

The World Is Mine For The Taking #Chapter 1081 - 166 - To The Next Location (6) - Read The World Is Mine For The Taking Chapter 1081 - 166 - To The Next Location (6)

Chapter 1081: Chapter 166 - To The Next Location (6)

"Ahhhh...!"

Her moan burst out the second I pushed into her, raw and unrestrained, like her body couldn't even pretend to hold back. It slipped out of her as naturally as a gasp for air, trembling and soaked in heat. The moment I sank into her, I felt just how drenched she already was—so wet that my cock slid all the way in with zero resistance, like her pussy had been waiting open just for me.

Her breath shuddered. Her thighs quivered. Her whole body reacted before her mind even caught up.

"Nghhhh, ahngh, aaahh...~ Aaaaahhhh...!"

Her voice rose and cracked while I started to thrust into her—slow at first, but deep enough that I could feel every soft, clenching ripple inside her. Her walls hugged me, squeezing around my cock like they were trying to memorize its shape. Each movement slid slick heat across my skin, and every thrust made her back arch just a little more, her breath leaving her in broken moans she couldn't control.

She kept moaning while I pulled her toward me, her body moving with the vines still attached to her. Every time I pulled her in, the vines stretched, tugged, and swung her slightly forward, syncing her movements to my rhythm. It was like her body had no choice but to follow the pace I set.

I could feel the head of my cock hitting her cervix with each push, nudging against that sensitive depth that made her whole body jolt. Her pussy got tighter and tighter around me, gradually closing in like she wanted to swallow me whole.

"Ahhh, M-Master... Master, Masterrr...~ It feels like... nghhh, nghhh... ahhh, s-something is... It feels good...~ It feels so good...~! Nghhhh, ahnghhhh, aaahhh...! Nghhh, aahnggh, ahhn, aaaaah, ahnghhh, ah... ahnghhhh, ah, ah, ah, ahhhnghh, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh...~!"

She couldn't keep her voice steady anymore, couldn't keep it low, couldn't even stop her thighs from trembling. Her pussy squeezed around me again, this time harder, the sensation rolling through her insides like a wave. I could feel it—every tightening pulse, every clench of her muscles, every soft undulation that crawled all the way along my shaft.

She felt so damn good that it made my own breath hitch for a moment.

I thrust into her deeper, harder, and her reaction hit immediately. Her tongue lolled slightly out of her mouth, her eyes rolled back halfway, and her expression melted into a full ah-gao. Her body was practically radiating pleasure.

"Ahhnghh, aaaahhh, aahhnggh, ahhhnghh, nnnn... nghhh, ah, noo...~ Ahh, aaahhh... It feels good... It feels way too good...~ Nghhh, ahnghhh, ahhh, ah, ah, aaahngghh, ah, aaahh...!"

Her moans were getting so loud they were starting to ring in my ears—loud, high-pitched, almost desperate. So I leaned in and pressed my lips to hers, swallowing her voice with a kiss. I pushed my tongue into her mouth, muffling the sounds as her lips trembled against mine.

"Mmmghhh, mmghhh, mm...~ Mmghhh...~!"

Her muffled moans vibrated against my tongue, mixing with the wet, sloppy sounds of the kiss as I kept thrusting. My hips slapped against her crotch with each movement, creating a loud, lewd rhythm—skin against skin, wet flesh meeting flesh, echoing in a way that made everything feel hotter.

At this point, my body was reaching its limit. After fucking Almea and Lixis earlier, my cock felt painfully sensitive. Every time her walls squeezed me, the pleasure shot up my spine in a sharp, electrifying rush.

"Nghhh, aaahhnggh, aaah...~ Hnghhh, ah, ah, ahhhngh, ah, ah, aaaaaaaaaaahhhh...!"

Her pussy clamped down so deliciously tight that it almost hurt, in the kind of way that made it impossible to stop. I kept thrusting, harder now, pushing her body into the surface beneath us while she gasped into my mouth.

Meanwhile, the vines kept teasing her—wrapping and wiggling around her breasts, rubbing and pinching her hard nipples, stimulating her body from angles I couldn't reach.

I gritted my teeth. Holding back was torture. My cock throbbed so intensely it felt like it was begging to explode. But I forced myself to keep going, just a little longer, because I wanted her to cum first. I wanted her to lose it completely.

"Nghhh, aaahhnggh, ah, ahnghh, aaahh... C-Cumming...~ I'm going to cum...! Hnghhh, aaahh...! M-Master, Masterrr~... It feels good...~ Hnghhh, aaaahhnggh, ah, ahh, ah, aaahh, ahhnggh, aaa...~ Yeshhhh... N-Nooo... I'm going to... I'm going tooooooooooooo~!!!"

Her voice shot up, cracking and trembling, and her entire body tightened at once. Her thighs shook, her belly tensed, and her pussy squeezed my cock in a sudden, intense grip.

"Nghhh~!!!"

She squirted hard, her pussy squeezing and releasing around me in pulsating waves. The sudden tightness drove me right over the edge.

I couldn't hold it.

Not anymore.

My cock jerked inside her, and I came—hard—shooting thick streams of semen deep into her until I felt her pussy flooding with warmth.

"Hnghhh...! Aaaaaaaaahnghhh...~! Aaaaaaaaah, I'm being filled with semen by Master! Master's semen... is so delicious...~ Hnghhh, aaaaaaahhnnghhh...!"

Her voice trembled with pleasure as my cum leaked out around my cock. When I finally pulled out, the mixture of her fluids and my semen spilled out, trailing down her thighs. Morthea lay there with a full ahgao expression, completely fucked out, her body slack and twitching lightly.

After that, I fucked all of them again.

By the next day, we continued our journey.

The path toward the Lamia Tribe was rough—harder than it looked. The terrain was uneven and unfriendly, and the winter snow hadn't let up at all. The cold air bit against our skin while our boots crunched loudly with every step, breaking through layers of snow that had built up for days.

"Master, we are almost there," Lixis said.

I still had no idea how they weren't freezing when they were practically naked, wearing nothing but leaves covering the bare minimum. The cold air didn't seem to bother them in the slightest. Dryads must've been naturally attuned to low temperatures—or just immune to common sense.

As we walked, something brushed against the edge of my senses—a presence spreading across the area like a sudden drop in the air pressure.

"Master!"

Her warning came right as something moved—fast. So fast it barely registered in my vision before it was already behind me.

A blade appeared at my back.

"Kukuku, what is this?" a voice purred from behind me. "Dryads walking around with a human? Don't tell me this is the infamous elven fucker, huh? Done fucking the dwarf queen, and now you're planning to fuck our leader too?"

"Well, that's the plan," I replied. "But I'm guessing you're not going to let me stroll in that easily, huh?"

I turned my head enough to catch a glimpse—and saw her.

A woman with a human's upper body...

...and the lower half of a snake.

