the Merman King and Queen alone who doted on Ariel, but also the rest of the royal mermaid guards.

Perhaps the rest of the kingdom might even dote on her with how they were all acting...

But now wasn't the time to be thinking about that.

I looked at Klein and the royal guards and they all gave sighs before coming forward to stop the Merman King and the royal mermaid guards from tearing Viper apart. Though they didn't draw their weapons since their intentions weren't to start a war with the Merman Kingdom.

Viper also moved behind them as if he was cowering behind them.

I had to admit that the Merman King and all of these royal mermaid guards charging forward like this did seem quite terrifying.

It seemed like they didn't care that Klein and the others had come forward to stop them. It even seemed like they would barrel right through Klein and the others if they needed to.

But they didn't get the chance to do that as Ariel suddenly stopped them.

"Why are you cutting me off?!" She suddenly shouted which made the Merman King and the royal mermaid guards suddenly stop.

Then narrowing her eyes to look at her father, she said, "I wasn't done speaking yet, why are you making such a fuss?"

The way that she looked at her father wasn't the way that one should look at their father.

But the Merman King didn't dare speak back.

He immediately put away his trident and backed down.

The way that he looked was completely different from how he had been acting before. He was like some kind of poor animal that had been cowed into submission with how he backed down under Ariel's glare.

The other royal mermaid guards also put down their tridents and took a step back.

The Merman Queen just gave a cough and raised her hand to mediate as she said, "Alright, let's not get agitated. Let's all calm down and talk this through."

The way that she said this was as if she hadn't been the one that shouted 'Execute him' just

now.

Once all of them had calmed down, Ariel said, "Like I said before, he's someone that has offended me. Normally, I would have cut him down on the spot for this."

There was a pause from Ariel as she said this and it seemed like it was quite the well timed pause as...

"He deserves death if he offends our little precious baby!"

"That's right!"

The Merman King and Queen didn't hold back at all.

Though the royal mermaid guards didn't say anything, it was clear by the look on their faces what they were thinking.

After this outburst from them, Ariel continued by saying, "There is a problem with his identity though."

Both the Merman King and Queen were surprised to hear this since they didn't think that there was anyone that would force their daughter to hesitate over. After all, they knew what status their Merman Empire had in this world.

Ariel looked at Viper and said, "This person seems to be someone from the Tide Empire's royal family. He seems to be an illegitimate child from the Tide Empire's royal family, but he is still related to them."

Both the Merman King and Queen slightly knitted their brows when they heard this.

If it was any other place, they wouldn't care at all.

It was just the Tide Empire that was different since they could be considered relatives...

It was only the Tide Empire that they had to be considerate over...

Or at least that was what Ariel thought, but that didn't seem to be the case.

"So what if they're related to the Tide Empire? I'll make sure that they personally apologize

to you!" The Merman King suddenly declared.

Chapter 949: Doting parents (3)

This time, it was Ariel's turn to be surprised.

Even though she had been doted on by her parents, she didn't think that they would

completely ignore the consequences that this would pose to the Merman Kingdom just to support her.

After the Merman King made this declaration, the Merman Queen came forward to put a hand on Ariel's shoulder to say, "Darling, it doesn't matter who's against you, we'll always be on your side."

Ariel looked even more surprised hearing this.

Her mouth opened and closed a few times as if she didn't know what to say.

But her eyes eventually relaxed and she looked at her parents with a touched look as she softly said, "Mom, dad...thank you."

The Merman Queen tapped Ariel on the head before saying, "Silly girl, we're your parents. Do you need to thank us? It's our job to be on your side."

The Merman King didn't say anything, but he did give a strong nod to show his support.

Even Sebastien and the other royal mermaid guards gave small nods of agreement to show their support for this.

It was clear how much this royal couple loved their daughter, it was also clear how much the Merman Empire loved their princess. It almost seemed like they would do anything for her.

A long silence followed this touching moment before Ariel gave a cough to clear her throat and say, "Then what should we do about him?"

She was naturally referring to Viper who was still struggling and trying to break free.

Viper's eyes and ears weren't blocked, so it wasn't as if he couldn't see and hear everything that was happening. He wasn't a fool either, so he could tell what was about to happen to him. If he didn't find a way out of this place, the only fate that awaited him was death.

So he was desperately struggling to break free from his bindings.

It was too bad that he wasn't strong enough to break free.

All he did was embarrass himself by wriggling in place as he tried to break free. That was even stopped by the royal guards who were by him hitting him on the back of the head.

Both the Merman King and Queen narrowed their eyes to look at Viper.

Though they had made the declaration that they didn't care about the Tide Empire, that didn't mean that they would just execute him on the spot. They had calmed down and they knew that their precious daughter was concerned about not just them, but also the entire Merman Kingdom.

They couldn't just ignore her feelings and still execute this idiot on the spot.

So the only thing that they could do was think of a way to take care of this matter discreetly.

After thinking for a bit, the Merman King asked, "How did he offend you?"

Ariel narrowed her eyes to look at the Merman King when she heard this.

The look in her eyes was anything but kind.

Even the Merman Queen felt that there was something wrong with what her husband said and couldn't help slightly knitting her brows.

The Merman King quickly realized his mistake and waved his hand as he said, "No, no, it's not like that. I need to know what happened so I can properly handle this matter and punish this b*stard for his crimes."

Ariel just narrowed her eyes to look at the Merman King like she was judging him, but she eventually said, "He tried to hit on me and then even tried to touch me with his hands when I was walking about."

The eyes of the Merman King and Queen immediately filled with flames of rage when they heard this.

Even the royal mermaid guards flared up when they heard this.

They really looked like they wanted to shout for another execution with the way that they were acting.

But they were able to hold themselves back in the end.

The Merman King and Queen looked at Viper with cold eyes as he tried shaking his head and denying everything that Ariel had accused him of. Only the way that he did it made him seem even more guilty.

Well, even if he didn't do this, the Merman King and Queen wouldn't have believed him over their own daughter. So in the first place, Viper's fate had been sealed from the moment that she accused him.

After looking at him with those cold eyes for a bit, the Merman King said, "It's a good thing that we're here, aren't we? That just means that we'll be able to hold those Tide Empire b*stards responsible for what they've done."

The Merman Queen gave a firm nod of agreement.

The Merman King didn't hesitate as he said, "For his crimes, we'll cut off his tongue and arms so that he will never be able to do the same thing again."

The royal mermaid guards moved forward towards Viper as if they were about to take him

away.

Klein looked at me as if he was asking for my permission, but I just gave a simple nod for them to let Viper go.

After all, I could tell that there was a deliberate part of this punishment on the part of the Merman King.

There was no need to cut off the tongue was there?

Unless he could guess what Ariel wanted to do with Viper.

