

The World Is Mine For The Taking

#Chapter 21 - 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (2) - Read The World Is Mine For The Taking Chapter 21 - 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (2)

Chapter 21: Chapter 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (2)

Martha and I headed to her office, just upstairs from the establishment. It turned out to be a small office, fitting for a brothel owner. It would've been a shock if her office were grand and magnificent.

I found myself settled on a plush, red couch, positioned to face her as she occupied her seat behind a modest desk.

"So... sir?" Martha queried.

"Ah, Leon," I clarified.

"Just... Leon?"

"Yup."

Martha's head tilted, an expression of confusion etched across her features. She donned rimless glasses that adorned her strict face. Her short, vibrant blue hair framed an alluring visage. In what resembled a corporate office uniform, she had strategically left the upper buttons undone, granting a provocative glimpse of her cleavage. The tight miniskirt she wore boasted a seductive slit to one side, revealing stockings that intertwined with pantyhose. Martha's attire exuded an undeniable allure, challenging the conventional image one might have of a brothel owner or manager. A closer look suggested she harbored more than met the eye. It was this realization that fueled my determination to dominate her.

"What do you want to talk about?" she inquired.

"Ah..." I stammered. Oh, right. That was the reason we came here, right? I had forgotten. The truth was, I had no clue what to discuss. While my mind flirted with the idea of probing into her skill or the secrets of the basement, I could sense this woman wasn't one to spill her secrets willingly. Even now, she appeared guarded. So, let's come up with something for now. "Are you the owner of this brothel?"

She nodded, a motion so curt it bordered on enigmatic silence.

"That's surprising, given your youthful appearance. How old are you, if you don't mind me asking?"

I recognized it might be considered rude to inquire about a woman's age, but I wanted to keep the conversation flowing and discourage her from being so reserved. I despised one-sided conversations.

"Isn't it considered somewhat impertinent to inquire about a woman's age? Others might raise an eyebrow or two if faced with such a bold interrogation. Fortunately, though, I remain ensconced in the embrace of youth, as your discerning eyes may have surmised. Perhaps our ages align more closely than one might anticipate."

"I'm 18," I disclosed.

"How coincidental. I find myself at the tender age of 18 as well."

"Liar," I chuckled.

"W-Why are you laughing like that? And why did you call me a liar? How rude. I wouldn't just fabricate my age, would I?"

I smiled at her. The subtle play of emotions on her face fascinated me. The veneer of strictness gave way to a faint blush as she confronted my laughter and the accusation of falsehood. However, she was indeed concealing the truth. I wasn't merely making baseless claims when I called her a liar.

"You shifted your eyes ever so slightly when you claimed to be 18."

"I-I didn't!"

"You did. And just now, you did it again," I teased with a laugh. Deception seemed to be a recurring theme with her, yet her skills in the art were less than adept.

"O-Okay. I did lie. My age is actually 19."

"Nope."

"20," she confessed, a flicker of uncertainty betraying her composure.

"Your eyes persistently sidestepping the truth," I observed, my voice laced with amusement.

"O-Okay. I'm 21! 21!"

"Not going to convince me," I replied, my grin widening with every unsuccessful attempt.

Her frustration reached a boiling point. Slamming her hands on the desk, she rose abruptly, sending her chair tumbling in the process. "22! I'm 22! Happy?!"

I maintained my grin, enjoying the unraveling of her attempts at deception. "Is that so?" I remarked casually. Her gaze, now fixed on me, signaled the cessation of the charade. "But still, that's a tender age. And you're steering this brothel solo?"

Martha, having regained her composure, righted her chair and reclaimed her seat. "My father entrusted the ownership to me after his passing. Initially perplexed, especially with a more capable brother in the picture, I later grasped his intentions upon assuming control of this establishment," she confessed, a momentary lapse in restraint. Realizing she had divulged more than intended, she shook her head. "Sorry. That's something I shouldn't talk about. Anyway, now you know why I'm at the helm, and as for your other question, yes, I'm navigating it independently."

"Wow. I can't believe you're shouldering this responsibility at the age of 22," I teased, noting a vein pulsating on her forehead at the mention of her age. Unfazed by her reaction, I probed further. "Is your adeptness in managing it attributed to your skill?"

The vein on her forehead disappeared as she cleared her throat. "...No."

"What's your skill, incidentally?" I asked casually. Since we were discussing skills, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to inquire. Whether her skill would be useful to me or not, I was still determined to dominate her.

She appeared hesitant to divulge the information at first, but realizing there was no harm in sharing, she admitted, "It's a useless skill called Deft Hands."

I had no idea what that skill entailed.

"What does it do?"

"Why are you prying?" she responded suspiciously.

"Can't I express a bit of curiosity?"

"Are you hitting on me? I'm sorry, but even with that handsome face, that's not going to work, kiddo."

I couldn't fathom why she was so convinced that I was hitting on her, but I thought, why not let her believe it? Before I could utter a word, she spoke with an air of reluctance.