Chapter 1082: Epilogue 20 - The Heroes From Another World (1)

Kashiwagi Yuuto's POV

The winter sun was beating down on us again, its heat sliding across my skin like someone pushing a warm hand against my back. I could feel sweat sticking to my clothes as I swung my weapon for what felt like the hundredth time today. Training with my classmates had become such a routine that my body moved almost automatically, even if my mind drifted off half the time.

It had been weeks—literal weeks—since all of us got transported to this world. At this point, the shock of being thrown into some fantasy world had already worn off, and we were now stuck with the reality of what we were supposed to do here. Every day was basically wake up, eat, train, repeat. Nothing glamorous about being a summoned hero, honestly.

Commander Lilia, the first person who welcomed—well, more like briefed—us when we appeared here, drilled the same thing into our heads: we had to defeat the Demon Lord if we wanted any chance of going home. There was no negotiation, no alternative questline, no side mission that magically bypassed the main story. The only ending available to us was *Kill Demon Lord → Get Teleported Back*.

So yeah, every day, we were training for that "decisive battle." And honestly, every time Commander Lilia said "decisive," it made me feel like some huge pressure was just sitting on top of my chest, waiting for the right moment to crush me.

Not everyone was eager to fight, though. Some of our classmates had already chickened out, refusing to join training because they didn't want to risk dying. And

again, I couldn't blame them. If anything, I kind of admired that they were honest about being terrified. War was dangerous, and the probability of us getting killed out there wasn't low. Some of our skills looked cool as hell, but none of us had real battle experience. We were like kids waving around dangerous toys without knowing how to actually use them.

"I still can't believe it's been weeks since we came here," I muttered while catching my breath. My voice sounded tired even to me. "It doesn't feel like we'll be going back anytime soon. Probably not for a long while."

"That's right, I guess," one of the guys said from beside me, wiping sweat off his face.

"Some people want to go back already," another chimed in. "But since they can't, they're starting to beg the Princess to do something. Not that she can. She already said she doesn't have that kind of power."

"Yeah. But the Princess is nice, though. Really nice," a third classmate added, stretching his arms. "She tries to get along with us. And I mean, she's only like two or three years older than us. Kinda makes her easier to approach than the adults."

He was right. Princess Myrcella Milham—the princess of this entire kingdom—felt surprisingly... normal. For someone with royal blood, she didn't act distant or untouchable. She helped us learn about this world, explained things without sounding annoyed, and treated us like people rather than tools. It was honestly impressive for someone with her status.

"She's super beautiful, too," one of my classmates whispered with way too much enthusiasm. "Like, if I somehow end up getting with her, I don't mind just staying here forever. I mean, why go back if you find happiness here?"

"True, true," someone else laughed. "If we can't return, we might as well get something good out of this world."

I didn't say anything. Their reasons weren't terrible or anything, but hearing them talk so casually about staying in another world felt weird. Like we were slowly accepting that this wasn't temporary anymore. Like everyone was getting used to this world a bit too easily.

And that... scared me a little.

Training ended not long after, and my body felt heavy and sore. My clothes clung to me uncomfortably, and all I wanted was to flop onto a bed and stop existing for an hour or two.

The castle hallways were quiet as I made my way back to my room. Each room housed five people, and even though the rooms were big enough to fit another five without trouble, having more people would destroy whatever tiny sense of privacy was left. As it was now, it felt tolerable.

While walking, I noticed a familiar figure approaching from the opposite side of the corridor. The long, flowing dress, the soft footsteps, the faint floral scent that drifted ahead of her—Princess Myrcella. She looked like she was heading toward the training grounds again to watch the others, something she'd been doing regularly.

"Oh, Mr. Yuuto. Good day to you," she said with a warm smile as soon as our eyes met.

For a moment, I actually forgot how to breathe. My heart thumped hard inside my chest like it was trying to warn me of something. Her smile was gentle, and the way she tilted her head slightly made it feel like she genuinely cared about greeting me. Just that small gesture made my heartbeat go crazy.

"A-Ah... G-Good day to you too, Princess Myrcella," I stammered, scratching the back of my head like an idiot.

Lately, I'd been thinking about her more and more. And deep down, I already knew what that meant. I was... in love with her. Or at least, falling in love. Whatever it was, the feeling was strong enough that just being near her made my chest feel tight.

This was the first time I'd ever felt something like this, and I had absolutely no idea how to deal with it. I didn't even know how to handle crushes properly back in our world, and now here I was, falling for an actual princess in another world.

After exchanging greetings, we passed each other. My feet kept moving forward, but my eyes followed her for a few seconds, watching her walk away. Her hair swayed gently, catching the light in a way that made it almost glow.

A small part of me wished that moment could've lasted a little longer.

But I knew something. Something that made my feelings feel pointless.

Princess Myrcella already had a lover.

I found out by accident one time when I overheard her talking to someone through a smartphone—yes, those existed here too. Along with cars, which was still weird as hell to me. She sounded so happy while talking, saying how much she missed him. There was a softness in her voice, the kind that only came out when someone was speaking to a person they truly cared about.

She already had someone. Someone she loved. Someone she missed.

And that alone should've been enough for me to just accept it and move on.

But instead, for some reason, it pissed me off.

It made something twist in my chest, something irrational and ugly. I wasn't angry at her—of course not. I could never be. It wasn't her fault. She had every right to love someone.

But knowing it... still hurt like hell.

It stung deep enough that I wanted to look away from the thought, but it wouldn't leave me. The idea of her smiling like that for someone else, talking sweetly to someone else, having someone she cherished—it made something burn inside me.

Maybe it was jealousy. Maybe it was frustration. Maybe it was just the feeling of wanting something you knew you could never have.

Whatever it was, it left me feeling hollow and pissed at the world for no good reason.

And all I could do was keep walking toward my room with that annoying ache in my chest.

Chapter 1083: Epilogue 20 - The Heroes From Another World (2)

The training with all of my classmates was still going underway, stretching on like one long, exhausting blur of sweat, mana, and bruised egos. Each passing day chipped away at whatever "normal" we used to have back in our old world. At this point in the schedule, we had already been divided into categories—roles, basically, like we were in an RPG, except this wasn't a game and the soreness in my muscles reminded me of that every single morning.

Those of us who developed stronger bodies—enhanced strength, endurance, stamina—were tossed into the "warriors" category. I ended up here. Warriors were supposed to be the vanguard, the shields of the class. If a battle ever broke out, we were the ones who had to take the hit first. Lucky us, right? Some people were excited about it, but after the initial hype, reality set in. Being a warrior meant being exhausted pretty much all the time.

Those who had been blessed with overwhelming magical potential were slotted into the mages. They trained far behind us, working on elemental blasts, barriers, incantations—whatever mysterious stuff mages were supposed to do. Honestly, whenever I glanced at them, they looked like they were having an easier time. Sure, they worked hard too, but they weren't getting slammed into the dirt ten times a day by instructors twice our size.

Then there were the healers. Those rare few who received healing magic capable of patching up practically any kind of injury. Their role was vital, maybe even more

important than ours, but ironically, most of them weren't participating in training at all. That included Asada-san. She spent all her time in her room, curtains closed, barely speaking to anyone.