If he knew and he was still going along with it, it seemed like we were completely wrong about how much these two doted on their daughter. Or perhaps there was something happening behind the scenes when it came to the relationship between the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire.

Regardless of what it was, it wasn't necessarily a bad thing for us.

Viper kept struggling, but he was pulled away by Sebastien and the others for his punishment.

I was pulled back from my thoughts when the Merman King suddenly asked, "So how did you get human legs?"

Chapter 950: Meeting parents

When the Merman King asked this, the Merman Queen came forward and leaned down to look at Ariel's legs.

After looking at them for a bit, she said, "Right, how did you get these human legs?"

It was as if they hadn't noticed the fact that their daughter had been walking on land like this the whole time.

It seemed that they had been so worried about her that they didn't have time to think about this. Though one would think that the first thing that they would notice was that their mermaid daughter was walking on land like it was nothing, right?

Ariel had an awkward look on her face when she heard them ask this.

Seeing this, the two of them looked at each other with confused looks.

The Merman Queen asked, "Did you notice any of the humanizing potions missing when we went to get some earlier? I don't think that any of them were missing."

The Merman King shook his head before saying, "We can ask when we get back, but there shouldn't have been any missing."

"Then does that mean that she got them from one of those sea witches?" A concerned look appeared on the Merman Queen's face as she asked this. Then without even waiting for an answer from the Merman King, she went over to Ariel's side and started looking carefully at her legs.

She ran her hands up and down Ariel's legs as if she was trying to see if there was anything wrong with them.

The Merman King hesitated for a few seconds, but then he also came closer to Ariel to take a close look. He didn't run his hands over her legs like the Merman Queen was doing, but it was clear that he was looking very carefully at her as if he was trying to see if there was anything wrong as well.

Ariel just stood there with an awkward look on her face the entire time without saying a thing, as she let them just look at her legs like this.

It seemed like she was hesitating on saying something with the way that she stood there. After a while, she looked at me as if she was asking me for help, but I really didn't know what to say in this situation.

After all, I didn't even know what a humanizing potion was...

Even though there was a part of the game that involved spending time in the Merman Empire, it had never shown the mermaids coming to land. They had spent all of their time in the water and never came onto land in the game.

So I of course didn't know what this humanizing potion was.

Though it wasn't hard to guess based on the name and the way that they acted.

After a long silence, Ariel saw that I wasn't going to help, so she took a deep breath and said, "Mom, dad, I didn't use a humanizing potion."

The Merman King and Queen were both surprised to hear this as they looked up at her with confused looks. However, those confused looks quickly turned into looks of recognition and understanding as they looked back at Ariel.

They looked carefully at her legs for a bit before looking over at our group.

The way that they looked at us was as if they were scrutinizing us.

It wasn't a normal way of scrutinizing us, it was a way of looking at us as if they knew exactly what the situation was.

It wasn't strange since they were the Merman King and Queen, they must know more than normal mermaids did.

Feeling this gaze, Klein and the others all turned away and moved away from me.

With the way that they were acting, it was as if they didn't want any part of this.

This led to the Merman King and Queen to turn their gaze to me.

It was clear that they knew that I was the one that was responsible for Ariel's legs.

Since they knew, it wasn't as if I could hide it from them.

Ariel could also see this, but she took a deep breath and said, "Mom, dad, I was the one that wanted to make a contract with him."

The two of them immediately turned to look at Ariel with shocked looks before coming forward to say, "Darling, how could you do something like that? You know that there are dangerous humans in the world, you can't trust them that easily."

The Merman King then moved away from Ariel and started moving towards me in an aggressive manner. He was quite the large man and he had his chest puffed out like he wanted to threaten me.

I just had an awkward look on my face, but I didn't back down when I saw the Merman King approaching.

These were the consequences of my actions, so it wasn't as if I could shirk them.

Only it didn't come to pass.

Ariel left the side of her mother and ran in front of her father to say, "What are you doing? He's the one that was kind enough to help me and bring me all the way back here. If you want to hurt him, then you'll have to go through me first!"

Both the Merman King and Queen were shocked when they heard this.

They looked at Ariel with that shocked gaze for a bit before slowly revealing a very strange look.

They looked at her, then at me, and then back to Ariel.

As they looked at her like this, they slowly gave a sigh and looked like they had aged by several years as their shoulders slumped down.

Ariel just didn't seem to care as she stood there in front of me like she was going to protect me

until the end.

Seeing them like this, I couldn't help revealing a strange look as well.

Why did this feel so strange?

Well it was because it was like when a daughter brought her boyfriend home for the first time

and she fought with the parents because of said boyfriend.

Only there wasn't such a relationship between me and Ariel!

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Chapter 951: Always repay our debts

There was a tense silence that hung in the air before the Merman King and Queen finally let out sighs and just took a step back to give Ariel and me space.

It was only then that Ariel put her arms down, but she didn't move away from me.

She just stood there in front of me as if she was protecting me.

But the only thought that was on my mind was...

"Can you please not involve me in this family drama?"

I wasn't even part of that family, so how could I be included in this family drama in the first place?

I didn't want the Merman King and Queen to have the wrong idea about me...

Though if they didn't have the wrong idea, the right idea didn't seem that good either. After all, the reason that I had approached Ariel in the first place was because I wanted to use her as a defensive measure against the Tide Empire.

I didn't approach her for a good reason in the first place.

Of course, I wouldn't say that out loud.

After another silence, the Merman King just said, "Alright, let's not talk about that for now." He turned to look at the Merman Queen and she nodded before coming forward to ask Ariel, "What kind of contract did you sign? Is it the old pact or the new pact?"

"Which one?" Ariel had a confused look on her face when she heard this.

It was the same for me since there was no such thing in the game either...

Both the Merman King and Queen knitted their brows when they heard this, but the Merman Queen kept asking, "Yes, which one did you make?"

Ariel was still confused, but she slowly said, "I just used the one that I read about before. The one where if we exchange flesh, we'll be able to take the form of each other."

The Merman King and Queen both had ugly expressions when they heard this.

It seemed that we had chosen the worst of the two options...

But that wasn't what I thought since this was the kind of thing that was easily broken in the game.

In the game, all we had to do was travel to the territory of the sea witches and do a quest to break the contract. It was actually quite the simple quest that it didn't seem like it would be a problem to do.

After all, this was just how it was in the game or else the player wouldn't be able to access the Merman Kingdom.

With a cough, I said, "Isn't it easy to solve this problem with the help of the sea witches?"

Both the Merman King and Queen immediately glared at me.

Even Ariel was looking at me with a strange look when I made this suggestion.

After a long and awkward silence, the Merman King finally said in a slow and deliberate voice, "You want to cooperate with the sea witches?"