"Well, since there's no harm in telling you, I suppose I could. It's just a useless skill anyway," she sighed. Her eyes, sharp and piercing like sapphires, locked onto mine. "It's a skill that lets me do things with my hands, you know? I can write like a pro, craft

brehtaking handwriting, whip up impressive paintings, and cook like a chef. It makes me a maestro at anything hands-on. Sounds like a load of crap, huh?"

What the fuck? Useless? I thought that was one hell of a skill. Being a master at anything with your hands could turn life into a smooth ride. And if I could snatch that skill, it might just skyrocket my swordsmanship. I mean, swordsmanship involves hands, right? Making that skill mine became a burning ambition. Her proficiency was impressive, and she had this innate talent for hands-on tasks. My craving to conquer her only intensified. While I was lost in my thoughts, she pressed on.

"It's useless," she sighed, her gaze dropping to her hands. "Because this skill couldn't save those women," she admitted bitterly. Realizing the weight of her words, she shook her head and looked back at me, her expression softer. "I'm sorry for saying something weird."

"It's fine," I assured her. I was starting to glimpse the face beneath that stern exterior.

"And also..." she hesitated. "I'm sorry for extorting you."

"...What?"

"For demanding so much money just to let you through those doors. I'm not some money-hungry woman, just so you know. I'm doing this so that... those women there can live a better life."

"You must be carrying more than just the burden of managing this brothel."

"It's nothing you need to know about."

"Is that so." I responded.

After our conversation, a heavy silence hung in the air. Hours crawled by until finally, the fruits of my labor, in the form of money, arrived. Gabrielle looked worn out as she wearily stepped through the entrance of the brothel.

"Why do you always have to put me through the wringer? Being a professor at the academy is demanding enough, you know!" she said, huffing and puffing.

"Now, now. Take a breather, Gabrielle. I'll make sure to show my appreciation for your hard work, alright?"

Her protests ceased, and a faint blush painted her fatigued face. She was undeniably charming. I couldn't help but feel a deep affection for her.

"Did you bring what I asked for?"

"Yes. Three thousand gold coins, right?" She gestured towards three imposing boxes. I approached them and opened each one, revealing a gleaming pile of gold coins. Among them, I noticed a box containing smartphones.

"Amon sent those to me," Gabrielle explained.

Martha also approached the three boxes, her eyes fixed on the contents. The prostitutes and the receptionist joined in. Almost in unison, they seemed ready to collapse at the knees, their eyes gleaming as they beheld the dazzling pile of gold that radiated a captivating sheen. On top of the gold sat a cluster of smartphones in one of the boxes.

Martha regained her composure and turned to me, "Wh-Who are you?" she stammered.

It was a question that made perfect sense under the circumstances. The sheer amount of money before them was incomprehensible. Even a prince might struggle to amass such wealth. The prostitutes and the receptionist gazed at me with eyes sparkling, their unspoken question mirroring Martha's.

"Someone with a hell of a lot of money," I grinned at her.

Chapter 22: Chapter 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (3)

With Martha by my side, I descended into the lower floor, guided by the scent that lingered in the air. As we reached what I thought was the basement, it turned out to be another floor, much like the ones above. However, what distinguished it was the multitude of women seated, all fixated on a wall at the front. An old, wrinkled woman stood before them, gesturing toward something on a blackboard affixed to one of the room's walls.

"Mastering the art of conducting oneself can grab anyone's attention or ignite interest. Graceful behavior can elevate your aura, making others sit up and take notice. Remember, your poise and manners are your greatest assets. A lady should walk with the elegance of a swan gliding across a serene lake. Keep your posture upright, shoulders back, and chin level. A subtle sway of the hips adds a touch of allure, enticing those who lay eyes upon you. The way you present yourself is crucial. Imagine each step is a note in a melody, and your movement is a dance, captivating the audience. A slight smile can be a powerful tool, mysterious yet inviting, leaving a lasting impression. Now, let's talk about conversation. Engage in it with intelligence and charm. Listen actively to your clients, respond with grace, and never forget the power of a well-timed laugh. Laughter, my dears, is the music of joy, and joy is infectious. As for the art of dining, familiarize yourselves with the intricate dance of silverware. Each piece has its place and purpose. Mastery of this dance not only showcases your refinement but also puts your client at ease, creating an atmosphere of comfort."

Even though I wasn't exactly tuned in during my academy classes, I recognized what this old woman was imparting. She was teaching these women how to conduct themselves as proper ladies and the etiquette expected of nobles. It was an elective subject for those who aspired to refine their manners. I had chosen this elective too, as every student had to pick at least one. However, these teachings were typically reserved for noble children and commoners pursuing endeavors that demanded such refinement. Judging by the women in this room, they weren't noble daughters.

"...Prostitutes in training," I mumbled. That's right. These women were learning noble etiquette because they were training to become prostitutes.

I shot a glance at Martha, who observed them with a conflicted expression. I had an inkling of why she wore such a look. For now, though, I focused my sense of smell and immediately pinpointed the source of that alluring scent. Right there, she was seated among the women, attentively listening to the old woman.