It made sense, though. She was still mourning. Ichinose-kun's death hit her the hardest. He had been her best friend for years, practically her other half. And then, right after she lost him, she was thrown into a new world—confusing, overwhelming, and very harsh. Anyone would break under that.

But what bothered me, what gnawed at the back of my mind, was that Amakawa-kun wasn't supporting her at all. He was her boyfriend, and yet their relationship looked like it had shattered the moment Ichinose-kun died. They were supposed to be the "perfect couple." Everyone thought so. But now? It felt like Asada-san was staring into some imaginary space where Ichinose-kun still lived, clinging to a ghost of a memory. And I felt like I, as class president, should at least try reaching out to her.

But every time I took a step in that direction, something inside me froze. It wasn't fear—more like this instinctive feeling that if I bothered her, she'd shut me out completely. And I didn't want to make things worse.

To be honest, I wasn't even used to talking to girls. People always told me I was easy to get along with, someone who could talk to almost anyone, but that didn't magically fix the awkwardness when it came to sensitive topics. The only girl I barely talked to before all this was Chihara-san. And she... well, she only ever talked to Ichinose-kun.

The first time I saw Chihara-san truly broken was after his death. She blamed herself for it and she was completely crushed. I always thought something was there between them—something unspoken but obvious. I really believed that if nothing horrible happened, the two of them would have grown closer. They had that sort of vibe. But fate didn't care, apparently.

While I was walking down one of the long castle corridors, lost in those thoughts, I suddenly spotted Amakawa-kun talking to one of the maids. They were standing in the shade of a balcony, talking quietly, but thanks to whatever weird sensory enhancements came with being transported to this world—especially my hearing—I could hear them clearly, even from far away.

"Last night was amazing. I hope you enjoyed it," Amakawa-kun said with this casual confidence that felt a little too smug.

The maid flushed a soft pink, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "I enjoyed it, Sir Amakawa," she replied, voice warm and slightly shy.

And honestly... she was gorgeous. Maybe not by this world's standards—I've heard the knights call her "plain"—but to me, she looked like someone you'd find on the cover of

some gravure magazine back home. I wasn't the only one who thought that. Most of the guys in class would've agreed.

Did Amakawa-kun and her go somewhere last night? So that was why he wasn't in his room.

"Can I do it again with you tonight?" he asked, no hesitation at all.

"As someone who is tasked with taking care of you, Sir Amakawa... wherever and whenever you want to, I'll gladly do it with you again."

His smile widened, turning into this proud, self-satisfied grin. Even though I had absolutely zero experience in that area, even I could tell they definitely "did the deed" last night.

But it didn't sit right with me. Not because I was judging him. But because he had a girlfriend—one who was barely holding herself together, drowning in grief and despair.

Shouldn't he... I don't know, *be there for her* instead of doing something that would obviously crush her further?

It wasn't my place, really. But my conscience wouldn't shut up.

So I approached him after the maid left.

He noticed me almost immediately. "What? Why are you here?" he snapped, then narrowed his eyes. "You were listening?"

I swallowed. "I'm sorry. I know it's not my business but... did you get into a relationship with that maid, Amakawa-kun?"

"So what?" he replied, still smiling but colder now.

"Well... not to be rude, but... aren't you still in a relationship with Asada-san?" I said. "Doing something like this—it's clearly cheating. I don't think it's good for a relationship."

His smile disappeared instantly, replaced with an irritated glare.

"You really are a nosy, busybody type, huh?" he said. "If you want to snitch, go ahead. I don't want that bitch in my life anyway."

"Huh?"

I actually froze. I didn't expect that at all. Before all this, they were inseparable—lovey-dovey, annoyingly cute even. They looked perfect. No one would have guessed he'd talk about her like that.

"I mean, she isn't putting it out anyway. I got tired of waiting," he said casually, like he was talking about the weather. "But here in this world, since we're special, the maids are willing to put it out for us without question. Just the other night, I was fucking that maid."

He said it like it was nothing.

"And it's not just me. Almost everyone here is fucking a maid of their own. They call it their 'secret service.' And honestly, we boys welcome it. Who wouldn't want to get laid?"

Then he leaned closer, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"I've seen you staring at the Princess too. Don't worry, I get it. She stands above the rest. So why don't you ask her to service you as well? I mean, she'll probably put it out. We're heroes from another world, after all."

Chapter 1084: Epilogue 20 - The Heroes From Another World (3)

"W-What are you even saying?" I shot back, my voice cracking slightly from sheer disbelief. I could feel my face heating up—part embarrassment, part annoyance. "I don't intend to do something like that. Seriously, I don't see becoming a hero from another world as some kind of privilege I can use for that kind of thing."

My words felt a little hollow even to myself, like I was scrambling to defend something obvious, but still—his accusation pissed me off. Being summoned here didn't magically turn me into some kind of walking sex pass.

Amakawa-kun just grinned, and it wasn't the friendly kind. It was that smug, shit-eating grin of his that made you want to punch him through a wall.

"Oh, you really thought that?" he said, leaning back like he owned the place. "Well, I don't think so. Sooner or later, you'll use that privilege to fuck any woman you want. Seriously, it's a damn good privilege. Honestly, maybe I should use it on the Princess instead? She's pretty hot. You know exactly what I mean. That's why I told you I get where you're coming from, right? I mean, fucking that beauty would be absolutely awesome."

His tone wasn't just dirty—it was disgusting in a way that crawled under my skin. I glared at him, my jaw tightening. Every single word he said felt like it hit a nerve, like he was trying to drag me down to the same gutter he lived in.

He was really saying vile shit without blinking. And something like that? Yeah, no way I was letting it slide quietly.

"Oh? What are you gonna do exactly?" he said, raising an eyebrow like he was daring me. "Stop me?"

Before I could answer—or punch him—something sliced through the air behind us.

"Fufufu..."

A soft, melodic laugh slipped into the space like a whisper, and every hair on my body stood up. We both froze before slowly turning around.

And there she was.

The Princess.

Right behind us, standing with perfect posture, her long hair drifting slightly with the breeze like even the air itself was trying to flatter her. And she was smiling—not a normal smile, but one that looked like she found us amusing. Like she had walked in on two kids arguing over which twig was cooler.

My heart dropped straight into my stomach.

Did she hear everything?

No. Judging by the extremely serene, too-perfect smile on her face... she absolutely heard everything. Especially what Amakawa-kun said. Her eyes shimmered with something that looked way too polite to be comforting.

"I'm sorry," she said with a soft, almost playful tone. "You two were telling such an intriguing tale that I found myself stopping to listen."

Her approach was calm, too calm, as if the nasty, vulgar things Amakawa-kun said didn't even scratch her composure. She acted like she was the teacher who had caught us gossiping about her but decided to play along instead of scolding us.

