

SICKLY GIRL, BUT A DRUG ADDICT

1 - I'm a Greenhouse Flower

When I was ten, I fell from a bunk bed and hit my head.

And as I awakened my status window, I realized.

That I wasn't the girl Shana Midgard, but Han Si-woo who lived on Earth.

The name of the game I was possessing was 'Day-R', commonly called Day-R.

It was a bishoujo collection roguelike game ambitiously developed by Hajeong Soft, famous for its gameplay so simple even a fool could understand.

The player becomes a professor at Regin Academy, nurtures Athenas who are cadets of the academy to form a squad of five.

The player's goal is to survive the inevitable doomsday, 'Day-R'.

But while the gameplay was simple, the strategy was not easy.

Because it was an extremely reactive game where the future changed according to the user's trivial choices.

Perhaps because there were so many variables that it was difficult to establish a set strategy.

Among the four difficulty levels—Easy, Normal, Hard, and Extreme—not a single person had cleared the Extreme difficulty in the two years since the game's release.

I was the person who almost became the first to clear this extreme difficulty that everyone had failed to conquer.

If only I hadn't gone out to the convenience store just to buy beer and dried squid to celebrate alone when I was on the verge of clearing it.

If I had at least carried an umbrella, I wouldn't have died from being struck by lightning.

...And I wouldn't have become a fragile girl like I am now.

"Did the... meeting go well?"

As I came out of Professor Yggdrasil's office and closed the door, I heard the professor's secretary's voice from behind.

I turned to face her.

Carefully holding the skirt line created by tightening a pure white gown with a black belt.

With her milk-white bob hair fluttering like slightly dissolved cherry blossom water.

A girl slightly shorter than me approaches.

Lost.

Regin Academy 3rd year student.

She's an Athena who assists the protagonist from the beginning, and like most early guides in character collecting games, she's kind and friendly.

Of course, if you peel back one layer, a shocking truth is revealed.

Usually, professors learn this fact much later.

Even Professor Yggdrasil, who currently keeps her by his side, probably doesn't know about it at all.

"Yes. It went well."

"...And the result?"

“Shall we talk in the secretary’s office?”

Lost turned her body, covering her mouth with her small hand, seemingly conscious of Professor Yggdrasil who might be beyond the doorway.

It meant for me to follow her.

[Characteristic – ‘Greenhouse Flower’] [Active]

As soon as I took a step, the toe of my shoe caught on the smooth marble floor of the professor’s research building.

I almost stumbled, but because Lost was in front of me, I at least avoided hitting the floor.

Lost looks at me with pitiful eyes.

There’s also a meaning of ‘be careful’ in her gaze.

I showed an elegant smile and regained my posture.

Rather than by choice, it’s semi-forced.

<< Shana Midgard >>

Regin Academy / Aesir Dormitory / 2nd Year

— Enhancement Effect ‘Vermilion Heart’ Applied

(Time Remaining: 114 minutes)

...

[Characteristic – ‘Greenhouse Flower’]

“Don’t leave this pitiful flower alone.”

— You possess noble actions and speech patterns appropriate for your role.

...

— 25% chance of twisting your ankle when walking or running.

...

I slowed my pace even more than before.

It would be troublesome if I fell again.

The probability is 25%, but saying 25% feels more like 90% when you actually live with it.

Lost is supporting me, and as my walk slowed, I gained some extra time.

So I first understood what Lost had intended with her earlier question.

One, was I caught stealing the Vermilion Heart?

If so, what punishment did I receive?

“I pretended not to know until the end. The professor tacitly approved.”

“...I see.”

Two, was her involvement in the theft discovered?

If discovered, how much does the professor know?

“Don’t worry, senior. I didn’t say anything related to you.”

I denied stealing the Vermilion Heart in front of Professor Yggdrasil until the end.

Therefore, both Lost and I are currently off the list of suspects.

Even though I raided the professor’s office safe each time, I didn’t leave any traces.

Professor Yggdrasil must have experienced the magic of the Vermilion Heart disappearing every time he opened the safe.

“Of course... it will be difficult to sneak into the professor’s office from now on.”

Until now, while Lost played the role of radar, I collected the Vermilion Heart and professor’s supplies.

But from now on, I can’t even visit the office without official business.

Because I would be suspected.

“...Tch.”

As if facing reality, Lost frowned and bit her nails.

Her once round eyes were now sharply folded.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know we would be caught like this.”

“No, I didn’t expect him to return so suddenly either. If anything, I should be sorry.”

“No, if I had noticed his presence a little earlier, it would have been fine. It was my mistake.”

“Shana.”

Lost grabbed my shoulder and shook her head.

“It’s a miracle that you even noticed and reacted...”

Indeed.

I was so surprised that my response was clumsy.

I thought I could smuggle out about five bottles of Vermilion Heart.

Unfortunately, Professor Yggdrasil, who was returning to the professor’s building, stared at me until he entered the building entrance, so I couldn’t move rashly and missed the golden time.

He ran so fast.

When he entered the corridor with a loud noise, I had just managed to erase the traces of tampering with the safe.

‘...I was careless.’

Certainly, the earlier situation was a bit strange.

How did Professor Yggdrasil know I would visit today?

I would understand if Lost had informed on me.

Although she cooperates with me, she is ultimately an Athena.

She’s utterly powerless in front of the professor, who is a generator of plausibility.

Of course, that’s not possible.

On the way to the secretary’s office, I simulated the dimension of possibilities repeatedly and asked Lost, but the conclusion was the same.

