

The World 591

Chapter 591 - Rose's Downfall (5)

Now, it was my turn.

I gently laid her down onto the bed, watching as she sank into the plush mattress, her supple body conforming to its softness. The dim light cast a warm glow over her skin, accentuating every curve, every delicate line that made up her perfect form. Her beauty was almost unreal—her breasts, full and perky, yet firm enough to mold against my touch. Her stomach, taut and smooth, was a testament to her strength, yet there were no harsh muscles to disrupt the flawless softness of her body.

Despite her immense power, her physique remained undeniably feminine, a contradiction that only made her more enticing.

I hovered over her, my breath mingling with hers. "I'm going to enter you again," I murmured, my voice thick with desire.

Her emerald eyes shimmered in the dim light, her expression vulnerable yet eager. "Um..." she nodded, anticipation making her shiver beneath me.

Slowly, I pressed my body against hers, aligning myself at her entrance. My cock throbbed as I parted the slick petals of her pussy, the heat of her core swallowing me inch by inch. Her inner walls quivered around me, the ridges of her flesh dragging along my shaft, gripping me as if desperate to keep me inside.

"Ah, ah... So good... so amazinggg..."

Her breathy moans sent a shudder through me, her body convulsing beneath mine as I bottomed out. A tight squeeze at the deepest part of her made my vision blur for a moment. It was an overwhelming sensation—almost as if I was taking her for the first time all over again.

It had been too long since I last had her like this.

"Ahh... Y-You're filling me up... I missed this feeling..."

Her voice trembled as she tried to steady her breath, but I wasn't going to give her time to adjust.

I grabbed her hips and began to move.

"Ahh, ahh, nn, hhaaannn, aaah, aaahhh, ahhh, hhaaaaa, ahhh, it feels... good... yeaaaaaaahhh~, ahhhhhnnnnn~!"

Her moans rang through the room, a sweet melody laced with pleasure. The wet, sinful sounds of our bodies colliding filled the air, the rhythmic slaps of my hips against her soaked pussy bouncing off the walls. Each thrust sent her into a new wave of ecstasy, her tight, velvety walls sucking me in, milking me for everything I had.

I could feel her gripping me, squeezing me with a desperate need that sent my mind reeling.

"Aaahhh, it feels so good... It feels really good~! Aaaahn, aaah, ahhn... Leon... Leon... Ahnnn, ahhh! Leonnnnn~!"

Her pussy clenched around me like a vice, making me groan, my hands digging into her hips to hold her steady.

"If you tighten that much, I might just burst," I growled, my movements becoming more desperate, more forceful.

"Ah, aaahnn, ahh, I'm not... doing it on purpose... Ahhhhhnnn, haaaaah, aaah~!"

Then, without warning, she wrapped her legs around my waist, locking me inside her.

"I'm going to cum! Please... cum together with me... Leon, aahhhhhnnnn~!"

The way she clung to me, the way her voice wavered with desperate need—it was almost too much. Was she holding me so I had no choice but to cum inside her?

Pregnancy was something we could prevent... but if she truly wanted it... if she wanted me to give her a child, then...

"Do you want... to get pregnant by me?"

The words left my lips before I could stop them, my pace relentless, slamming into her over and over as the slick, obscene noises of her soaked pussy surrounded us.

"Yes... Yes... Ahnnn, ah, aaaah, I want... I want you to father a child in me... I want you to impregnate me...! I want you to give me a boy... Ahnnnn~!"

She was so beautiful like this—pleading, trembling beneath me, her fingers digging into my back as if afraid I would pull away.

Despite her usual sharp attitude, at her core, Rose was just a woman who wanted to be held, to be claimed, to be loved. A heroine waiting for a hero to sweep her off her feet.

I wasn't sure if I could be that hero.

But I wouldn't waste this chance.

I would impregnate her.

"Alright then, I will...!" I growled, pushing my body to its limit as I drove into my final spurt.

A deep, coiling sensation spiraled around my core, winding tighter and tighter like a spring about to snap. A scorching heat pooled in my abdomen, and my body tensed, trembling on the edge of release.

"Hnnn, hnnnn, mnnn, aaahnnn, ahhhh, aaahhhh! Hnnnnnn, aaaaahnnnn, aaahhh! Ahhhh! Ahhhh! Ah, ah, ah, ah, aaaah, ah, ah, ahhh, ahhhn, ahnnn! Cumming, cumming, cumming, cummmmmiiiiiiiiingggggg~~~!!!"

As though she had reached her absolute limit, Rose's body arched, her back lifting off the bed as she screamed out in ecstasy. Her orgasm crashed over her like an unstoppable tidal wave, her insides convulsing violently around my cock. The sensation was overwhelming—her pussy tightening in erratic spasms, squeezing and milking me as if desperate to wring every last drop from me.