I was immediately captivated by her beauty. It was enchanting, much like the alluring scent she emitted. Judging by her appearance, she seemed to be at least close to my age. With long snow-white hair, blood-ruby eyes, and a curvaceous figure that even the kimono couldn't conceal, she exuded an otherworldly allure. Her kimono, a striking shade of red, was secured by an Obi, a sash around her belly. Yet, that wasn't what shocked me. While it was surprising to see a woman donning a kimono in this world, what truly caught my attention were those... long fox ears... and those nine tails. It was a being that only existed as a legend back on Earth—a kyūbi no kitsune, a nine-tailed fox.

I patiently waited for the class to come to an end. As it concluded, the women directed their attention toward me. However, my gaze remained fixed on the nine-tailed fox. It might be incorrect to label her that way, but lacking knowledge of her name, I had no other option. Suddenly, I heard metallic chimes ringing in my head. Judging by the abundance of chimes, it seemed many women had taken an interest in me. Yet, I paid them no mind. My focus was solely on the nine-tailed fox. Like the others, she had taken an interest in me, prompting me to open the panel on how to dominate her.

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You've captured the interest of Ayane Kitsune. You can now proceed to dominate her.

Name: Ayane Kitsune

Race: Beastskin

Requirements to dominate Ayane:

1. Save Ayane From Becoming A Prostitute

2. Unlock

3. Unlock

4. Unlock

....

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When I saw that, I leaned in close to Martha's ear. "You said I can get what I want if I give you 1000 gold coins, right?"

She shot me a disgusted look. "You're not talking about one of them, are you?" she said.

It was clear she assumed I was here for an item, not a woman. I glanced at the corner where various items were displayed, probably gifts from clients to their prostitutes. While they were nice-looking, they wouldn't add up to 1000 gold coins.

"...I want her," I declared, pointing at the nine-tailed fox. She visibly flinched when I singled her out, and the other women looked at her with a mix of confusion and concern. They must have sensed that I was attempting to purchase her.

"Sorry, but she's not for sale," Martha asserted.

"She'll be soon, right? She's in training to become someone who will sell her charms to men, after all," I countered.

"That's not the point. I'm telling you that you're not allowed to take her because she'll..." Martha hesitated, a visible struggle on her face. Gritting her teeth, she finally uttered what she had been avoiding, "She'll become our product. You can't just whisk her away, as she's destined to be one of those exclusive, high-class prostitutes fetching a premium price. Your measly 1000 gold coins, or even your entire fortune, couldn't possibly measure up. These budding courtesans in training will... be sold for a night at the rate of 100 gold coins. Even a lifetime's wealth won't be enough to secure her. She's also a beastskin, meaning she won't age even in fifty years, preserving that captivating beauty. In fifty years or so, she'll amass a fortune for me. So, don't even think about trying to buy her. You can't afford her."

Her words seemed to flow naturally, but I could sense they didn't reflect her true feelings.

I began to piece together the grim reality within this brothel. While my deductions remained speculative, the evidence pointed toward a harrowing reality—these women were essentially slaves, thrust into the dark world of prostitution. Perhaps they had been abducted, much like what happened to Amon. Regardless of the specifics, it was evident that they were placed here against their will. How did I come to this understanding? Martha's words earlier provided a crucial clue. It was clear she desired a better life for these women, indicating her reluctance to see them forced into prostitution. This sentiment likely extended to the existing prostitutes as well.

Then, why didn't Martha simply set them free if she was independently managing the brothel? The answer was straightforward. She was lying. I observed a slight wavering in her eyes as she maintained eye contact while asserting her independent management. Recognizing her weakness in deception, she consciously avoided averting her gaze from mine.

If Martha wasn't the owner, then who was? She had mentioned having a brother. Despite having a capable brother, her father passed the ownership of the brothel to her. She expressed confusion about her father's decision, wondering why he chose her over her brother. But after some time, she eventually understood the reason for her father's choice. However, by the time she realized it, it was already too late. While unclear what led to her losing ownership, I surmised that her brother now held the reins. It seemed he was involved in the unsavory practice of buying or potentially kidnapping slaves to sell as prostitutes.

That's why Martha was burdened with guilt. Due to her, these women were going to be forced into a life of prostitution. I could imagine she had tried everything in her power to prevent her brother from inflicting more cruelty, but he seemed highly competent and crafty, leaving her struggling to intervene as she witnessed these women gradually being coerced into the profession.

As for why she didn't want me to buy Ayane, the nine-tailed fox, Martha must have assumed I'd only turn her into a sex slave. Ayane was undeniably beautiful, and Martha probably thought anyone laying eyes on her would treat her as such. However, unlike those lowly hoodlums, I had no intention of reducing Ayane to a mere sex slave. I sensed, the moment I first saw her, that she had something more to offer.

"Don't underestimate my wealth. I have more money than you can fathom. In fact, if you genuinely believe otherwise and dare to underestimate my fortune, how about I buy all the women here?" I declared.

The prostitutes in training were taken aback, and Martha blinked repeatedly before regaining her composure. "Surely you jest."

"I'm not," I asserted in a more challenging and confident tone. "Name your price," I demanded.