I slowly gave a nod even though I felt strange about the way that he asked me this. "There's a reason why we banished those sea witches from our Merman Empire in the first place!" The Merman King suddenly roared which made me take a step back in surprise.

I was completely caught off guard by how intense the reaction of the Merman King was.

It seemed like he thought that this was something that absolutely couldn't be accepted which was just strange to me.

In the game, there was no problem for the player to travel between the Merman Empire and the territory of the sea witches. It was something that was easily done after the territory of the sea witches was unlocked on the map.

Even if there were a few things in the lore of the game that talked about the bad relationship between the Merman Empire and the sea witches, it didn't seem bad enough that there would be such an intense reaction.

It really didn't seem to make sense at all...

Or at least that was the case for a person like me who had knowledge from the game.

As I slowly thought about it, I figured that this wasn't the case for the people that lived in this world.

It seemed that this was another one of those places where there was a disconnect between this world and the world in the game. This piece of lore seemed much more important than it did in the game.

Ariel stepped forward and pulled me aside before giving me a lecture on the sea witches.

It seemed that the history between the Merman Empire and the sea witches was much deeper than I thought. With the way that she was explaining it, I could understand why the Merman King had such an intense reaction.

But the problem was that the help of the sea witches really was the easiest way to solve this issue.

This didn't seem like it would be a viable option, so I guess we could see what other methods there were.

It wasn't that important right now.

The Merman King and Queen seemed like they had a few more things to say about the sea witches, but they eventually calmed down once they finished their rant.

After they calmed down, they turned to see the royal mermaid guards who were coming back to report.

They went forward close to the Merman King and Queen so that they could report without us hearing what they had to say.

The Merman King gave a nod in response before saying, "Go and contact the Tide Empire. Tell them to come here so we can talk about this."

The royal mermaid guards nodded before heading off to follow his orders.

The Merman King was silent for a bit before turning to me to say, "Human, remember that we will always repay our debts."

Then without waiting, he turned and took the Merman Queen's hand before heading towards the buildings. It seemed like they were planning to stay here for the night.

But as he was leaving, he stumbled when he heard...

"Dad, his name's Zwein!"

Chapter 952: Man to man

The sun quickly set and soon it was night time.

Before the sun had set, we saw what happened to Viper in the end.

They had been very efficient with their work, cutting off both his arms and his tongue without much blood. It seemed that they had used flames to sear off the wounds that had been left behind so that he wouldn't die from blood loss or infection.

The sight of Viper just laying there without any arms and eyes that were completely dim created a very sorry sight.

One might even feel sorry for him if they didn't know what he had done before.

But we wouldn't feel that way since we knew the full extent of his crimes.

After the sun set, I headed out to the beach.

This was without a doubt a very proper beach resort that was constructed as a place for the Tide Empire and Merman Empire to negotiate. Since it was a proper beach resort and it had been a long time since I had a vacation, I took full advantage of this trip to walk on the beach at night.

It would only have been better if I had been able to bring my wives along, but not everything could be perfect.

With the moon high up in the sky and the waves crashing on the beach, it really created a perfect mood.

At the same time, I was able to convince Klein and the others to not follow me. Though it wasn't easy since they were guards that were supposed to protect me in the first place.

Still, I was able to convince them to rest and relax as well.

With the mood that this place set, it really seemed like it would be one of those scenarios where I would meet a beauty on the beach.

As I walked along, I even saw a figure that was just sitting there under the moon on the beach.

It really seemed like I would be having an encounter...but it wasn't the kind of encounter that I thought it would be.

Instead, it was a completely different kind of encounter.

When I came closer, I found that the figure was getting bigger and bigger until it was even bigger than me. As I came closer, I was able to see with the light of the moon that this was a large man who was sitting there on the beach.

Once I came close enough, I found that it was the Merman King sitting there.

With the way that he was sitting there, it seemed like he was thinking about something.

I didn't want to disturb him, so I turned around to leave. Only when I did, his voice suddenly rang out, "What are you sneaking off for? Come and sit, let's have a talk."

When he said this, there was no way that I could just leave.

There was a bitter smile that was on my face at first, but that disappeared when I turned around and went over to sit down beside the Merman King. He didn't seem to notice at all, he didn't even seem to care that I sat down beside him as he kept staring out at the ocean.

There was an awkward silence that lingered in the air as we just sat there.

It didn't seem like the Merman King was going to talk and there really wasn't anything that I could say.

But after a long silence, he finally said, "Thank you."

I was confused at first since I didn't know what he was thanking me for, but I slowly understood why he was thanking me.

It was because of Ariel.

She had run off on her own and there was no telling what would have happened to her if I hadn't found her. While she was a powerful princess of the Merman Empire, that didn't mean that she would be able to handle everything that was on land.

If I hadn't found her, there would have been terrible things that could have happened to her.

At the very least, I didn't do anything too bad other than making that contract with her.

I slowly turned to look at the Merman King who just sat there staring out at the ocean without even looking at me.

After another long silence, I said, "Well, I didn't do it out of the kindness of my heart."

The Merman King gave a slow nod without saying anything.

It didn't seem like he would blame me, which was why I had chosen to confess in the first place. I knew that a relationship was something that had to be built from both sides, it wasn't something that could be built if one side was lying to the other.

Honesty was the best policy when showing sincerity.

There was another long silence that hung there in the air, but I didn't mind since this let me see another side of the Merman King.

I had only ever seen the doting parent side of him, but it seemed like there was the calm and collected ruler side of him.

Though it was only natural that there was this side of him in the first place, or else he wouldn't have been able to rule over a large empire like the Merman Empire.

The two of us sat in silence like this for a bit before he suddenly stood up.

As he stood up, he said, "Regardless of what happened in the past, if you dare have any intentions towards my daughter..."

He didn't finish his sentence, he didn't even look at me as he turned around to walk away. The Merman King just left me with this as he left.

There was a bitter smile that was on my face as a part of me regretted not having the chance to explain, but it didn't matter since there was no need for these kinds of words in man to man talks like this.

There were chances in the future and this was our first time learning from each other.

I'm sure that I will be able to clear this misunderstanding in the future.

Chapter 953: What could it be?

"What is this?" A voice suddenly roared out.

All those that had been in the throne room couldn't help flinching when they heard this voice roaring out. They all looked like they would rather be anywhere else, but their positions

didn't allow them to leave.

That was because they were all ministers of the Tide Empire.

If it was anywhere else, these people would receive the best treatment because of their status.

It was only here that they had no choice but to cower.

That was because the one that was in front of them was the one that ruled the Tide Empire, the Tide Emperor.

After asking this question, the Tide Emperor just looked at the ministers that were standing there silently in front of him.

As they felt his gaze sweep over them, they all lowered their heads. It was as if they were a bunch of naughty kids that were trying to avoid being chosen by the teacher.

