

SICKLY GIRL, BUT A DRUG ADDICT

[Status ailment, 'I Love Strawberries' has occurred]

I Love Strawberries.

Isn't that the name of a game people play at college retreats when they can't think of anything else to do?

...Though I've never played it.

This is probably a status ailment that occurs from continued use of the counterfeit.

It must be the real side effect that Count Train didn't mention.

While being supported by Rukia, I activated my status window.

[Status Ailment – 'I Love Strawberries']

“Even a child would know that unrefined medicine isn't good for your body!”

— The enhancement effect 'Vermilion Heart' that occurs when consuming Vermilion Heart no longer refreshes the duration with each consumption but accumulates.

— While the enhancement effect lasts, you won't die even if your vitality parameter reaches 0.

— (Not activated yet)

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...Is this really a status ailment?

The effect is too good.

It's a situation where I could welcome it with open arms.

But my clear-running head warns me while simulating the dimension of possibilities.

It may seem fine now, but it will come back as a huge penalty later.

The status ailment I've been living with since the moment I was possessed.

'Last Leaf', which only appears to be the worst debuff, is the precise counterexample.

'Still, with this... I don't even need to dangerously hide medicine bottles in the dormitory or old school building....'

I don't know when those hidden effects will be revealed or what problems they'll cause.

But there's no better method to overcome the immediate crisis.

The timing is as if the constellation watching over me is shouting, 'Now is the time!'

'I should hold off for now.'

As long as the Thunder Emperor, Ice Emperor,

Or Professor Yggdrasil's interference doesn't get worse.

Let's postpone biting into this sweet strawberry.

There might be dangerous poison inside the strawberry.

“Hey, department head? Shouldn’t we go to the infirmary soon?”

By the way, not recovering naturally is always terrible whenever I feel it.

At this rate, the bucket will overflow with strawberry extract.

◆◆◆

Tough skin that doesn’t easily cut even with sharply honed blades.

Superior recovery ability that heals even fairly deep wounds in minutes.

Athenas are born with physical abilities vastly superior to humans.

That’s why they don’t get seriously injured except during ability verification season.

You could say they don’t even need the help of recovery skills.

Especially given that the last two months were vacation, even faculty members hadn’t visited the academy infirmary.

“Quickly, connect the transfusion pack!”

“Did you check the blood type?”

“Yes!”

Such an infirmary became busy for the first time in a long while thanks to a weakling like me visiting.

“It’s been so long since we had a patient.”

“May I handle the broken bone reattachment?”

“Rookie, come out here! That’s Head Doctor’s job!”

“B-But I came all this way because I wanted to treat Athenas, and there weren’t any Athenas injured this badly last year...!”

“We all waited years like that, you idiot!”

People usually imagine that in a pretty girl gacha game's infirmary, there would naturally be a doctor with big breasts, a good figure, and wearing a garter belt.

Day-R directly contradicted this imagination and was praised for being original.

"Student, are you alright? Consciousness?"

"I'm fine."

"Blood keeps flowing like this... Athenas indeed!"

"More than that, it's too noisy. Could you please send everyone out except yourself?"

"That... These are all rookies who need to observe the treatment process, so please understand. Hey! Did you all hear? Be quiet!"

"Yes!" "Yesss!"

The little ladies who were circled around the foot of the bed where I was lying are a dwarf race called 'Beberu'.

They're cute 4-head proportion female characters that often appear in games and make users' backs bend.

Thanks to their good hand skills, they're called geniuses of invention.

When products that don't fit in a pre-modern world setting appear, they're all handwaved as 'Beberu's mistakes'.

The refrigerator in the club room is one of them, which I specially ordered for Nava.

I never dreamed that my Wikipedia knowledge about refrigerators and air conditioners that I happened to look up would be helpful.

"I'll restore the burst blood vessels while realigning the broken bone."

“Yes.”

“It might be very painful.”

“It’s okay.”

“Really, it hurts a lot.” “That’s right! It hurts a lot!” “Be brave!!”

Maybe because it’s their first time treating at this level, the Beberus’ fuss is going crazy.

Anyway, except for the brief moment right after consuming Vermilion Heart, I can’t particularly feel pain.

I don’t feel pain.

I don’t feel hot or cold.

I don’t get hungry, or need to go to the bathroom.

I can’t even fall into a deep sleep.

Because the effect of Vermilion Heart not only fills my vitality but also keeps me awake all the time.

This is a terrible stimulant.

Similar to the one from the World Wars that resolved soldiers’ fear and burden in one go.

“It’s fine, so could you do it quickly...?”

At times like this when the surroundings are noisy, it’s best to refrain from simulating the dimension of possibilities.

Information coming from outside gets mixed with my thoughts, causing probability errors, which in turn distorts the future vision more greatly.

The chattering Beberus are a good size to hold and fiddle with in your arms, just like Pixie who is rolled up in a blanket.

But that's only when you have peace of mind.