I wasn't bluffing. I possessed an item that could indeed allow me to acquire them all.

"Hmph. Then how about one hundred million pieces of gold coins? All these women are yours if you pay me that exorbitant sum," she said with a haughty tone, convinced and confident that I lacked such an amount. Little did she know.

"Deal," I affirmed. Retrieving something from my pocket, I held it out, revealing it to her.

"W-What?!"

The moment her eyes fell upon it, she recoiled. Understandably so, as it was something she likely never encountered, nor expected to see in her entire life. It was an item she believed she would grow old without witnessing. Yet, the object in my hand was undeniably real.

"A... An ancient... gold coin?" stammered the old lady, her eyes bulging as she too inspected the item in my hand.

"T-That's impossible," Martha gasped, her eyes narrowing as she leaned in to examine the ancient gold coin more closely. "Ancient gold coins are believed to be mere whispers of the past, hidden away in some unknown location. Countless adventurers have futilely sought their elusive existence, deeming them nothing more than legends. It's inconceivable. How can..."

"That's the real thing," declared a woman, her voice cutting through the disbelief. I turned to see an elf with golden hair, a prostitute in training, stepping forward. "I've lived through enough centuries to discern what's real and what isn't. I've encountered many fakes, but none of them bears the authenticity of that coin. I am 100% certain it's the genuine ancient gold coin."

"So then..." another prostitute in training began to mumble, her voice trailing off as she started trembling.

The elf, with a tone both solemn and confirming, finished the unfinished sentence. "That one coin is potent enough to purchase all of us, with plenty of change left over."

Chapter 23: Chapter 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (4)

That was spot on. The elf woman was right. The ancient gold coin was indeed a legendary treasure hidden from the world. It was concealed by the hero who ended the 100 years war. Due to its legendary status, many had attempted to locate it but failed in their endeavors.

So, why did I possess something like this? The coin was actually a gift from Elise. It was that something she had been reaching for between her cleavage. However, my naughty antics, driven by my fascination with her ample breasts, led us into a non-penetrative

yet exhilarating escapade. After we finished our workout and cleaned ourselves, she finally had the opportunity to give it to me.

When I laid eyes on it, I was genuinely shocked. It turned out to be the ancient gold coin, something that had eluded discovery despite numerous attempts. I asked her where she got it, and she explained that it had been hanging around her neck like a necklace since she was young. When she eventually realized its significance, she kept it hidden from others. But upon encountering me, she decided to give it to me.

This coin was worth a staggering 500 million gold coins. So, not only did Martha underestimate my wealth, but she also erred in naming the price at a mere 100 million gold coins.

I grinned at her and then handed over the ancient coin. "You can keep the change," I said, watching her shocked expression as she looked at the coin in her palm. I wasn't joking; she could genuinely keep it. With this, I could also fulfill her first requirement. "With that kind of money, you can also settle your debts," I added.

Upon hearing that, she looked at me, her voice trembling. "H-How do you know that?"

"You don't need to know," I replied. I shifted my gaze to the prostitutes in training, meeting each of their eyes. Some looked fearful, some shocked, some uneasy, and some met my gaze directly. Then, I turned back to Martha. "With that much money, you can improve the lives of the prostitutes, right? Transform this business into something that enhances their lives beyond working as courtesans. Turn it into a classy establishment, maybe a fancy restaurant or something along those lines." I smiled at Martha.

"W-Why are you doing this?" she asked, still looking at me in shock.

"Because it's genuinely refreshing to encounter a beautiful soul in this unforgiving world."

She looked at me, her expression puzzled. "What?"

"I find your dedication and your management of these women truly commendable. It takes a good soul to keep them from breaking down and succumbing to depression in this line of work. And, Martha, you possess that kind of soul."

If it weren't for her effective management and her role in overseeing the well-being of the prostitutes, I believe they might have already taken their own lives. This kind of work could be soul-crushing, after all. Back on Earth, I knew someone engaged in a demanding job that gradually wore away at her spirit. She started smiling all the time, attempting to hide whatever turmoil lurked behind that smile. I sensed her changing day by day, but I didn't pry into what was wrong. Then, one day, I returned home to find her lifeless, hanging from the ceiling with a noose around her neck.

I deeply regretted not reaching out to her at that time. If only I had known what would happen. If only I had known she was so depressed that she would take her own life. I carry many regrets from my past life, but this is the most haunting one, and it's something I still can't forget. Her job might not have been as demanding as being a prostitute, but it was enough to drive her to suicide. The prostitutes here might have had entertained similar thoughts and might have had been pushed to the brink of wanting to end their lives. If not for Martha, who cared for their well-being and ensured they didn't reach that point, they managed to hold on.

Even though it was our first meeting, I felt like I already knew so much about her. She was an open book, after all. Despite her stern face, her eyes revealed her true feelings. Whether it was the concern in her eyes as she looked at the prostitutes or the conflicted expression she wore when she was looking at the prostitutes in training, or even the hint of anger when I mentioned buying one of them – she was an open book, plain and simple.