The Tide Emperor looked even more disappointed when he saw them acting this way, but he didn't say anything as he just gave a simple snort.

Instead, the Tide Emperor turned to look at the one that brought the letter and said, "Well, what do they want this time?"

The way that he said this was very guarded, as if he was afraid of what the letter would say. After all, this was a letter from a very special place, a place that even he as the emperor of the Tide Empire needed to be wary of.

It was from the Merman Empire, the reason why the Tide Empire had become one of the strongest human empires.

The messenger slowly opened the letter and said, "The letter is a letter asking for a meeting with your majesty."

The Tide Emperor slightly knitted his brows when he heard this.

This was certainly not what he had expected, but this wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

After all, there had been talks about a royal engagement with the princess of the Merman Empire. If they were just asking for a meeting, didn't that mean that they were planning to move forward with this?

Though the Tide Emperor couldn't help feeling that something was off since this was a very short notice letter. It seemed unnatural how they suddenly asked for a meeting like this.

It didn't seem like there was a need to rush like this since they had already been discussing this a long time.

Something must have happened in the Merman Empire for them to suddenly send a letter like this.

That was what the Tide Emperor was worried about.

However, it wasn't as if he could just ignore this invitation to a meeting.

If he were to do that, it would be like looking down on the Merman Empire. For the Tide Empire, their relationship with the Merman Empire was the most important thing.

If their relationship with the Merman Empire was ever destroyed, then it was almost certain that they would lose their power on the continent. Once that happened, it would mean that their Tide Empire would be attacked by the other three empires and torn apart.

That was just how it was with human greed.

So there was nothing that the Tide Emperor could do other than go along with this. After thinking about it for a bit, the Tide Emperor said, "Where's the crown prince?" "Royal father, your son is here." A handsome looking young man with blue hair stepped forward and bowed slightly as he said this.

When the Tide Emperor saw this handsome looking blue haired young man, he gave a satisfied nod. The way that he looked at him was completely different from the way that he had looked at the ministers just now.

It was clear by the way that he looked at him how the Tide Emperor thought of this crown prince.

At least the ministers couldn't compare to the position that the crown prince had in his heart. After looking at him with a look of approval for a bit, the Tide Emperor said, "Prepare to head to Peace Island with me. You will meet the Merman Princess with me."

When the crown prince heard that, his eyes lit up.

He had seen a picture of the Merman Princess before and there was nothing for him to complain about. The moment that he saw the picture, he had actually fallen in love with her.

Since he was going to meet the princess, there was no doubt that this would be about his engagement which filled him with even more joy.

The crown prince bowed his head even more as he said, "Yes, royal father. Your son will follow you wherever and whenever."

The Tide Emperor slightly knitted his brows hearing this, but he chose to ignore it in the end.

Instead, the Tide Emperor turned his eyes back onto the ministers and said, "Prepare the guards and the gifts for the Merman Empire." He narrowed his eyes before saying, "If there's even a single mistake..."

All of the ministers gulped when they heard this, but they quickly said with bowed heads, "Yes, your majesty. We will not make a single mistake."

The Tide Emperor narrowed his eyes even more, but he eventually just waved his hand.

Seeing this, the ministers all left the throne room while letting out sighs.

The looks on their faces was as if they had been pardoned from an execution.

The only one that looked excited was the crown prince who seemed to be lost in some kind of fantasy.

Once the Tide Emperor was alone in the throne room, he looked again at the letter that had been presented to him. He looked at it carefully as if he was trying to figure something out.

After a long silence, the Tide Emperor couldn't help saying to himself, "Just what could it be? What do they want that they would send this message all of a sudden?"

Chapter 954: My fair goddess

Two days later, the ship carrying the Tide Emperor and his group arrived on Peace Island.

When they arrived, they found that the Merman King and the others from the Merman Empire were waiting for them.

Though they were surprised to see the full group of royal mermaid guards that were behind them.

This seemed different from the other meetings that they had before.

It seemed like they were here to fight rather than to have a peaceful meeting.

The Tide Emperor and his group couldn't help feeling a bit worried when they saw the Merman Empire group like this, but that worry was soon dispelled after they landed and disembarked from the ship.

The Merman King came forward with a smile as he said, "It's good to see you again!" The Tide Emperor immediately revealed a smile as well as he took the outstretched hand offered by the Merman King as he said, "You as well!"

Though the two of them were smiling, the smile never really reached their eyes.

This was normal for both of them since they were rulers of their nation and hiding their emotions like this was necessary. Even if there was a good relationship between their nations, it wasn't as if that couldn't change at any moment.

That was just how politics went.

The two of them exchanged a few simple greetings before the Merman King invited the Tide Emperor's group onto the island.

Though there was no real need to be invited, the Tide Emperor acted as if he didn't mind this at all. He was more than fine with letting the Merman King act as the host since he was the one that invited them here in the first place.

The Tide Emperor wanted to go along with this to see what the Merman King was planning.

However, there was one thing that made him knit his brows.

He didn't catch sight of the Mermaid Princess, Ariel.

She was supposed to be the other party that was involved in today's matter, so it was strange that he didn't see her at all. She should have been here for this meeting since it involved her.

So he couldn't help feeling strange not seeing her.

As for whether he would recognize her or not...

Since she was supposed to become the Tide Empire's daughter in law, he naturally had someone find a painting of her so that they would be able to recognize her right away.

That was why the Tide Emperor was certain that Ariel wasn't here.

If she wasn't here, then where was she?

It turned out that he was just thinking too much.

When they arrived at the buildings, they found that there was a group waiting for them. Among this group was a beautiful young lady with bright red hair, it was so bright that it was hard to miss her.

This was Ariel.

Seeing this, the Tide Emperor let out a secret sigh of relief as he realized that he was just thinking too much about this.

The relationship between the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire had existed for several centuries now, it wasn't something that could be broken that easily. So even if they had rushed to invite them over, it certainly wasn't anything bad.

Perhaps it was an internal matter for the Merman Empire?

Regardless of what it was, it didn't seem like there were any downsides for them.

As for the blue haired crown prince, his eyes lit up the moment that he saw Ariel.

It was as if everything around him had disappeared and she was the only thing that he could

see

Unfortunately for him, this wasn't a mutual feeling.

Ariel wasn't even looking at him, she wasn't even looking at the Tide Empire group.

She was currently yawning as if she was bored of all of this.

But even then, the blue haired crown prince still found her cute.

Once they arrived, the Merman Queen came forward to greet the Tide Emperor as well.

The Tide Emperor responded in kind with a smile on his face.

The others also started exchanging greetings, showing that they were quite close with one another.

There was nothing that seemed off.

