

SICKLY GIRL, BUT A DRUG ADDICT

6 - 2. A Bolt from the Blue

Just before leaving the private gambling den in the basement of the old school building, Barak Train was clearly wary of Shana.

But before consuming the counterfeit Vermilion Heart.

And after consuming the counterfeit Vermilion Heart.

Watching the chain of dramatic reactions she showed, Count Train realized.

‘She’s a perfect clinical test subject... The Fire Sword Ghost would definitely like this...!’

As already mentioned, the ultimate goal of all companies that spread like a net under the Fire Sword Ghost is the same.

That is, to create Vermilion Heart beyond its original purpose.

But research was stagnant.

There was an absolute shortage of Athenas willing to participate in such dangerous clinical trials.

The introduction of a game called Day-R explains well why such a situation exists.

— 100 years ago. Before humans who were fighting a bloody war against the Demon King’s army, ‘Athenas’, evolved humans with mysterious powers, appeared.

— Nations stuffed Athenas into specialized training facilities and thoroughly educated them from a young age so they wouldn’t defect or defy the nation.

— But the harsh training and near-brainwashing education imposed on girls who weren't mentally mature caused various problems and accidents.

— Eventually, led by central nobles who had Athenas as children, a law was established.

— [Special Law for the Protection and Management of Athenas]

It was a law to prohibit inhumane discipline and to care for them in a way that made them feel emotionally protected.

— Over time, substandard educational institutions gradually disappeared. Only quality academies sponsored by nobles with Athena children survived.

— Regin Academy, where you will be appointed, is among the most prestigious of these.

— The time given is limited. Survive alongside Athenas in an environment that changes moment by moment.

— Good luck. Professor.

Surprisingly, Count Train had obtained Shana who showed definite signs of counterfeit addiction in this situation.

“Why... are you looking at me like that?”

Perhaps he benefited from staying on good terms with the troublemaker Rukia all this time.

It was a successive wave of luck that would be believable even if someone said he'd won the lottery.

“Nothing. I just hope you'll like the job I'm going to introduce you to.”

“I told you I'm fine with any kind of job.”

“...Yes. I hope that feeling doesn't change.”

Count Train smiled at Shana, then asked the driver.

“How is it? Any tails?”

Until now, as the sun had risen to its zenith and was slowly declining westward.

The car had been driving on arbitrary roads for several hours already.

It was to shake off any possible tails.

“None, Count.”

The exit of the secret passage leading to the basement of the old school building is indeed halfway up a mountain, and quite far from academy grounds.

The tail-shaking started from the anxiety of ‘Do academy staff really not know about the existence of this crude tunnel?’

Fortunately, there were no following vehicles.

Count Train looked at the direction the car was heading with relief.

The sky was clear without a single cloud.

‘Somehow... I feel uneasy. But it feels like it will lead to a good result...’

But in an instant.

Boom—!!

“...Hieek!!”

A bolt of lightning fell from a clear sky.

And it fell on the small mountain a little away from the vehicle Train was riding in.

“Uh... hik. Hieek...!”

Simultaneously, a scream was heard from the back of the vehicle.

Judging by the thin, noisy voice, it was definitely Rukia.

“Rukia, what’s wrong?”

“Li-Lightning...!”

Train reached out and stroked the back of Rukia’s head as she trembled with her face buried in Shana’s chest.

“Don’t be afraid. It’s just a bolt from the blue anyway. It won’t strike again.”

But Rukia’s trembling didn’t stop.

Shana, who held her in her arms, also bit her lip firmly with her eyes fixed outside the window.

The sense of unease began to spread.

From Rukia, beyond Shana, to Train.

To shake off the spreading ominousness, Train opened his cigar case. The driver naturally stopped the car.

He cut off the end of the wrapper with a cigar cutter.

And with a match, chik.

A small fire quickly caught the end of the cigar.

With the window fully down, Train extended his right hand holding the cigar outside.

“Are you afraid of lightning?”

Rukia’s trembling body also calmed down a bit.

“No... I’m afraid of what comes after it...”

“What comes after it?”

However.

Something else didn't stop.

— Boom!

“Hugiieek!”

“Rukia, calm down.”

“Hi. Uh. Uhee... eek. eek....”

Even Train had never seen Rukia this terrified before.

Wasn't she the child who was always busy teasing him with playful expressions and speech patterns, acting more adult-like despite her young appearance?

“Count Train. How much longer until we reach our destination?”

After appropriately tapping the ash into a portable ashtray he had prepared, Count Train started the car again and replied.

“If you want to hide a tree, hide it in a forest. You've heard that saying, right?”

“Yes, of course.”

“We've already passed the destination several times.”

The company operated by Count Train was in the middle of downtown Regin.

Disguised as an ordinary mid-rise office building.

“We hit the 0.1%, I see.”

“...0.1%?”

For some reason, as soon as she said that, Shana sighed and bent her upper body flat along with Rukia.

A strange blue light swirled from the neck choker of Rukia who was underneath.

'I can never understand what these kids are talking about....'