"Sorry, but... I guess there's no hiding it now," Amakawa-kun said. Somehow, he looked pleased—like being caught was part of the thrill for him. Idiot.

The Princess continued smiling, and it only grew more dangerously gentle. "Well, I do find it interesting how strongly you seem to think that way," she said. "I think both of you are charming young men. And I am genuinely grateful that charming men like you desire to have me in bed."

Her smile shouldn't have affected me the way it did, but it did. Hard.

It was seductive—but not intentionally. More like she radiated this natural allure, like she was wrapped in some kind of mature aura that didn't belong to someone as young-looking as her. Her voice was warm, soft, and every word slipped into my ears like silk. My thoughts got fuzzy for a moment, drifting into a weird dreamlike state.

For a second, I felt like my mind was being pulled toward her, like she was some kind of beautiful flame and I was a dumb moth that didn't know it was about to get burnt. It wasn't magic—at least I didn't think so—but the effect was scary.

Why was she showing that kind of aura? Was she trying to prove a point? Show us how out of our league she was? Or worse... show us how childish our thoughts were compared to her maturity?

She looked too good—unfairly good—and it felt too natural for any man to fall for her at first sight. I honestly felt jealous of whoever her lover was, and I hated that I was feeling something that stupid.

Then, her eyes sharpened, and her voice broke through the haze like ice water dumped on my head.

"However, I don't find either of you desirable at all."

"Huh?" Amakawa-kun blurted, visibly stunned. His mouth hung open like he just got punched verbally.

"You seem surprised, Sir Amakawa," she continued. "But that should not be surprising. Many heroes gain confidence from their titles, and you are all catered to so you do not feel suffocated here. But I am not part of the secret services you are mentioning, nor do I intend to participate in such things. I already have a lover of my own, you see. But I appreciate your feelings toward me."

Her expression softened—only for a breath.

Then her smile vanished like a candle blown out, and her gaze hardened into something sharp enough to cut through bone.

"Thinking of something and acting on something—like touching a princess or any royalty—is a royal crime punishable by immediate execution. So if you wish to keep your head, and keep it out of the gutter, I advise you to limit such thoughts to your secret services and leave me out of them."

Each word had weight. Steel. Authority.

"Even if you are a hero, you have no right to make yourself important to this world."

Then, as quickly as her coldness appeared, it disappeared. She replaced it with the sweet, warm smile she always wore in public, then turned around and walked away with steps so graceful they felt choreographed.

We just stood there, stunned into silence.

Amakawa-kun clicked his tongue. "Tsk." He looked pissed, obviously annoyed he didn't get what he wanted—not even the reaction he hoped for. But honestly, I felt relieved. If he kept going the way he was, he was going to get himself killed one day.

Still... seeing her like that—strong, loyal, scary in a sort of regal way—left a strange feeling in me. I never expected her to snap like that. Or maybe it wasn't snapping. Maybe she was just putting us in our place for even thinking about crossing such a line.

Her loyalty to her lover was clear. Sharp enough to cut anyone who got too close.

And for some reason, that made me even more jealous.

Chapter 1085: Epilogue 20 - The Heroes From Another World (4)

Training later that day felt different in a way I couldn't quite put into words at first.

It wasn't just my muscles being stiff or my arms feeling heavier from earlier exercises. No—something deeper was shifting. Mentally, something had snapped awake inside me. There was this strange heat simmering under my skin, like every emotion I went through that morning had been dumped into a furnace somewhere in my core. It wasn't painful, but it burned enough to keep me sharp. Focused. Hungry. Like some hidden drive had been switched on, waiting for this moment to push me forward whether I liked it or not.

"It seems your potential has increased," my instructor said as we sparred. His tone wasn't surprised, more like he'd been expecting it for a while and was just waiting for me to notice the change myself.

He was a middle-aged magic knight—though honestly, calling him "middle-aged" felt like an understatement. The man had gray hair tied back tightly, scars littered across his arms and one slicing diagonally across his cheek. His posture alone could put a nobleman to shame—straight, rigid, disciplined to the point that it made you question every sloppy life choice you'd ever made. One look and you'd know he wasn't just someone who fought battles—he lived them.

Magic knights weren't just your average knights swinging swords for the glory of some banner. They were the elites. The backbone. The kingdom's quiet monsters who never needed recognition because their work spoke for them. They didn't rely on flashy spells or traditional styles. Instead, they trained their bodies and magic until both could naturally fuse into something terrifyingly efficient. Warriors built on discipline and raw talent honed over decades.

And somehow *this man*

—this titan who looked like he'd fought armies—still showed up every day just to teach someone like me.

He looked well over sixty, maybe even older when the sunlight hit his wrinkles just right, but every time he swung his arm, the air literally shifted. I felt the pressure of every strike against my skin before his wooden training sword even reached me. Each blow carried so much weight that my body was practically begging me to just fall over, roll aside, and surrender for a break. But somehow—maybe because that strange fire inside me wouldn't shut up—I stayed on my feet. My legs trembled, yet they held. My breathing stuttered, yet it steadied again.

Somewhere along the way, my stamina had changed.

Not double.

More like triple.

I didn't get it. I didn't understand the how or the why, but I could feel everything in my body responding differently—stronger, faster. I could move again even when my muscles screamed. I could recover in seconds instead of minutes. The burn inside me wasn't dragging me down—it was pushing me harder without letting me crumble.

"I see that your potential is quite high," he said, and this time he gave a smile—one of those rare, genuine ones that stretched gently across his weathered features. "I think you're going to get stronger soon."

Coming from anyone else, that would've been empty encouragement. But coming from him? That was huge. The kind of praise you'd bottle up if you could. And weirdly... I appreciated it more than I ever expected.

"Thank you, Sir," I said, a bit out of breath.

"You don't have to thank me. It's only natural. It's my job, after all." He chuckled lightly, the kind of laugh that carried a hint of warmth. And for a moment, I caught a glimpse of something familiar in him—an aura that felt like my grandfather's. That same mixture of strict discipline and quiet care.

He was the only person taking care of me here. The closest thing I had to a family in this place. The only person who looked out for me not because he had to, but because he genuinely wanted to. And that was the reason I was fighting. To come back to him. To make sure the old man didn't end up worrying himself sick wondering whether I'd return alive or not.

I hated the idea of worrying him. I hated the idea of him waiting and not seeing me walk back through that door. Which was why... I promised myself I'd come back. No matter what.

"Well," he said suddenly, wiping sweat from his face with a towel, "considering how fast you're growing, I think it's only natural for me to hand you off to someone younger and

more capable. I don't think someone like me is enough to be your instructor anymore. You should be under someone stronger."

He smiled again, gentle but firm.

"Huh? But..." I blurted out before I even realized it.

Something twisted in my chest. I shouldn't say anything. I knew I shouldn't. This was obviously him trying to give me the best path forward. A chance to grow even faster. A chance to become someone stronger. Someone capable.

But at the same time... if I didn't speak up right now, it felt like I'd lose something precious. Like this part of my journey with him would suddenly just... end.