But the crown prince didn't seem to care about any of this as his eyes were still on Ariel.

He reached behind him and pulled out a bouquet of roses that he had been hiding the entire time. With how perfect they were, it seemed like he had put in quite a bit of effort to make sure that they were properly preserved.

With a confident smile on his face, he moved towards Ariel with the flowers at the ready.

Once he came over, the crown prince fell to one knee and raised the flowers in front of him to present to Ariel as he said, "Oh, my fair goddess. I present these humble flowers to you in hopes of receiving one glance of your beautiful eyes."

The way that he said this was very smooth and coupled with his handsome looks, he might have been able to fool some normal girls.

Only...

"What are these for? Can you eat them?" Ariel said with a tilt of her head.

The smile on the crown prince's lips twitched when he heard this.

He had to look at Ariel again as if he was trying to figure out if she was being serious or not, but Ariel just looked at him with the same confused look. When he saw her looking at him like this, he couldn't help feeling that she looked cute.

At the same time, he didn't think that she was doing this on purpose, so it wasn't as if he could blame her.

But in reality...she was doing it on purpose.

She was purposefully acting like she didn't understand what he was saying, playing the fool

so to say.

After all, the best way to counter those slick playboys who were confident in their actions was to act the fool to throw them off.

Chapter 955: Someone you might know

The Merman King and Queen both laughed on the inside.

They knew that this was their daughter's special move which she had already used on many bachelors in their Merman Empire, so they knew that this was effective.

This was further proven by the crown prince who looked like he had no idea what he was supposed to do now.

The Tide Emperor showed a trace of disapproval for the crown prince for the first time.

At a time like this, he was faltering.

This wasn't like the crown prince that he raised, but he also didn't say anything as he watched what would happen. This was a matter between the crown prince and Ariel, so it wasn't as if he could just butt in if he wanted.

The crown prince actually didn't have a backup plan since he had been confident that this would work.

He had gone in with the full confidence that he would be able to make Ariel his, but in the end...he was just left there with a dumb look on his face.

This was a stark contrast from the normal confident and handsome crown prince.

If there were any of his fans that could see him now, they certainly would have been disheartened.

This was why they said love was blind.

The crown prince was blind when it came to his own love and didn't care even though he had been made a fool of.

It was just that Ariel was already done with him and had moved aside so that he could no longer talk to her.

The Tide Emperor could only reveal an awkward look as he stood there with the Merman King and Queen. The situation didn't look good for him or the crown prince, but at least they were here to discuss this matter.

So the Tide Emperor said, "Shall we go in and talk?"

The Merman King and Queen had one last look at the crown prince who was standing there like a fool before nodding in agreement and leading the way in.

The room that they sat down in was a room that had already been prepared for them, so there were refreshments that were already waiting for them.

The Tide Emperor didn't hesitate at all as he sat down at one side of the table.

When the Merman King and Queen sat down as well, the Tide Emperor asked, "Your majesties, was there a need to call this urgent meeting? I'm sure that this was something that we could have discussed at leisure, there was no need to rush this, right?"

He didn't have a blaming tone as he said this, he just had a curious tone which showed that there were no ill intentions behind his words.

Only, the Merman King and Queen didn't seem to be on the same page.

The Merman King said, "Of course there was a need to call this meeting. There's something important that I want to discuss with you."

"Huh?" The Tide Emperor couldn't hide the surprise and confusion that appeared on his face.

But that expression didn't last long as he forced himself to calm down.

While he was curious what they wanted to discuss, he didn't let himself show it since he couldn't give up that information. If they were to misunderstand because of his reaction, then that would be bad for the Tide Empire.

This was a skill that one trained when one became a ruler.

One couldn't react easily or else one might be misunderstood.

So he forced himself to keep calm as he asked, "What important matter?"

The Merman King didn't explain what he meant by this as he looked at the Tide Emperor with slightly narrowed eyes.

When the Tide Emperor saw this, he couldn't help feeling more and more confused.

He just didn't understand what the Merman King was doing looking at him like this.

The Tide Emperor tried to think about what this could all be about, but he just couldn't think of a single thing. It didn't seem like his Tide Empire had done anything to the Merman Empire.

Seeing that the Merman King wouldn't say anything, the Tide Emperor finally couldn't take it anymore as he shook his head and said, "I have no idea what you mean."

Since he couldn't figure out what was happening, he decided not to beat around the bush.

With the relationship that was between the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire, there was nothing to gain from beating around the bush.

The Merman King didn't answer the doubts of the Tide Emperor right away. Instead, he turned to look at one of the royal mermaid guards who gave a nod back and left the room. The Tide Emperor was as confused as usual, but he waited to see what this would be.

When the royal mermaid guard came back, he wasn't alone.

He was leading someone by some kind of rope that was attached to that person's neck.

But that wasn't the thing that attracted their attention when they saw this person. The thing that attracted their attention right away was the fact that this person had their eyes blindfolded, was missing their arms, and seemed to be unable to speak. The group from the Tide Empire just couldn't understand why this person was brought in for them to see. However, after this person was brought in, the Merman King just calmly looked at them and said, "I think that this is someone that you might know."

"Huh?" The entire Tide Empire group was shocked and confused when they heard this.

There wasn't a single person that recognized the one that had been brought in.

Even if that person was complete, they wouldn't have recognized him because they had never seen this person in their life.

The Tide Emperor deeply knitted his brows when he came back to his senses.

He didn't believe that the Merman King would do something like this for no reason, so did that mean that this person was somehow related to the Tide Empire?

Chapter 956: How do you want to settle this?

No, it didn't matter if this person was related to the Tide Empire or not.

The reason that the Merman King brought out this person must mean that he was planning on using this person to negotiate something with them.

The Tide Emperor had no idea what he would want to negotiate, but he knew that it wouldn't be a good thing.

It would never be a good thing if someone was pulled out like this.

But why?

Why did the Merman King suddenly do something that would clearly hurt the relationship between them?

Did something happen that the Merman Empire didn't hesitate to break their relationship like this?

The Tide Emperor was deeply bothered by this since the link to the Merman Empire was the greatest thing that the Tide Empire was relying on. While they wouldn't lose everything that they had if they lost that connection to the Merman Empire, it would still hurt them very much to lose that connection.

So that was the worst case scenario that had to be prevented at all cost.

Only...who was this person?

There wasn't a single member of the Tide Empire group who recognized the person that had been brought out.

All of them even started to wonder if this was some kind of trap that was set up by the Merman Empire to get something from them.

After a long silence, the Tide Emperor slowly shook his head to say, "I have no idea who this person is." Then after a pause, he added, "Has this person offended you in some way, your majesty?"

The Merman King calmly looked at the Tide Emperor as if he was scrutinizing him.