"W-What are you saying? What are you talking about?" Martha looked at me as if I were some kind of insane person. Her eyes reflected confusion.

I surveyed the room, taking in all the women—both the prostitutes in training and the older woman. Even the ones who had descended to this floor at some point—the prostitutes and the receptionist, with Gabrielle just behind them. Then, I turned back to Martha, who still regarded me with a perplexed expression. "You've done well," I commended her.

All the women in this room had eyes filled with life, not the lifeless gaze I had seen in that person back then.

If I had been like Martha, able to guide those in need, maybe the outcome for that person, my sister in my previous world would have been different. Perhaps she wouldn't have taken her own life. But it's too late now. Those were only the ifs of the past. All I can do is look forward in this new life and carry the burden of regret for as long as I live.

When I was about to pat Martha for a job well done, she swatted my hand away with a forceful slap.

"I don't know what you're talking about," she snapped, her expression twisted in disgust. "And here." She thrust the coin back at me. "I don't need this. I don't need your money, anyway. I don't know where the hell you came from, but please, go back to wherever that place is and never return here again."

I held my ground, not reclaiming the money, and locked eyes with her. "Why give it back? Isn't this payment for all these women? That coin is worth more than your amount. Keep the change. Use it to settle whatever debt you have."

Her forehead furrowed even deeper, and her disgust only intensified.

"I don't know how you found out about any debt I might have, but don't think I'll let you buy all these women. I won't allow it. What will you do once you own them? Treat their bodies like toys? Violate them until they lose their minds? Let other men use them too? Is that your plan? That's it, right? My brother did exactly that, after all. See those women there?" She pointed at the prostitutes. "He treated them like playthings. And then his bastard friends did unspeakable things to them too. They used their bodies without a shred of respect for their feelings. Is that what you're after by trying to buy them?"

Her words spilled from the depths of her heart, carrying tremors of anger and sadness within them.

"Don't expect me to just accept your money and hand them all over to you! I... I won't let them suffer more! They've already been torn away from their families, and you're going to subject them to more agony?! Men are heartless! As long as they get to fuck, they don't give a damn about anything else! They don't care about what even the woman feel, as long as they get to fuck! They're oblivious! They treat women like mere toys for pleasure! And you! The moment I laid eyes on you, I knew you're just like them! You're scum! Trash! You deserve to die!" she yelled, hurling the coin at me.

The aim was so precise that it would have hit me in the eye if I hadn't reacted quickly. Perhaps her accuracy was thanks to her skill, Deft Hands. Instead of using the Guardian skill to block it, I caught the coin with my hand.

"Die! Just die! Get out of here!" she screamed at me. However, I remained unmoved. I stood my ground. Seeing that I wasn't budging, she attempted to slap me. But I caught her hand.

"What?! Grrr!" she growled at me for thwarting her. Undeterred, she tried again with her other hand, but once more, I caught it.

I gazed into her eyes, filled with simmering anger, and calmly said, "Calm down."

"Calm down?! You expect me to calm down?!"

"Yes, that's right. You have to calm down," I insisted. "I'm not planning to buy them with those intentions."

"Eh?" Her anger halted, replaced by shock. "Wh-What do you mean? What are you playing at?"

"I'm not playing at anything," I assured her, shifting my gaze to Gabrielle.

As I locked eyes with Gabrielle, she walked over to Martha and me.

"Mr. Leon here is seeking workers for his company. Leonamon's company urgently needs more hands to boost our production. Currently, we only have one worker, and

we're in desperate need of more. So, Miss Brothel Manager, there's no need to worry about Mr. Leon having any sinister intentions with the women he's interested in buying. After all..." She paused, grabbing me by the collar, pulling me towards her, and surprising everyone by planting a kiss on my lips. The women present were left in shock. After a moment, Gabrielle released my mouth, saying, "He already has a beautiful and sexy lover like me."

Chapter 24: Chapter 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (5)

Gabrielle handled all the explanations for me. In a nutshell, my company, Leonamon – which wasn't really mine, as Amon was the mastermind behind it – was on the hunt for more workers to ramp up our production. That explained my interest in purchasing all the prostitutes in training. Martha eyed me like I was her mortal enemy, especially when I initially only wanted to buy Ayane, the spirit fox. However, Gabrielle countered by highlighting Ayane's unique appearance, pitching her as the perfect model for our product. Gabrielle proved herself to be a master negotiator, and Martha eventually calmed down, taking in all the details.

Now, it was already 10 A.M., and I stood before the prostitutes in training, asking them to decide whether they wanted to join or not. I assured them they wouldn't be forced into the life of a prostitute and certainly wouldn't become my slaves. They exchanged unsure glances, grappling with the weight of their decision. This was their chance to escape the fate of becoming prostitutes. I was confident they'd seize this opportunity, but it appeared they still harbored suspicions about me. I urged them to think it over for an hour before I returned to hear their decisions, hoping that by then, they'd have made up their minds.

Afterward, I returned to Martha's office, where Martha, Gabrielle, and the old women were gathered. Martha shot me a displeased look when she saw me entering the room. It seemed like trust wasn't on the menu.