He probably could already tell I wanted to go home soon. That I was pushing myself so hard because I didn't want to waste a second. He must've seen it in my training, in how I kept going even when I was exhausted.

"You don't have to worry," he said before I could speak again. "I'll still be involved with your teachings. I just won't handle your physical training."

"I see..." I breathed out.

That eased something inside me. As long as I could still see him, still learn from him, still hear his voice correcting me or scolding me or guiding me—I wouldn't complain.

"I learned a lot from you," I said, and this time I bowed, bending in a perfect ninety-degree angle. "I'm grateful for everything you taught me. The strength I have now, and all of the things I've learned... I owe them to you. So really—thank you."

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"You don't have to bow like that. I was simply doing my job."

His voice softened just a little, almost like he wasn't used to someone giving him actual gratitude. It wasn't cold, but the shift was subtle—an instructor trying not to look flustered.

Job or not, it didn't erase what he'd done for me. He could shrug it off as if it was nothing, but to me, it meant everything. He shaped me. Guided me back when I knew absolutely nothing—when I was fumbling through every stance, every swing, every breath like a clueless idiot who barely knew where his own feet were. He never made me feel stupid, never rushed me even when I took longer than normal. Every correction was gentle, steady, patient, like chiseling a dull stone into something barely decent. He gave me the tools I used now—the foundation that kept me standing.

Without him, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't even be able to pretend I had a chance in this world.

As those thoughts swirled around, a sudden noise tore through the air. A heavy, violent flapping—like a massive sail ripping the sky apart. It wasn't a normal wingbeat. It was dense, deep, the kind of sound you felt in your ribs before you even heard it.

My head snapped up so fast my neck nearly cracked. And for a second—just a second—I almost screamed like a kid who'd just seen a horror movie monster crawl out of the screen.

"W—Wha...?! Is that a dragon?!" someone across the training grounds shouted, their voice cracking so hard it sounded painful.

"Idiot! That's a wyvern! Can't you see its wings are connected to its arms?! That's a wyvern, dumbass!"

"I don't need you correcting me!"

The dumb argument barely registered. Because the second guy was right—it wasn't a dragon. It was a wyvern. But that didn't make it any less terrifying.

A massive wyvern hovered directly above us.

Its shadow swallowed the entire training field like a dark blanket dropped from the sky. The ground trembled as gusts of wind rolled off its wings, whipping dust everywhere. Even the loose dirt lifted off the ground. Its scales shimmered like polished metal catching sunlight, and each flap of its wings sent a shock through the air strong enough to rattle my bones.

For an instant, everything inside my head shut down. Completely blank.

If that thing was an enemy...

If it attacked...

If it landed in the middle of the field...

Then I would have to fight it. I would have to stand here and somehow face something that could crush me with a single swipe. And if I failed—people would die. Even the idiots arguing about wyvern anatomy would be wiped out without even knowing what hit them.

But then the truth slammed into me like a bucket of ice water.

I didn't know how to fight something like that.

My body froze. My legs turned into jelly—weak, trembling, refusing to obey me. They didn't even feel like they were mine anymore. And honestly? That reaction was normal. Even with training, even with all the stamina I somehow gained, all of that meant nothing in the face of a creature like this.

Strength was worthless without experience.

Real, carved-into-your-bones experience.

The kind you got by fighting for your life.

And I had none. Not even a tiny bit.

I had never fought anything like this. Never faced anything this big, this dangerous, this overwhelming. I didn't have a single clue how to handle it.

Absolutely none.

"You don't have to worry about it," my instructor said casually, as if the world wasn't shaking around us. "That's going to be your next instructor."

"Huh?"

My head jerked toward him. A wyvern? An instructor? Did he just combine two terrifying words into one horrifying sentence? I felt like I was getting pranked by the universe. But then I noticed something—someone—on the wyvern's back.

A rider.

"As expected, she's coming back here with that wyvern of hers," my instructor muttered, sounding tired, almost defeated. Like this was just another normal day of witnessing something outrageous. Now that I thought about it, I had heard rumors—about a magic knight who rode a wyvern. So this was going to be my next instructor?

Before I could even process that—

"Oh. She's coming down," he said. "Move out of her landing zone."

"Huh? Oh—"

So she was landing *right here*? She was going to jump off that thing's back?!

And while my brain was still buffering like an old computer, she did exactly that—she jumped off. No hesitation. No warning. She leapt from the wyvern's back like gravity was a suggestion and hit the ground hard enough to make it crack. The impact sent a shiver through the earth, dust exploding outward from the point of contact.

And then I saw her clearly. My breath caught.

She was a woman. A terrifyingly striking one.

Purple hair—long, flowing, catching the light in a way that made it look unreal. Her skin was pale, almost ghostly white, like she'd never seen sunlight in her entire life. It wasn't sickly—just unnaturally fair, like moonlight made into flesh.

But what really hit me was... familiarity.

There was something about her face, her expression, the shape of her eyes—something so eerily similar to someone I knew that it made my stomach twist. It was disturbing. Unsettling. Like seeing a dream walk into reality.

It was honestly shocking. Earlier, I'd been thinking about that person, and now this woman appeared right in front of me with features so similar it felt like a cruel trick. Out of all the people who got teleported, she was one of the few who didn't appear because she wasn't in the classroom when everything happened.

Was this a coincidence? Could it even be one?

Both of them were similar. So similar. Except for the hair color.

She opened her eyes and stood, her movements sharp, controlled—too controlled. She radiated something wild, dangerous, almost feral. She didn't feel like a normal human at all. More like a predator pretending to be one.

"This is Shredica," my instructor announced. "She is going to be your new instructor from now on."

"Shredica," she repeated, her voice low. Then her eyes locked onto mine.

Every hair on my arms stood up instantly, cold prickles shooting down my spine. It felt like I was staring at something that shouldn't exist in this world.

Because right now... She looked exactly like someone who wasn't supposed to be here.

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A doppelganger. No... worse than that. Way worse.

She didn't just *resemble* someone I knew—she looked like the real person but twisted, distorted, like someone had taken the original and pulled it through a nightmare filter. Every detail was familiar but wrong at the same time. My brain kept flickering between recognition and denial, like it couldn't fully process what I was staring at.

It was—

"Chihara... Akane?"

The words slipped out of one of my classmates, barely above a whisper, but it cut through the training field like a blade. His voice trembled, shaking with a mixture of disbelief and fear. And the moment he said it, everything stopped. Every step, every swing, every breath—frozen. The entire class turned in unison to stare at her as if some unseen command had swept through the air.

A beat of silence. Then the murmurs erupted.

"What? Isn't she supposed to be here? How did she even get here?"

"Wait—why the hell is her hair purple now?"

"Is she really Chihara?"

"I mean, look at her. She seriously looks like her."

"No, no—now that I'm actually staring, she's kinda different."

"But if you look at her from that angle? Dude. She's literally Chihara!"