The Tide Emperor could see this, so he calmly looked right back at the Merman King as if he was proving his innocence.

The Merman King suddenly said, "He's someone who caused trouble to my daughter."

The entire Tide Empire group took a cold breath when they heard this.

Since they had dealings with the Merman Empire, they naturally knew some things about the Merman Empire. The most famous rumour of all from the Merman Empire was...the

dotingness of the Merman King towards his daughter.

This was something that everyone in the Merman Empire knew, but at the same time, it wasn't as if they didn't understand. The love for the princess in the Merman Empire was something that was widespread.

Everyone loved Ariel and would fiercely protect her, so there was no one that dared to provoke the Merman Empire's princess in the Tide Empire.

This was someone that they had made sure to recognize so that they wouldn't accidentally offend her. This was someone that had been put on the top of the danger list just because of how they treated her.

They couldn't believe that someone would dare to offend her.

However, the Tide Emperor wasn't just willing to accept this accusation without a fight.

With slightly knitted brows, the Tide Emperor said, "Your majesty, this is not someone that I recognize, so how can you say that they are from the Tide Empire? Are you trying to blame us for something that we haven't done?"

This time, it was the Merman King's turn to knit his brows.

He looked at the Tide Emperor and said, "Are you trying to deny responsibility for this matter?"

The Tide Emperor couldn't help being taken aback by the way that the Merman King said this.

It was almost as if he had concrete proof that this person was related to them.

The Tide Emperor didn't dare say too much, so he said, "If there is responsibility, we will accept it. But you cannot blame us for something that isn't related to us."

The Merman King gave a nod before reaching his hand out towards one of the royal mermaid guards.

That guard handed over some papers that the Merman King took before he threw them on the table in front of him. Throwing these papers down, the Merman King said, "This one is an illegitimate child of your Tide Empire's royal family and you want to deny all responsibility?" The Tide Emperor and the rest of his ministers were all shocked to hear this.

He quickly picked up the paper that had been thrown onto the table and looked through them with his ministers.

As they read through these reports, the looks on their faces became uglier and uglier.

That was because these reports had clearly stated who Viper was and how he was related to the Tide Empire.

He was the son of one of the dukes of the Tide Empire, who was also the former second prince. When the crown prince took over as the emperor of the Tide Empire, that former second prince had become the duke.

Viper was one of the sons that he had with a maid and that had been sent away because the duke didn't want anything to do with him. Though the duke had already had plenty of illegitimate children with other maids before.

It was just that these illegitimate children had never caused a mess like Viper had.

With those ugly looks on their faces, the Tide Emperor and the ministers slowly looked up at Viper.

When the Tide Emperor looked closer at Viper, he could see traces of his brother in Viper's face. He hadn't looked at Viper closely before, but now that he did... he could clearly tell that this person was related to his brother.

As such, he really was related to the Tide Empire's royal family.

This was a very big international incident!

Seeing the way that the Tide Emperor and his ministers looked at Viper, the Merman King could tell that they were seeing the resemblance between him and the duke.

There was no denying the claims anymore, so there was no need for him to hold back anymore.

The Merman King slapped his hand down on the table and shouted, "How do you want to

settle this?"

Chapter 957: Off the table

The entire group from the Tide Empire trembled when they heard this.

Even though the Merman King was asking them this question, it wasn't as if they had an answer for him. After all, there wasn't a single one of them who had expected things to go this way.

Even if the Tide Emperor had expected something to go wrong, that didn't mean that he had expected all of this.

There was no way that any of them would have expected this since they didn't even know of Viper's existence.

So the only thing that they could do now was try to figure out what happened and how to minimize the damage.

To them, Viper's life meant nothing.

To them, it was better for them if Viper died as soon as possible so that the anger of the Merman Empire was appeased.

Since it was his fault that this mess was created, his death would be the solution to the problem.

Though it wasn't as if they could just kill him in front of the Merman King and the rest of the group from the Merman Empire. If they were to do that, then it would be seen as an act of aggression.

So the only thing that the Tide Emperor could do was...

"I apologize for whatever mess this fool has caused. I hope that you will accept my sincere apologies so we can discuss what to do next." The Tide Emperor even lowered his head as he said this.

That was the only thing that he could do in this situation.

Since he was the emperor, the one that had the highest status, he could only offer his head. Well, it wasn't his head that was being offered, but rather his face.

He would take this humiliation to apologize to the Merman Empire so that they could put this matter behind them.

The ministers were all surprised by this, but they quickly bowed their heads as well.

Since the emperor had already bowed his head, then what was stopping them from bowing their heads.

It was only the crown prince who just awkwardly stood there without bowing his head.

His eyes were on Ariel who was standing on the side watching all of this.

The reason why he didn't want to bow was because Ariel was here.

This was the girl that he loved, so he didn't want to embarrass himself in front of her. He didn't want to bow his head and put himself down like that, but he had no choice in the end.

Especially when the Tide Emperor sent a glare in his direction.

It was almost as if the Tide Emperor was saying, "Bow or die."

So the crown prince had no choice but to bow his head to the Merman King along with the rest.

The ministers all gave sighs seeing this, but they didn't say a thing.

After all, they knew that this was a matter that was far beyond any of them.

After sincerely bowing his head for a bit, the Tide Emperor looked back up at Viper and said, "If possible, I hope that you will allow us to take him back so we can properly punish him."

There was a cold tone in his voice that also had a trace of anger to it.

It was clear that if Viper were to land in the Tide Emperor's hands, there wouldn't be a good ending for him.

That made Viper give a rare reaction as he revealed a trace of fear, but then the same despondent look appeared on his face.

The Merman King shook his head as he said, "No, we will be the ones that will punish him," The firm tone of his voice made it clear that he would brook no argument.

The Tide Emperor was a bit surprised to hear this, but he didn't push the issue as he just said with a nod, "As you wish. You are the ones that he has offended, so it is your right to handle him however you wish to handle him."

Then after a moment of hesitation, he said in a slow voice with an awkward cough, "As for the other matter that we've discussed before..."

"There's nothing to discuss." The Merman King cut him off right away.

The Tide Emperor was shocked to hear how resolute the Merman King was, but he didn't give up as easily this time. After all, this was a very important issue for his Tide Empire.

It had been a long time since the royal families of the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire had been connected, not since the progenitor of the Tide Empire had there been a connection like this between them.

So even before the matter of the relationship with the Merman Empire, what the Tide Emperor was worried about was the decline in mermaid blood in the veins of the citizens.

At this rate, it would only be a matter of time before all the mermaid blood was diluted and they became normal humans.

If the Tide Empire lost the only thing that they could rely on to compete with the other human empires, then it would only be a matter of time before they were destroyed.

Though it wasn't as if they could go against the Merman Empire and force them to marry into their Tide Empire.