"I assure you, I won't do anything to them," I stated. "They'll be working for someone under me, a woman, and I won't go near them—I'm always busy."

"That's right," chimed in Gabrielle. "You don't have to worry about a thing. Despite his playboy appearance, Mr. Leon here is... very trustworthy."

Gabrielle seemed to enjoy tagging me with these labels. She'd called me a troublemaker once, and I'd punished her with a bit of neglect play. When she couldn't take it anymore, she had prostrated herself in a dogeza posture, begging for me to fuck her. She'd also labeled me an idiotic master once, and my response had been to fuck her without letting her cum. Honestly, Gabrielle might just be a masochist because despite the embarrassing kinks I'd used for punishment, she still persisted in tagging me with these labels. I wondered what kind of punishment I should dish out for her calling me a playboy?

"I don't know. I don't trust either of you. I just can't... sell them. It would make me no better than those despicable slavers I despise. The thought of handing them over to strangers without any clue about their fate sickens me. Do you honestly believe I'd entrust those women to you based on the mere words you both are spouting?"

It was tough trying to convince her to sell them. Her reasoning made sense, though. I only wanted to buy one of them, not the whole bunch. I wanted to dominate that one. I only said I'd buy them all in the heat of the moment, partly to flex my wealth and ensure she didn't underestimate it. But Gabrielle's idea of boosting smartphone production made sense, and I was leaning more toward buying them all now. Still, how do we make this happen?

As I pondered how to convince Martha to sell the trainee prostitutes, the old woman chimed in.

"I think you should sell them to him, Martha."

"Granny?!" Martha looked shocked, then her eyes turned angry. "You want me to treat them like some sort of pets?! You, of all people, shouldn't be endorsing such ideas!"

"I know this might not be the ideal suggestion, but... I believe these two aren't harboring any ill intentions toward them."

"Still, I can't trust these two! I have no idea what twisted plans they might have for those women! What if they're just feeding us a load of bullshit? Sure, maybe this guy isn't planning anything bizarre, but seriously, expecting me to buy into the idea that they just want the women as workers for their company? No way in hell I'm falling for that. What if their real aim is to experiment on them? How the hell am I supposed to live with that hanging over my head?!"

"Martha, are you really okay with this, though? If they stay in this godforsaken brothel, they're headed straight for a life of degradation. It's just a week away before your brother tarnishes them."

"I know that!" Martha thrust herself up from her seat, her hands slamming onto the table for support. "But what the fuck am I supposed to do? I've wracked my brain for ideas to change their fate, but I'm clueless on how to stop my brother. He's a force, cunning. I doubt I can do anything to keep the girls from becoming tools for pleasure. So, I figured I'd buy some time by telling my brother they need training on how to conduct themselves, giving me a chance to plan. But in the end, I've got jack shit, and the damn deadline for their deflowering is staring us down! I failed to save them!"

"That's why I'm telling you to sell them to him. If you do that, they'll be liberated from the clutches of becoming playthings, right?" The old woman spoke with a smile on her face, presenting a glimmer of hope in an otherwise grim situation.

"I..." Martha's voice wavered, and she lowered herself back into her chair. Her eyes shifted, locking onto mine. "C-Can... Can I really trust you?"

I responded with a confident smile, leaning in slightly. "You don't have to trust me. But you can expect I won't pull any weird shit. I swear it from the depths of my heart."

As those words left my lips, I witnessed tears forming in the corners of her eyes, tracing a delicate path down her cheeks. It appeared that I had finally broken through the fortress guarding her emotions. A nod of gratitude towards the old woman who had played a pivotal role in this moment. She approached Martha with a gentle smile, her hand moving to pat the back of Martha's head, prompting more tears. "It's okay. You can finally take a breather from this relentless battle against your brother. Entrust the girls to these folks," she said, casting a glance at us, a smile of assurance lighting up her face.

We finally managed to convince Martha to buy them. I handed her the ancient coin and insisted she keep the rest. I told her to use it however she pleased, even though she seemed conflicted about taking it. After a brief internal struggle, she accepted. Returning to the underground floor, I found the women still engrossed in discussion. I decided to head back up to the first floor and engage in some further conversation with Gabrielle.

After what felt like an eternity, it was time for the prostitutes in training to share their decision. Returning downstairs, I discovered they were still uncertain. It appeared they hadn't fully placed their trust in me yet. Just as I was about to suggest they take a day to think it over, and I'd return tomorrow for their answer, a hand shot up.

It was the woman exuding that captivating scent, Ayane. "I... I want to go with you," she said, her voice carrying a hint of nervousness.

A wave of murmurs swept through the group as all eyes focused on Ayane.

"I... I'm afraid I'll be stuck in this hellhole forever if I don't make a move now, so I've made up my mind to choose him. If our fate is to become someone's playthings no matter what, then I'd rather go with this man," she confessed.

"I assure you, I won't be treating you like mere playthings."

"I'm sorry, but that's hard to believe," Ayane skeptically responded.

Was it really that hard to believe? Did I really give off some playboy vibe?