Their voices overlapped, rising and falling, blending into this weird, static-like noise that made my head pound. It honestly felt like the world itself couldn't decide on what the hell it wanted her to be. It was like reality had split in half, showing two versions of the same person and then shrugging, unsure which one to keep.

And the creepy part? Everyone knew—deep down—that the person standing in front of us, Shredica, looked way too much like Chihara Akane to call it a coincidence. It wasn't even a slight resemblance. It was uncanny. Eerie. Like staring at a mirrored version of someone who wasn't supposed to be here. Someone who had no business being in this place at all.

Our classmate. The girl who should've been nowhere near this world.

But Shredica... she didn't seem aware of the chaos she was causing. Her expression wasn't threatening or smug or anything like that—it was confused. Really confused. But beneath that confusion, there was something else. Something subtle. A faint spark of recognition, like she thought she *knew* me but wasn't quite sure from where. She looked like someone who recognized the shape of a memory but couldn't recall the actual moment.

At the same time, she also looked like someone who had absolutely no idea who I was.

"This is the person that I'm going to instruct?" she asked, voice steady but tinted with uncertainty.

"Well, yes," my instructor—who was basically about to be my *former* instructor—replied. "He's Sir Kashiwagi."

"Kashiwagi..." she repeated, mouthing the name slowly. It rolled out of her mouth like she was tasting something familiar, something she couldn't fully grasp but somehow felt attached to.

Then her eyes locked onto mine.

"I am Shredica, and I'll be your instructor from now on," she said. "With that, let's begin my lesson."

The way she said it—sharp and confidently—made it sound like she was ready to put me through hell and then some. She didn't smile. She didn't soften her expression. She just stared at me with this scowl that could send a grown man straight into therapy. Honestly, she looked like she was about to square up and throw hands before the lesson even started.

"I've been told that you're the one who's been improving the most out of everyone here," she continued. "So I was specifically assigned to teach you. Apparently, I am the only one capable of handling you at the moment. Moving forward, you will address me as Instructor. If you ever feel like you can't improve... then they'll have to evaluate your worth."

...Wow.Okay. So she already decided I might be a disappointment. Great. Fantastic. Perfect way to motivate someone—start by assuming they're useless. I wasn't sure how I felt about that. It annoyed me, sure, but I also weirdly understood it. If she didn't expect anything from me, then she wouldn't get emotionally invested. Kind of like preinstalling disappointment so she wouldn't have to suffer later.

Real comforting.

But while she kept talking, something kept poking at my brain. The way her voice sounded... it was too familiar. She didn't just look like Chihara-san. She *talked* like her. The cadence, the tone, the subtle disinterest layered under her words—it was the same. It felt like hearing a voice I'd known for years but slightly distorted.

Sure, it could've been coincidence... but it wasn't. It was too damn precise. Too close to be random.

Then—

"Now then, *Kashiwagi*."

Even the way she said my name was identical to how Chihara-san used to say it. Flat. Dull. Like she was already bored of me before I even opened my mouth.

"Come at me," she said.

She didn't draw a weapon. She didn't raise her guard. She just stood there, staring at me, clearly expecting me to swing my sword at her like this was just another exercise.

"Oh, it seems Shredica isn't going to beat around the bush today," my instructor called out with a slightly worried laugh. "Be careful around her, Sir Kashiwagi. She's a little too rough for her own good."

Yeah, no kidding. Even from here, her aura felt brutal. Not dangerous—brutal. Sharply intense. Rough around the edges in a way that Chihara-san never was. That fierce, almost abrasive presence was probably the one thing separating her from the real Chihara-san. Without that, the resemblance would've been terrifyingly one-to-one.

I tightened my grip on the sword, feeling the weight settle into my hands. Then I dashed forward.

The speed I moved at now... it wasn't human. Not by Earth's standards. I could feel the wind slicing behind me, my feet hitting the ground faster and lighter than they ever could back then. Even the sword—this heavy, metal object—felt weirdly light, like a wooden stick. A heavy wooden stick, sure, but still nothing compared to what it should've been.

I lifted the sword. Closed in on her. Brought it down—

And for a moment, I actually thought I won.

Because she didn't move. Not even a twitch. She stood there, completely calm, as if I wasn't even worth reacting to.

I stopped the blade right before it reached her.

She stared into my eyes. And then—slowly—she sighed.

A heartbeat later, I felt something slam into me.

A punch. A brutal punch.

Right into my solar plexus.

"Guaaahhh!"

My entire body folded almost instantly. No warning. No chance to brace. It felt like she punched straight through my soul, grabbed it, and yanked it out. Air refused to enter my lungs as I gasped and wheezed, my vision flickering at the edges.

She punched me. Right in the gut. When I thought I won.

"As I thought, I'm disappointed," she said, exhaling sharply as if I had let her down on a deeply personal level. She emphasized the disappointment, dragging it out like she wanted to make sure I never forgot it.

"W-Why...?" I managed to choke out. Each breath felt like broken glass sliding through my chest.

"If you come at me without the intent to kill," she said casually, as if explaining something obvious, "then I won't move at all. Because I already know you won't kill me."

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"You really are merciless, Shredica," my previous instructor muttered, sounding half-exhausted and half-amused, like he had seen this exact scene one too many times already. He rubbed his temples and glanced at the wreck I had become. "You have to take it easy on them. They still haven't even been taught how to fight in real scenarios. They're already feeling overwhelmed, and you're not helping that, you know?"

Shredica didn't even flinch. She didn't look back at him. She just stood there with her arms crossed, staring down at me like she was checking whether I was a stain that needed to be wiped off the floor. "If he's going to be that way," she said flatly, like she was stating basic math, "then he wouldn't be able to come home."

Her voice didn't waver. Not even a tiny bit.

"If his goal is really to return home, he has to have that merciless tendency and kill anything that gets in his way." She said it the same way someone would state the time of day—calm, emotionless, disturbingly natural for her.

Hearing something that dark being said so casually made the hairs on my arms rise. I couldn't help but feel like she was... pitying us, in her own twisted way. It was like, underneath all that coldness, she understood us too well. Almost like she had been in the same situation once—teleported here, thrown into chaos, forced to fight with no warning. But at the same time, the way she looked at us, at me... it wasn't pity. It was like she was looking at a mirror. Like she saw herself in us, but not in a good way—more like she was seeing the parts of herself she hated, and she was trying to beat them out of us.

"If you don't want to get disappointed and you want real results," she said sharply, snapping me out of my thoughts, "stand back up and try that again."

She didn't raise her voice. She didn't need to. The way her eyes narrowed at me made me feel smaller than a pebble. She looked at me like I was trash she had to deal with.

I tried to fight her. I honestly did. I pushed myself back up, my arms shaking, my legs barely responding. But the moment I moved, the world spun, and before I could even understand what happened, I was face-first in the dirt again. It happened over and over. I'd stand up, she'd flick her wrist—or leg, or elbow, or whatever—and boom, the ground would rush to kiss me like it had been waiting for me all day.