So this time, the Tide Emperor said, "I'm sure that this is just an unrelated matter, there's no need for us to allow this fool to sour the relationship between our two empires."

Then turning to the crown prince, he said, "This isn't something that us elders should be interfering with in the first place. This is a matter between the younger generation, so I think that we should let them decide."

This was the only way that the Tide Emperor could argue since he couldn't force them to allow the engagement.

He believed that the crown prince would be able to win the heart of the mermaid princess,

Ariel.

It was just that...

Chapter 958: Warm face to a cold butt

The crown prince's eyes lit up when he heard this.

He wasn't a fool, he could tell that based on the way that the talks were going, it seemed like it was very likely that the engagement would have been cancelled.

So he could also tell that his father was trying to figure out a way to keep this engagement.

As for the method, he was very confident in the method used.

The crown prince was very confident in his own abilities after all, he considered himself a very eligible bachelor. This was true whether it was in the Tide Empire or outside of the Tide Empire.

So if he was given a chance, he would surely be able to seduce Ariel.

The Merman King didn't say anything, but that was because he knew that it was impossible to use words to convince these people. The best way to convince them was to let them play their tricks and then shut them down.

After all, he was certain that his daughter wouldn't fall for this fool of a crown prince.

After what he saw, he knew that this crown prince was the last kind of person that his daughter would fall for.

Seeing that the Merman King didn't say anything, the crown prince took this as a silent agreement and moved forward to approach Ariel who had been sitting on the side the entire time. She didn't say anything, it didn't even seem like she had been listening the entire time even though this matter was about her.

But she did notice the crown prince approaching her, so she narrowed her eyes to look at him. The crown prince took this as a good sign.

He took this as her showing her interest in him, which made him reveal a confident smile.

It was just that by doing this, he actually hurt his own impression in her mind.

He made himself seem like a fool in her eyes.

"What an idiot, why is he smiling all on his own?" Ariel thought to herself.

That's right, he had been reduced to a complete idiot in her mind all because of this confident smile.

However, that confidence that the crown prince was riding on made him stand there in front of her with that same smile that made him appear a fool in her eyes. He was just standing there as if he was allowing her to get a good look at him.

Not knowing that by doing this, he was reducing himself to an idiot.

After seeing that Ariel wasn't saying anything, the crown prince couldn't help feeling that something was off. It was just that this fool was filled with confidence in himself that he didn't think that it was something that he could have done wrong.

His first thought was...

"It seems like she's quite the shy girl, isn't she?"

Then his second thought was...

"Well, if she's a shy girl, I guess I have no choice but to make the first move."

There wasn't a single second where he thought that she was acting this way because she didn't like him.

That was just how confident he was in himself.

With an even wider smile on his face, the crown prince came forward and said, "Miss Ariel, if possible, may I invite you for a walk on the beach?"

"No thank you." Ariel said right to his smiling face without any hesitation.

The moment that he heard this, the smile on the crown prince's face froze before it slowly faded away. His eyes slowly started to fill with shock as he just looked right at Ariel, as if he couldn't believe what he had just heard.

Ariel didn't care about the way that he looked at her.

If it wasn't for the fact that this was a meeting between the Tide Empire and the Merman Empire, she would have already left the room without a single care.

There was an awkward silence that just hung there in the air as the crown prince didn't know what to do next. After all, this was a situation that he had never encountered before.

It was already rare for him to take the initiative to invite a girl, but for her to reject him like this...

It really was the first time.

After a long awkward silence, the crown prince gave an embarrassed cough to adjust himself before saying, "Yes, it is a bit cold outside today, so how about we go relax by the fire in the

lounge?"

"Can you not hear me? I'm not interested." Once again, Ariel didn't mince her words as she directly rejected him.

The crown prince looked even more shocked after hearing this.

He just looked at her like he felt that there was something wrong with her.

Ariel didn't even bother looking at him after she rejected him as she looked around for something, anything more interesting than the crown prince.

The crown prince didn't know how to feel.

After all, he had never experienced the situation of sticking a warm face onto a cold butt before. It was always him who had ignored people, it had never been the other way around...

So now that it was happening to him, he just didn't know how to act.

As if to save him from his embarrassment, the Merman King said with a cough, "It seems that she's not interested. I think that we can just forget this matter."

The Tide Emperor had a shocked look at first before slowly knitting his brows.

The look on his face made it clear that there were more things that he wanted to say, but there wasn't anything that he could say in the end.

After all, the situation had already been embarrassing enough, so it would only make it worse if he said anything.

Regardless of what he said, it didn't seem like there would be any progress today.

So the Tide Emperor just had to suck it up and say, "It seems like we won't be able to reach an agreement today. How about we discuss this another day?"

The Merman King just gave a simple nod without saying anything, but the look in his eyes said more than enough.

Chapter 959: Cleansing

The Tide Empire's group couldn't just leave right away since that would be too discourteous. The only thing that they could do was wait for a bit before leaving.

At the same time, it wasn't as if they could just remain silent while waiting to leave, so they discussed a few simple matters with the Merman King.

Since the Tide Empire was close to the Merman Empire, there were some things that they had to discuss with each other in terms of the cooperation between them. There were some simple matters such as trade routes that had to be discussed, though it wasn't necessary for the rulers to discuss it in person like this.

Most of these matters would usually be discussed in letters sent between the two empires.

It was just that there was nothing else that the Tide Empire group could discuss with the Merman Empire group during this time. They had already experienced the feeling of sticking a hot face into a cold butt, so it was awkward for them to say anything else.

They could only keep the topic on official matters that both sides could talk about.

Once it was over, they didn't hesitate to leave, though they did make sure to say their farewells properly to the Merman Empire group.

Once the Tide Empire group was back on their ship and sailing back to the mainland, the Tide Emperor's face immediately fell. He had a very ugly look on his face as he remembered everything that had happened in the meeting on Peace Island.

Though he was filled with anger, there wasn't a place that he could vent this anger on.

Or at least there wasn't until an idiot suddenly came forward as a sacrifice.

"Royal father, what should we do about the matter of the engagement?" The crown prince said in an anxious voice.

He had been filled with worry since the meeting ended because the engagement that he had been looking forward to was now completely off the table. With the way that things looked, it seemed like he wouldn't have a chance to bring it up.

So the only thing that he could do was raise this matter to the Tide Emperor in hopes that he would help with his prestige.

It was just that even the Tide Emperor couldn't do anything at this moment and bringing it up would just make him angrier since he would remember everything that happened.

The crown prince normally wouldn't make this mistake, but he had completely lost his self control because of the anxiety that he felt.

It was often said that beautiful women were the downfall of powerful men and this was the case with the crown prince.

He had been completely enthralled in Ariel that he had turned into an idiot.