"Head Doctor! Start the operation now!"

"Hurry with the operation!"

"The patient is suffering! Operate!"

"Hurry! Hurry!"

Ah. My head is ringing.

Even with my extremely dull senses, it's noisy.

If it's loud enough for someone with dried-up senses like me to hear clearly, how loud must it be for normal people?

These damn chatterboxes.

Just shut up!

"Please, could just one person speak...! Please..."

I bent my upper body largely while gripping my earlobes.

The still unstoppable nosebleed went drip-drop.

Soaking the bedsheet.

"This won't do. Everyone out!"

"What? But, the observation...!"

"We want to see it, Head Doctor!"

"It can't be helped for the patient's stability. Right now!"

Eventually, the Beberu who appeared to be the Head Doctor sent out the rookie Beberus with a fit of anger.

Though called Head Doctor, they all look like children and can only be distinguished by their doctor's gown.

While bickering, the Beberus went out in an orderly manner.

Now that it's quiet, they look cute like kindergarteners on a picnic.

"I'm sorry, student! I'll start the operation right away!"

"...Please."

The Beberu wiggled their tiny hands in rubber gloves and returned the broken and misaligned nasal bone to its original position.

They said it would be extremely painful, but it didn't hurt at all.

It might be natural because the drug effect is circulating.

"No... Uh. Doesn't it hurt?"

"Not at all."

"Huh...."

The Head Doctor Beberu stroked under their chin and stuck out their tongue.

Soon, a warm green energy flowed from their hands.

It was the healing energy that was like their characteristic.

The inside of my nose tingles, perhaps because it's the process of the broken nasal bone aligning.

[The weakening effect 'Bleeding – Lv4' has disappeared.]

"It's my first time seeing someone so calm during treatment since the Student Council President."

Beberus are basically a race with exceptional curiosity.

When they observe something that requires an experimental approach, they aren't satisfied until they produce a result in the form of a report.

This Head Doctor has now discovered an interesting research topic: ‘An Athena who doesn’t feel pain’.

“If it’s not rude...”

“It is rude.”

“What? I haven’t even said anything—.”

“It’s rude. Really, it’s disrespectful to a lady.”

“...?”

It seemed like I knew what the Head Doctor wanted even without hearing the rest.

I’ve already experienced the Beberus’ exploratory zeal and madness unbearably through Pixie, the lunatic who belongs to the Social Service Department.

“If the treatment is over, may I go back?”

“Ah. First, you should rest in the hospital bed for about half a day...”

“The ability verification is next week, so there’s not enough time.”

“Hmm. That’s... true.”

The Head Doctor seems to want to keep me by their side somehow and conduct a medical interview.

But unfortunately, there’s no time.

I need to quickly find a way to hide the Scarlet Heart.

“Thank you for the treatment, Doctor.”

“Ah, wait. That nose—.”

“It’s okay. I’ll be going.”

Because Shana Midgard is a polite girl.

She makes sure to express her gratitude.

I bowed deeply and left the infirmary.

It's finally quiet.

My head is clear.

At last, I have the leisure to think—

“Hey. We meet again.”

Why.

Why.

Why is it you, of all people?

“Hello, President.”

Why is the Thunder Emperor here?

According to the future vision, she should be outside right now.

To organize the scene where a bank robber in downtown Regin is staging a hostage situation.

“Are you free today, President?”

“Do I look free?”

“Incidents happen every other day. President, you're the most famous hero in Regin City.”

“That's right. But there are no incidents today!”

No incidents?

Why is that?

I racked my brain to find the reason.

The answer was surprisingly close.

‘Because of the incident where Count Train’s building was completely burned...?’

She has the strange power to lower the crime rate in an area just by appearing.

It can’t be helped.

Even I would be cautious if lightning had struck from a clear sky, and nearby at that.

Who knows when the Thunder Emperor might suddenly appear and crack your skull? How could criminals live with such anxiety?

“Instead, I’ve come to check on your condition by the professor’s order.”

“...Me?”

“Yes. The rumor that you were heading to the infirmary while gushing nosebleed is rampant throughout the academy!”

Something is strange.

I’m not the kind of person who would cause such a big rumor just because I had a nosebleed.

Everyone knows that Shana Midgard is frail.

But that Shana coldly rejected all hands extended to her.

Even if she had come to the infirmary writing letters with her nosebleed, it would be normal to just pass it off with “She seems a bit more sick today,” without making a fuss.

This rumor got exaggerated and reached Professor Yggdrasil’s ears?

There must be something I’ve missed.

What on earth made the situation this severe?

“...Ah.”

While racking my brain to find the cause of the newly created variable.

One possibility occurred to me from the Thunder Emperor’s energetic smile that I was staring at.

The 0.1% I hoped wouldn’t explode.

That 0.1% had been creating variables like crazy.

Thunder Emperor, you damn bitch?

“Thank you for your concern, President.”