"I can smell the scent of arousal around you. And that arousal is potent that it rivalled all the men who step into this establishment."

What? She could actually smell arousal? Well, she is a beastkin, after all. It shouldn't have been that surprising.

"I have an outlet to channel all this lust, so rest assured," I calmly assured her.

I had Amon and Gabrielle to satisfy my desires, after all.

Ayane seemed to be assessing me with hesitation, her eyes delving into mine. After a momentary standoff, someone else in the group raised their hand.

"I'd like to go with you," declared the elf who had identified the genuine ancient coin. "Ayane is right. If I stay here, I'll end up being a plaything for countless men. If that's my fate, I'd rather have just one man enjoying my body. Besides, I don't know about the rest of you, but I still harbor dreams of returning to my homeland, my family. If I remain here, I fear I'll spend my life without ever setting eyes on them again. So, I'm seizing this chance," she announced to the other women. Then, her eyes locked onto mine again. "I'll become your personal plaything, as long as you grant me freedom and don't strip away my right to venture outside. Does that work for you?"

I was taken aback by her resolute decision. Well, she did mention having lived long enough to recognize an authentic ancient coin. It wasn't far-fetched that, unlike the other women, she was more mature and could rationalize the situation, thinking about the long run instead of just the immediate consequences of accepting my offer.

Ayane and the other prostitutes looked at the elf in shock.

As our eyes remained locked, I replied, "Okay. I'll accept you as my plaything. Devote your body and soul to me and only me."

With that, the elf woman responded, "Yes, master."

Chapter 25: Chapter 4 - Ayane, The Spirit Fox (6)

It was somewhat surprising how this woman, who appeared to be the most mature among this group, easily called me "master." While observing her, gazing into her unwavering eyes as she willingly embraced the role of my personal plaything, I couldn't help but notice the incredible beauty radiating from this elf woman.

She was... otherworldly, to say the least.

Adorned in what appeared to be silk garments that covered most of her body, the attire was sleeveless and just long enough to conceal half of her legs. Unfortunately, she wasn't wearing any legwear, leaving me a bit disappointed as I had a soft spot for them. Well, I could always make her wear whatever I desired, right? After all, she was already mine. She had devoted herself to me.

Golden hair flowed straight down her back like a cascade of gold, and her eyes sparkled in a vivid emerald-green. As a member of the elven race, her ears were elegantly pointy and long. Her skin possessed a pearlescent, radiant whiteness, and her facial features were of extraordinary beauty.

I activated my skill to scrutinize her domination requirements. However, much to my surprise, it yielded nothing. Ah, I see. As suspected, trying to conquer a woman right off the bat isn't a walk in the park. No wonder her requirements remained elusive; she simply wasn't interested in me.

My skill followed some rules. The first one was that to dominate a woman, you had to pique her interest for the skill to reveal her domination requirements. If the woman didn't show any interest, it meant her requirements wouldn't be displayed, and you couldn't dominate her.

This woman before me showed no interest. Despite her claim to devote her body to me, it was apparent her heart hadn't fully embraced the notion.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Artemis," she replied.

Her name suited her face incredibly well. The first time I laid eyes on her, I thought she could pass for the goddess of the hunt.

I cast my gaze upon the assembly of trainee prostitutes and declared, "Anyone willing to be my plaything, like Artemis here, can step forward. I assure you, I won't venture into the realms of the unreasonable, and I won't coerce you into anything you're not comfortable with. You'll revel in the freedom to move, even visit your family or the place you hail from, as long as you return promptly to fulfill your obligations for me. The establishment you'll be part of won't harbor shadows of shadiness; the person overseeing it is nothing short of commendable. Direct supervision won't be my role; she will handle that. Once you embark on your duties, I promise you'll find solace in a place to rest and relish three meals a day. All of this, if you choose to accept my offer."

To get them to budge, I needed to dangle a carrot on a stick in front of their faces. As trainee prostitutes, the prospect of leaving this place before facing defilement was enticing enough, but they still feared I might defile them in some other way. Now, by sweetening the deal, they might be more inclined to take a bite of that dangling carrot.

Sure enough, some started to raise their hands, a few hesitated but eventually joined in, and soon enough, every hand in the room was raised.

Numerous carriages awaited at the front gate of the city of Pleasure, a fleet of at least ten. All the women had chosen to accept my offer. Now, fifty-three of them, to be precise, were set to join Leonamon's company as workers. They also expressed their intention to become my playthings, provided they were granted freedom of movement, and I refrained from issuing unnecessary or uncomfortable orders. As a man who always stood by his word, I had no intentions of treating them absurdly.

All the women boarded the carriages, while I lingered outside, meeting Martha's angry gaze.

"If you do anything weird, I'll surely put you down. Understand that?"

Her lack of trust was clear, and it was understandable, given that this was our first meeting. Yet, she was making an effort to trust me. Without that effort, she'd be forever burdened with worry, and I didn't want that.

"You've got the smartphone I handed you, right?"

"Huh? Y-Yeah, I do," she answered, casting a suspicious glance my way. "You're not thinking of snatching it back, are you?"

"No way. I just want to share my number with you."