The normal crown prince wouldn't act like this, but the current crown prince wasn't the normal crown prince.

"Is that the only thing that you can think of?!" The Tide Emperor slapped the crown prince across the face to everyone's shock.

The one that was the most shocked was naturally the crown prince since this had never happened before. As far as he could remember, he had never seen his father acting this way towards him, let alone raising his hand to slap him.

The crown prince was immediately filled with an aggrieved feeling.

The Tide Emperor didn't care what the crown prince felt as he took several deep breaths before calming himself down. That one slap had allowed him to vent some of the anger that was in his heart, so he was able to calm himself a bit now.

After taking several deep breaths, the Tide Emperor was able to calm himself enough to think clearly again.

He looked at the crown prince and calmly said, "Think for yourself what mistakes you've made. If you can't think this through, then don't bother appearing in front of me again."

This was the second time that the Tide Emperor had felt disappointed in the crown prince. Who would have thought that both of these times would happen on the same day?

The crown prince was shocked to hear this, but he quickly lowered his head and gave a simple nod. That slap had calmed him down as well and he was thinking clearly.

Once the crown prince left, the Tide Emperor looked at the ministers that were all standing there with their heads down.

There was another displeased look that appeared in his eyes, but he still said, "When we get back, find all of those b*stards that my brother has sired. I want to make sure that this doesn't happen again, so we'll be cleansing that line."

The ministers were shocked to hear this since the emperor had never cared about this before.

After all, those illegitimate children spreading through their empire was actually helping them since the mermaid bloodline was being spread across the country.

But thinking of the situation caused by Viper, they knew that this was a smart move.

It really was surprising that nothing like this had happened before with how lax their control

of these illegitimate children was, which sent a chill down their spines.

After this thought passed through their minds, the ministers all lowered their heads and said, "Yes, your majesty. We will not make a mistake and perform this task perfectly."

The Tide Emperor gave a nod before waving his hand as if he was dismissing them.

...

"Did you see the look on their faces? It looked like they swallowed a bunch of shit!" The Merman King laughed as he said this.

Ariel nodded in agreement before saying, "Right, right, did you also see that crown prince? He really looked like an idiot."

"Humph, how could someone like that be worthy of my daughter?" The Merman King said in

a fierce voice.

Seeing them act this way, there was a bitter smile that appeared on my face.

They were completely different from the serious mermaids that had met with the Tide Emperor earlier.

But I didn't dislike this side of them.

Compared to those nobles that were stuck up and arrogant, knowing that they could act like this was definitely better than having to deal with those kinds of nobles.

Chapter 960: Glowing beach

Once the matter with the Tide Empire had been settled, there was no longer a reason for us to stay here any longer.

However, we didn't leave right away since Ariel wanted a few days with her parents.

Since there was no way to solve the issue of her human legs, Ariel would be coming back with us to spend time in our kingdom as a royal guest. So it was perfectly fine to let her spend some time with her parents before she left for our kingdom.

At the same time, it was a chance for us since we could build up a relationship with the Merman Empire.

The relationship that the Tide Empire had with the Merman Empire had allowed it to become one of the four human empires.

So one couldn't look down on the Merman Empire.

Especially since they were the only ones that ruled under the ocean.

That meant that the Merman Empire had a vast quantity of resources at their disposal that humans didn't know about. The humans had no idea just how strong the Merman Empire was.

Well, I had an idea since I had my knowledge from the game, but it wasn't as if I knew everything about the Merman Empire.

So even I couldn't look down on them.

It was a good thing that the Merman King and Queen were easy to get along with.

After the initial misunderstanding was cleared by our man to man talk, it was much easier to talk to the two of them.

They behaved completely differently from the other royals.

They didn't have the same arrogance that other royals had.

It must be the difference in environment that caused them to behave differently from the other royals.

Simply put, it was most likely because there was no competition for land with the Merman Empire.

Most royals would develop that kind of arrogance because of their need to show off against the other royal families that would threaten them. So they would develop this kind of guarded and arrogant personality.

But since the Merman Empire didn't have such a threat, the royal family of the Merman Empire developed more freely as they interacted more with their people, rather than with other royals.

They were grounded rulers who saw themselves as one of the people that lived in the country, rather than rulers that were chosen by god to rule over their lands.

So they were much easier to interact with compared to other royals.

While we were able to become closer, we weren't able to strike any deals in the end.

It wasn't that they weren't willing to cooperate with us, it was just that there wasn't anything that we had that could entice them into coming all the way to our territory to trade with us. While we had a river that was connected to the ocean, the problem was that our kingdom was quite far inland so it was inconvenient for the mermaids to come that far.

At the same time, they would be able to obtain the things that they wanted from the Tide Empire which was much closer and had more variety than a small kingdom like ours.

So there were no benefits to the Merman Empire to come that far just to trade with us.

I fully understood what their reasoning was, so I didn't push the issue.

Just like this, a week passed where we got to know the people from the Merman Empire.

Klein and the others seemed to have gotten quite close to the mermaid royal guards during this time.

From time to time, I could see them playing sumo with each other.

The mermaid royal guards had the same strong legs that Ariel had since they were also mermen that had transformed into humans. So they were quite skilled when it came to sumo even if they didn't know the rules.

But Klein and the others had practice and the techniques that I showed them, so they were able to put up a good fight.

I even saw the Merman King down at the sumo rings from time to time...

It seemed that the mermen really were enthralled by the sport of sumo.

However, it wasn't as if that was a bad thing.

It was a good bonding experience after all.

On this final day, we went down to the beach late at night.

It was the Merman King and Queen who had called us out this late, so we had no idea what was happening. Though we didn't think that they would set a trap for us after all this time spent together.

When we arrived at the beach, we were shocked by the sight.

The beach was covered in glowing things that completely lit it up.

It was like the beach itself was glowing with the way that these things were spread out.

Ariel happily explained, "It's the Glowing Seaweed!"

Then she ran down to the beach and happily ran through the glowing things that were there.

I looked at the Merman King and Queen with a confused look and they explained what this

was.

The seaweed that was there was a special kind of seaweed that was found under the ocean that glowed because of the nutrients that they absorbed. It was just that they didn't have any

nutritional value that most things left them alone.

When it was time, they would be swallowed by the waves and sent to the beach, like what was happening now.

It was a sight that many mermen and mermaids liked to watch.

Based on this explanation, it was very easy to draw a comparison.

Fireflies.

This was the equivalent of watching fireflies for the mermaids.

The glowing seaweed spread out across the beach certainly was a beautiful sight, though it

was a bit hard for humans to appreciate since it was just seaweed.

This was most likely a cultural thing between mermaids and humans.

But that wasn't the thing that I was the most concerned about.

"New material detected."