She was really merciless.

Whenever I tried to get up, she'd immediately move like a shadow that had no patience left for me, kicking me down again like I was nothing more than a training dummy she was sick of looking at. There was no mercy in her movements. None. It felt like I was just dancing helplessly at the very tip of her fingers, and she was making sure I understood exactly how helpless I was.

My instructor, my previous one, just watched with this look like, "Well, here we go again." He sighed, shook his head, and folded his arms. It was almost like he had bet money that this would happen.

My classmates who were training nearby paused what they were doing. I could feel their eyes on me. Some of them winced when my face slammed into the dirt again. Others whispered among themselves, probably something like, "Damn, dude..." I couldn't blame them. I would've pitied me too.

By the end of it, I was sprawled across the ground, barely able to move a finger. Every inch of my body hurt—except now it hurt so much that it was starting to feel numb. That kind of pain that goes so far it loops back around into weird emptiness.

She was too strong.

And now I knew, for a fact, that this woman was not the Chihara Akane I knew. She wasn't even close. This wasn't the gentle, polite, quietly intimidating person I knew back home. This wasn't even Chihara Akane in general. No—this was something else entirely. A different person in the shape of someone I recognized. Maybe even a different soul altogether.

"Now, now. Take it easy, Shredica," my previous instructor said, stepping in before she decided to break something important inside my body. "He can't even move anymore. How about giving him a break and continuing his training tomorrow?"

Shredica stared at me one last time, let out a long, annoyed sigh, and then walked out like she hadn't just rearranged my internal organs through physical force.

"Fufufu..." my previous instructor chuckled under his breath. "It seems like you might be able to achieve your dream with her as your instructor. She's a wild card, you know. And she's almost the same age as you. Or I think she is. Anyway, I bet you're going to enjoy yourself by her side."

Yeah. Sure. Totally. Enjoy myself.

There was absolutely no way I'd enjoy myself. That was torture disguised as training.

One of my classmates—who had been assigned as a healer—walked over and healed me. The warm light surrounded me, sinking through my skin, my muscles, my bones. In just seconds, all the pain began melting away.

I thanked her. Honestly, I was shocked. A moment ago I felt like a cracked vase about to fall apart, and now I felt like nothing had ever happened. It was insane how effective healing magic was.

While heading to my room, still processing everything, I came across a maid. She paused, looked at me up and down for a moment—maybe checking if I was still injured—and then smiled.

And for some reason, my heart sped up.

Then I remembered what Amakawa-kun told me:

"We are heroes from another world, after all."

It echoed in my head. And suddenly, all the pieces started connecting. The rooms, the food, the way people treated us—it wasn't just courtesy. It was because we were... special here. Because we came from another world. We were valuable.

So when that maid smiled at me like that... gently, seductively... it hit different. I felt myself getting swept up by it before I even had time to think. Maybe it was the exhaustion, or frustration, or stress, or everything mixed together.

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I forced myself to calm down for now, taking slow breaths and trying to keep the shaking in my hands from getting any worse. But honestly... even as I told myself to relax, even as I forced my shoulders to drop and unclench, I knew damn well I was only buying time. That calm felt fragile, like a thin sheet of ice I was pretending was solid ground. One wrong move, one wrong thought, and it would crack under me again.

When I reached my room, it was completely empty. Not a single voice, not a single body, nothing—just silence, the kind that felt a little too big for the space. All five of us were supposed to share this room, cramped as it was, but apparently everyone else had wandered off somewhere. And honestly, knowing the kind of idiots I came here with... it wasn't hard to guess where they'd gone. It was very possible—no, almost guaranteed—that they were already messing around with some of the castle maids, probably bragging about being "heroes from another world" while getting their dicks wet.

I sat down on my bed, the old wooden frame creaking under my weight, and just let myself fall back. The mattress wasn't exactly comfortable—too stiff, too thin—but I still felt the exhaustion catching up to me. My head felt heavy, my eyelids heavier. I closed my eyes, letting the faint sounds of the castle—distant footsteps, a door closing somewhere far away, the soft hum of torches—fade into the background. And before I even knew it, sleep pulled me under so fast it felt like someone had flipped a switch in my mind.

I didn't know how long I slept, but sometime in the night, I woke up with this weird, creeping sensation—like the air around me had shifted. It was subtle at first, just the feeling of warmth and weight against my legs. Then something pressed down on me, something soft but unmistakably shaped. It felt like someone had straddled me.

My eyes flew open, panic slamming through my chest so abruptly it knocked the air out of me. And there she was. That same maid from earlier—the same woman who had given me that look, that smile that lingered a bit too long—now sitting directly on top of me like she belonged there.

My voice came out dry, almost cracking. "W-What are you...?"

She didn't even flinch. Instead, she leaned in just a little, her long hair falling over her shoulder as she smiled down at me. That same seductive smile, smooth and warm like she'd practiced it a thousand times.

"Relax, Hero," she whispered, her voice soft enough to brush against my skin like a fingertip. "Everything's going to be alright. Just leave this to me."

I tried to move—instinctively—but my body refused to respond. It wasn't that she was impossibly strong; it was the way she positioned herself, her legs braced, her weight pressed onto my hips, her hands planted on my chest. She had me pinned with a confidence that made resisting feel pointless. My mind scrambled for something—anything—to do or say. Whether I should fight back, push her off, ask her what the hell she thought she was doing...

But how could I? What was even the point? She was so close—close enough for her breath to skim the corner of my mouth, carrying this faint, sweet scent that made my brain lag. Her eyes were focused entirely on me, unblinking, so calm it felt unreal. My

heart was pounding like I'd been thrown into battle, but she acted like this was the most natural thing in the world.

She didn't wait for my answer, didn't give me time to think. She leaned down, her lips touching mine in a soft, slow kiss—

And that night, I lost my innocence.

Myrcella's POV

The castle had begun its nightly ritual, the one whispered about behind closed doors and carried out with an eerie kind of discipline. The maids were moving through the long stone hallways with practiced steps, preparing themselves to service the heroes from another world with their bodies. They adjusted skirts, fixed their hair, whispered to each other with nervousness or determination—each one aware of the role they had been ordered to play.

It was a plan meticulously crafted by the Commander herself. She was the one who decided that seducing the heroes would keep them tied to this kingdom, physically and emotionally. She wanted them so tangled in desire and pleasure that the thought of returning home wouldn't even enter their minds. It was cruel, honestly—cruel in a way that felt cold, calculated, almost frightening.

Commander Lilia always did the most. And the worst part was how effortlessly she pulled it off. She never looked like she was plotting anything monstrous; she smiled, gave orders, and acted like every decision she made was for the greater good. But she was doing all of this to make the heroes into her pawns, plain and simple. She had no intention of letting them return home. They were tools to her—pieces on a board she could move as she pleased. And the maids... the maids were just another weapon in her arsenal, used to keep the heroes exactly where she wanted them.