Train shook his head and turned to the front.

Soon, he sees blue sparks jumping up onto the hood of the car.

“.....”

I've heard about this.

The safety rule that everyone living in Regin City must know.

If one day small lightning bolts suddenly start striking upward toward the sky from surrounding metal objects.

Take shelter immediately inside a building or car.

Caution.

No matter how well you follow the above instructions.

Survival is not guaranteed if you are close to the lightning strike point.

Since the inverted lightning rises regardless of conductors or insulators at the strike point.

Please observe carefully and leave that spot immediately.

The time limit is only 1 minute.

“Oh. My.”

Train, who had stuck his head out of the car window, sighed.

This was because blue lightning was extending upward from the rooftop of the brick building where his company was located.

It will definitely fall.

A massive lightning bolt.

“Qu-Quick, get the car out!!”

“Yes, I under—.”

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—————!!!!

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“—head, Department Head! Are you okay?”

“...Urgh.”

When I regained consciousness, quite some time had already passed.

The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes was the overturned car and the broken windshield.

And beyond that, Count Train’s burning building.

For such a large fire to occur in a brick building.

It’s truly an unbelievable amount of firepower.

It must have been 10 billion volts for sure.

The probability of Black coming was 99.9%.

For the Thunder Emperor to come through that 0.1% chance.

This damn blockhead.

“Haah... Student Council President. Why.”

I quickly checked my status.

I had to confirm how much of my life value had been lost.

<< Shana Midgard >>

Regin Academy / Aesir Dormitory / 2nd Year

— Enhancement Effect 'Vermilion Heart' Applied

(Time Remaining: 466 minutes)

[Status]

Vitality 1/12

I had been in the car for about 4 hours after drinking the sample, so 4 would have been consumed according to time.

Add to that the time I was unconscious, which was less than 30 minutes.

Then the vitality parameter should be 8, but why is it 1?

I just rolled a bit inside a sturdy car, yet 7 flew away?

“What’s wrong, department head?”

“...Haah. God, mercy.”

I hurriedly opened the jewel box handed to me by Count Train to check its contents, and my hand naturally went to my forehead.

Normally, since I drank one bottle, one bottle should remain.

But the blockhead shattered the remaining bottle with her hero landing.

They say she was made as an homage to the thunder god in a famous movie. Even her appearance before her sister is a carbon copy.

“Student Council President. Really...”

At least the jewel box was closed.

And thanks to the cushioning material absorbing the liquid, I didn't lose all of one bottle.

I hurriedly removed the glass fragments embedded in the cushioning material.

As soon as the large pieces disappeared, I put the cushioning material in both hands, lifted it over my mouth, and squeezed hard.

There might still be small glass fragments left as there's an uncomfortable sensation in my palms, but drinking the life water was more urgent.

As the sensations that had filled my entire body drained away.

Rukia's crying sound, stretched into slow motion, splits into nine strands and is heard from all directions.

'Status....'

<< Shana Midgard >>

Regin Academy / Aesir Dormitory / 2nd Year

— Enhancement Effect 'Vermilion Heart' Applied

(Time Remaining: 299 minutes)

[Status]

Vitality 5/12

The duration of the enhancement effect has been renewed.

My body absorbed the Vermilion Heart that had soaked into the cushioning material.

Only 5 out of 12 vitality was restored, but that's better than nothing.

Thank God.

“...Ah.”

Rukia, who had been touching the choker around her neck, groaned and ruffled her hair wildly.

She seemed to be coming to her senses now.

She looked at my palms, soaked with blood and red liquid, with teary eyes, then moved her small hands to pull out small glass fragments.

The pain is as if my hand was torn into nine pieces.

It didn't hurt at all earlier.

“I'm sorry, department head. Because of me....”

Even the always cheerful and giggling Rukia becomes somewhat depressed like this when problems arise due to the Student Council President.

...That's troublesome.

It affects D-day.

“Don't worry. Even if the building is destroyed, something must remain.”

“You mean... sneaking in to investigate?”

“That's our only option.”

There are still 5 hours left, right?

After 5 hours, the sun will definitely set.

It's much better than the powerless daytime.

“By the way, let's get our story straight.”

“What?”

“We were kidnapped.”

Inside the overturned car.

Count Train and the driver, who should have been occupying the front seats, have long since disappeared.

Judging by the intact doors that were opened, they clearly fled to survive.

If the Thunder Emperor had forcibly torn them, the original shape of the doors wouldn't have remained.

"Yeah. I'll do that."

"Or don't say anything. You're intimidated by the Student Council President."

"Yeah... I'm sorry, department head."

"Don't be sorry."

I hugged Rukia's head, comforting her that it's okay.

Only cooling fluid dripping from the hood of the overturned car.

For a while, there was no sound except for the flames rising from the building.

After waiting for a bolt from the blue for a moment.

"The professor called everyone..."

Finally, the blockhead who brought the situation to this state,

"What are you troublemakers doing in a place like this?"

The Thunder Emperor appeared before us, tearing off the rear door of the car.