"N...Number?" Martha tilted her head, confusion making her look pretty damn adorable.

"So we can stay in touch. This device is perfect for some long-distance conversations, you know?"

Martha's eyes widened in amazement, "I-Is that so? W-Well then, I guess I'll take you up on that offer. I need you to keep me in the loop regularly on their status, after all. If you don't hit me back and show me some proof that they're okay, I'll come charging in wherever you are with a knife in hand. Got it?"

Wahh, scary. She's a bit like Shredica. "I got it."

"Well, if you get it, here's the phone."

Martha handed me her phone, and I quickly opened it to exchange numbers. Glancing at Gabrielle, who stood composed beside me, I noticed her scrutinizing Martha with discerning eyes. Why was she eyeing her like that? Probably assessing if she was worthy to be one of my women.

"Gabrielle, stick around and give Martha a crash course on navigating the phone."

"What?!" she exclaimed. "Why me?! I've got things to handle at the academy, you know?!"

"Chill out," I said, offering reassurance. "I'll make it worth your while later."

"O-Oh..." A flush of pink spread across Gabrielle's cheeks. "O-Okay then, if you say so. But you better deliver on that promise later!" she declared.

"I will," I replied with a smile. I wondered what kind of reward would be fitting. Well, I was thinking of indulging in some kinky outdoor activities with her tonight at the academy, maybe put her on a leash and have her walk like a dog. That sounded like both punishment and reward.

Alright, let's go with some spicy outdoor fun, with her on a leash. It's a reward fitting for her hard work. And, of course, a playful punishment for being a bit disobedient.

As we had this conversation, Martha gave us a disgusted look, "Gross. I really hope nothing bad happens to those girls in your hands."

Without missing a beat, I playfully spanked Gabrielle's ass, prompting a surprised yelp, before heading to one of the carriages. Upon entering, I found two familiar faces—Ayane and Artemis—and two unknown women already seated. The unfamiliar duo looked somewhat uneasy, so I opted not to sit next to them and instead took a seat close to Artemis. With that, we set off for the capital of Milham.

We were cruising along the road between Santuria and the city of Pleasure when chaos erupted. I sharply pulled back the curtains to address the coachman.

"What's happening?" I asked.

"Bandits, sir," he replied with a grim expression. "Seems they've caught wind of these numerous carriages going through the plains and want to catch a big fish. And they came...quite prepared."

"I see."

"Why didn't you hire adventurer bodyguards, sir? This convoy of carriages is like a invitation for bandits. They'd happily slaughter everyone on board for whatever's in these carriages—be it women, kids, or goods. They won't spare a thing. I wish you'd made some kind of preparation for this..."

The coachman's face twisted in genuine terror as he scanned the surroundings with the bandits closing in. The other coachmen were scrambling to abandon their carriages, but there was no escape; we were surrounded. The fear emanating from the women in our carriage was tangible. The only person not showing any distress in this situation was... Artemis.

She locked eyes with me, those emerald orbs unwavering. However, she made no move to join the impending conflict. It seemed like she had no intention of fighting.

"Well, why didn't I hire adventurer bodyguards? That's a good question. Why indeed?"

"S... Sir?" the coachman asked, confusion in his voice as I pondered aloud. For a moment, I thought I saw anger in his eyes. He was getting frustrated with me for what he perceived as a mistake. Of course, I didn't see it that way. Why would I need adventurers?

I stepped out of the carriage. The women inside, excluding Artemis, looked shocked as I exited. The coachman's eyes widened.

"Sir! It's dangerous! You can't get out!" he exclaimed.

I didn't bother looking back at him and simply said, "Allow me to answer your question." With that, I raised my hand, gathering mana from the atmosphere. Magic textbooks always harped on about limits to how much mana a person could gather for a spell, warning of potential explosions that could maim or even kill if exceeded.

Yet, I continued gathering mana, forming a ball of dazzling light in my hands. I was casting light magic. The amount of mana in my hand already surpassed the supposed limit. But I didn't stop. Why? Because the notion of a cap on mana gathering was complete bullshit. There was no limit; the risk of magic exploding stemmed from losing control over the mana being gathered.

Yellow light started to blind the surroundings, causing both bandits and others to shield their eyes from my magic. It was a massive ball of light in my hands. I felt like Goku in this moment.

But even though it was already enormous, I kept gathering mana to make it even more potent. Why could I maintain this giant ball of light? Well, the answer should be glaringly obvious already, right? Because my control of mana is precise.

"Light Bullets!" I roared, and brilliant beams shot straight at the heads of the surrounding bandits, swiftly taking their lives. There was no gruesome sound of flesh scrunching; the Light Bullets were fast enough to erase any audible trace.

I systematically eliminated all the bandits encircling us. They were killed one by one, their bodies slowly slumping while still standing. After each was hit, they all collapsed simultaneously. It was child's play. I didn't bother using any skills inherited from my women. These bandits were nothing to me.

I turned to the coachman, who stared at me in shock, his jaw practically scraping the ground.

I flashed him a grin and answered his question, "The reason why is that... we don't need one."