I felt sorry for the heroes. Truly, I did. But sympathy wouldn't fix the situation the kingdom was in right now. Things were getting worse every day. Rumors of insurgencies kept spreading, whispers about civil unrest slipped through the halls like smoke, and none of it ever reached my father's ears—or rather, he refused to hear them. There was a civil war brewing right under his nose, and he didn't know it. Or didn't want to know. And maybe that was why Commander Lilia was doing all of this—to make sure the heroes stayed put, so they wouldn't break away from the kingdom and disrupt the fragile balance of the world. Or maybe she just wanted them under her thumb. With her, it was always hard to tell.

It was almost impressive, the way she controlled everything with such ease. She manipulated situations like she was guiding a gentle river, not steering the fate of an entire kingdom. Even with my father supposedly watching her closely, she managed to

get away with so much it was frightening. She moved like someone who already believed she owned the throne.

This was bad. Extremely bad. And if this kept up, it was only a matter of time before she achieved whatever twisted goal she had in mind. I didn't know if she wanted full political control or something else entirely, but she was reaching for something big. And I couldn't let her have it. Leon was the one who would shape the future—not her.

Chapter 1090: Epilogue 20 - The Heroes From Another World (9)

As I walked down the hallway, the sound of my footsteps echoed faintly against the stone walls, each soft tap mixing with the dim hum of magic lamps overhead. My thoughts felt heavy—so heavy they almost dragged behind me like a long cloak dragging dirt along the floor. They tangled around each other, forming knots that refused to loosen. I had so many things on my mind already, and the last thing I needed was another complication.

But then... something shifted.

It was small at first, like a change in the air. The kind of subtle disturbance you only feel when your instincts have been trained to react. The hairs on the back of my neck lifted slowly, prickling as though a cold gust of wind had blown through a room that was supposed to be sealed shut. My steps faltered just a little. I couldn't shake the uncomfortable sensation crawling down my spine.

Someone was following me.

I slowed down, letting my stride become lighter, quieter, more measured. Then, with a calm breath, I turned around.

And of course—there he was.

That guy from before. The one who had the absolute audacity, the sheer nerve, to demand sex from me as if it was his birthright. As if being a so-called "hero" from another world automatically handed him every privilege imaginable. He looked exactly the same as the last time I saw him: full of himself, radiating that arrogant air of someone who believed the world owed him affection, bodies, and attention.

"You're trying really hard, boy," I said, stopping completely, letting my voice come out cool and almost bored.

He stepped into view fully, wearing a smirk so greasy it almost reflected the hallway lights. He carried himself like someone who was convinced he was irresistible—but his posture only screamed inexperience and insecurity.

"I didn't expect the Princess to have such sharp senses," he said. "To think you'd notice me following you."

"Sir Amakawa," I replied, pulling out that polite princess smile—the one carefully sculpted to hide irritation, hide disgust, hide everything. Calm, composed, almost gentle. "I didn't think you'd try to ambush me. Don't you have an appointment with another woman? Or are you still trying to get to me? I'll advise you to give up on that."

He immediately denied it, too quickly, like a child caught stealing sweets.

"I'm not," he said, but his face betrayed him instantly. That vile expression, those hungry eyes—his words didn't match anything happening on his face. "I was just curious, that's all."

"Curious?"

"Yup." He grinned wider. "I really want to get to know you, after all."

I let out the faintest breath of amusement—not quite a laugh, but close. "You must have quite the urge then. Considering you're following me like this. Normally, stalking a princess is a royal crime. But I'll let it pass—as long as you don't push your boundaries."

He chuckled, smug as ever—like he had somehow scored a win against me. It was ridiculous how proud he looked, like simply getting me to turn around and acknowledge his presence gave him some kind of victory.

"Well, I'm glad you're not planning to punish me too harshly," he said. "That's pretty generous of you. I didn't think you'd be so lenient. But I guess even if you say our authority as heroes isn't that high... we still have enough power that even the royal family can't really do anything about it."

There it was—*that*. That tone he used to slide under your skin, to make himself sound bigger than he was. He had a way with twisting his words, bending them in a way that almost reminded me of Leon. But only *almost*. He didn't have Leon's confidence. He didn't have Leon's terrifying precision. He tried to imitate it, but it came out awkward and sloppy.

He was trying to get in my pants—plain and simple. After fucking the maid in the castle, I guess he figured he could "level up" or something by trying his luck with a princess. A disgusting kind of logic, but predictable.

And I knew this tactic because I'd been caught by it before. Someone once tried to get into my pants—and succeeded. That someone was Leon. Which is exactly why I recognized every little move Amakawa was pulling. Except... he wasn't even good at it. Not even close.

This man was trying really, really hard. Almost desperately so.

Then I heard it.

"Amakawa-kun?"

A soft voice. Fragile. Like someone calling out through a fog.

He turned around immediately. "Kaori?"

Standing there was Lady Kaori Asada. His lover, if I remembered correctly. Which made all of this even more pathetic. Why was he still pursuing other women when he already had someone? Unless polygamy was normal in their world—but judging from the conversations I overheard between him and Sir Kashiwagi, that didn't seem to be the case.

Lady Asada looked terrible. No—she looked broken.

From the moment she was summoned, she already carried the expression of someone whose entire world had come crashing down on her. And somehow, since then, it felt like more and more weight had been piled on top of her. I didn't know what kind of problem she was facing right now, but it was clear she was barely holding herself together.

"You look rather... stressed," Sir Amakawa said, sounding more annoyed than concerned. "Don't you think you should freshen up more? You look like a shadow of yourself."

Truly unbelievable. This man had absolutely no tact. None. Or maybe he was already getting tired of her—his forced patience wearing thin. Maybe he was trying to push her away.

Honestly, it was impressive how low he could go. He was scum. The scum of the scum. The lowest kind of man.

Lady Asada looked pale—so pale it almost frightened me. Her eyes were ringed with deep dark circles, and she stared forward like she wasn't really seeing anything. Like she was trapped somewhere far beyond this hallway. She looked like someone who didn't know how to ask for help. And worse—like she didn't believe help would ever come.

If this continued... I could already imagine her hanging in her room with a noose around her neck, her body swinging slowly like a pendulum. It was too vivid. Too real.

"C-Can... you stay with me for the night?" she said, her voice trembling. "I don't think I would be able to hold it any longer if you are not by my side..."

The moment she said that, I saw it.

That smirk.

That delighted, devilish curl of his lips—like she had walked straight into his trap. Like he had been waiting for those exact words.

He wrapped his arms around her, pretending to comfort her. Pretending to care.

"I know. I know," Sir Amakawa murmured, stroking her back. "You are suffering from Tsubasa's death. Of course you're like this. Wipe these tears away. I will console you tonight."

A knot formed in my chest—tight and cold and heavy. If I left her alone with him, something terrible would happen. I knew that instinctively. Instead of comforting her, he would drag her deeper into her despair.

I didn't have a plan. I didn't have a reason. But my voice moved on its own.

I opened my mouth.

And I said something.