Lost is innocent.

The professor had known for quite some time that the safe was being raided.

He just wasn’t sure who was raiding it, and unfortunately, I ended up on the list of suspects.

“By the way... are you alright?”

With Lost’s fragile voice, I awoke from my reverie.

The exact circumstances are still unclear.

Let’s postpone figuring it out for now.

It’s been about 10 minutes since my vitality parameter changed to 2.

I am a person who will die in about 1 hour and 50 minutes.

Legend.

“I’m fine, for now.”

“For now... what does that mean?”

“Well. There’s still some time left, so something will work out, right?”

I showed a noble smile as always, then got up and dusted off my seat.

The coffee that Lost brewed is deeply flavored to the extent that Professor Yggdrasil always praises it highly...

But now there’s no time to savor it.

“Is there anything I can help with? If something... if something happens to you, I won’t feel at ease either, Shana.”

I held her hand while pulling up the corners of my mouth.

The slight trembling at the tips, it’s as if seeing my uncertain future.

“It’s okay. Whatever happens, you don’t know anything about it, senior.”

“B-But.”

“Senior.”

With narrowed eyes, I quietly whispered in Lost’s ear.

“The secret safe in the secretary’s office. Is it okay if it’s discovered?”

“...Ugh.”

“I’ll take responsibility for everything. Just pretend you don’t know until the end.”

And then I quietly wrapped my arms around Lost’s shoulders.

“Senior merely served warm tea to a pitiful cat shivering in cold rain.”

Let’s go back to the Social Service Department room first.

If there's a place where I can immerse myself in deep thought without interruption, that's the only place.

Since I need to find a new supply of Vermilion Heart, I probably won't be able to participate in Social Service Department activities for a while.

I hope the period of neglecting those kids doesn't get too long.

Surely, even after just two days, there will be endless troubles in the old school building.

Someone got hit by a dumbbell, and all club members got fractures.

Several people were taken as experimental subjects and never returned.

All the animals they were raising were eaten, and so on.

Just imagining these situations makes my head spin.

This is definitely a crisis situation.

My footsteps naturally quicken.

Quickly descending the stairs, I soon arrive at the entrance.

I push the heavy wooden door with my whole body and stretch my foot forward.

[Characteristic – 'Greenhouse Flower'] [Active]

Eek.

Again, my leg acts on its own—.

“Kyah...!”

Thud.

My body fell face first onto the grass spread in front of the professor's building.

The grass at the entrance held the morning dew, but the moisture touching my skin wasn't cold.

My ash-gray hair was scattered messily on the grass.

Nearby students who were chatting were startled and rushed over.

“Are you alright?”

“Hey, are you okay?!”

I gestured with my hand, meaning I'm fine, so go away.

Getting entangled with multiple students will only complicate my future vision.

Lying face down, I listened for a moment, and the two students were still fidgeting next to me.

“She must be embarrassed.”

“Is she really okay...?”

I'm fine, so please just go away....

Professor Yggdrasil was dumbfounded.

He had set a trap, but the one caught at the scene was Shana Midgard.

Just in case, he pushed her by pretending to be disappointed, but there was no yield.

How could a girl whose magical talent is slightly below the academy's average open a safe locked with the highest-level magic in the first place?

— Kyah...!

— Are you alright?

— Hey, are you okay?!

— She must be embarrassed.

— Is she really okay...?

Moreover, she has a sickly constitution.

She trips over her own feet every now and then.

Normally, at least one or two bottles should have broken during transport.

Even if he tried to hypothesize that someone might have helped her, she's not very sociable.

Most students at the academy approach the sickly girl with kindness first.

Perhaps due to her long life on the streets, she barely passed the peer evaluation.

'Conversations don't continue.'

'Instances where she initiates conversation can be counted on one hand.'

'There's a 50% chance of getting a response even if you ask a question.'

'Sometimes it feels like I'm being ignored.'

'I wanted to help, but was rejected every time.'

...He still can't forget Shana's sneer when he received the evaluation sheet full of such scathing comments.

Laying back in his comfortable leather chair, Yggdrasil turned over and shook one of the small handbells placed on the desk.

A few minutes later, knock-knock.

Lost brought in warm tea and cookies.

"Lost."

"Yes, Professor."

"What's the schedule for the student council president this week?"

If it's not that she has an accomplice.

Could there be someone directing her?

Even the Social Service Department head position she currently holds, I heard she signed it reluctantly due to pressure from those around her.

Perhaps the real culprit, fearing discovery, was trying to disguise it as a crime committed by the weak-hearted girl?

There is a need to investigate the situation.

Also, I should set a trap.

"The student council president only has the afternoon schedule free today, Professor."

However, if I move directly, there's a high chance that the real culprit will notice and react, so it would be better to use a trustworthy student to act on behalf of Professor Yggdrasil.

"Then let's hold a beginning-of-semester banquet tonight."

"How would you like to arrange the attendees?"

The frequency of Vermilion Heart thefts was irregular, but averaging the number of disappearances, it was roughly 2 per day.

Therefore, Professor Yggdrasil judged.

The real culprit must be in a situation where they need to continuously consume Vermilion Heart.

"Seek cooperation from other dormitories in advance. I will contact the professors."

So if there's a grand banquet where all students, even all professors, gather in one place.

That person will definitely appear at Yggdrasil's office again.

"Everyone must attend without a single absence."

A student who misses the banquet.

That student is the real culprit.