The sheer intensity of her climax sent a fresh gush of her juices spilling out, leaking from where my cock was buried deep inside her. The slick warmth drenched both of us, her walls pulsating as if trying to suck me even deeper. I clenched my teeth, my control slipping as her convulsing walls pushed me past my breaking point.

"Guh...!"

A crushing tightness coiled around me, suffocating, unbearable—it was too much. I couldn't hold back any longer.

"Nghhhhhhhhhhhh, nnnnnnnnnnnnn~!!!"

A second orgasm ripped through her body, making her cry out as she tightened her grip around me. Her legs locked around my waist, pulling me deeper still, forcing my cock to press against the entrance of her cervix. The soft, fleshy barrier stretched, yielding slightly as I drove into her depths, my entire length buried inside her trembling body.

My release erupted in thick, hot spurts, pouring into her, flooding her womb with an unmistakable intent. Rope after rope of my thick cum filled her, pushing against her cervix, seeping into every crevice inside her. I shuddered as the last remnants of my orgasm pulsed inside her, the sensation of being buried so deep making my head spin.

"Haaa... haa... so hot... it's still... spurting..." she mumbled breathlessly, her body limp beneath me.

I gazed down at her, taking in her flushed cheeks, her parted lips, the way her chest heaved with every shallow breath. She was utterly spent, her body still trembling in the aftershocks of pleasure. I couldn't resist—I leaned in and claimed her lips in a slow, heated kiss.

"Surely, this isn't the last round, is it?" I murmured against her lips, smirking.

She gave me a tired, wry smile. "You dummy... are you really trying to impregnate me?"

"That's what you wanted, isn't it?" I teased.

She hesitated for a moment before exhaling softly. "I guess... my emotions got the better of me. I don't mind it, honestly, but..."

"You're having second thoughts?"

"Hmph. It's not that," she muttered. "I'm just wondering... would it really be right for a child to have a father who's a shameless womanizer? And besides... I don't think I'm ready yet."

"Why? You said you wanted my child."

"T-That was just something I blurted out in the moment," she admitted, her cheeks darkening with a deep blush. "Although... I'd be lying if I said I didn't mean it."

I chuckled, brushing a strand of damp hair from her face. "You're honestly one hell of a cutie, you know that?"

"C-Calling me a cutie... I'm not—"

"But you are," I said firmly, smirking. "Look."

I twitched my cock inside her, still fully buried within her heat.

"K-Kya...!" She shuddered, her fingers digging into my arms.

"My dick is still hard because it's been inside you this whole time," I whispered against her ear.

"You really are such a pervert," she mumbled, but the small, pleased smile on her lips told me she wasn't displeased. Then, after a moment, she turned her gaze away, her voice quieter. "W-Would you like to try something else?"

Something else? I wasn't sure what she meant.

"Something else?" I repeated.

She hesitated, her fingers tracing slow, nervous circles against my chest. "Well... I think we've done just about everything... I've always been hesitant about this since I've heard it can be painful, but... I want to give you everything. I want to be completely yours now."

My eyes widened slightly as her meaning dawned on me.

She wanted me to take her ass.

"I've heard from adventurers that it can feel good... so perhaps... I don't know," she murmured, her voice uncharacteristically shy.

I swallowed hard. This was the first time I had ever seen Rose this subdued.

"Have you tried it before?" I asked carefully.

Her reaction was immediate. Her eyes darkened with irritation as she shot me a glare. "Of course not! I've never done anything like this before. I've never been with anyone but you. You took my first time. You took all of my firsts." Her voice grew softer, almost vulnerable. "So I want you to take the last thing I have left."

She was serious—completely resolute.

She had already fallen so deeply into my grasp, her heart and body utterly bound to me. Though I had yet to fully dominate her, she was already past the point of no return. She was mine. And now, she wanted to surrender herself entirely.

Chapter 592 - Rose's Downfall (6)

She rolled over and lay flat on her belly, her ass jutting high into the air—a magnificent sight, like beholding the peak of a mountain I had long strived to conquer. Every curve was a testament to her beauty, and though I had already claimed every part of her, her ass remained the final uncharted territory.

I moved closer, my hand finding her hips as I drew them nearer to mine. With deliberate precision, I aligned the head of my cock against her anus.

"Hnnn...!" she shuddered as the cock head pressed against the sakura-colored ring formed by her ass cheeks.

I pushed in a bit further, and the moment I did, she drew in a deep, steadying breath. The thrust did not pry her open immediately. My cock remained pressed against her asshole.

"Relax, Rose," I murmured as I leaned forward, my hands slowly caressing her thighs. "If you don't, I won't be able to enter."

"I—I'm trying," she replied softly, "but you're just too big...!"

I withdrew slightly, then shifted my focus—redirecting my cock into her vagina, parting her delicate walls once more.

"Aaah! L-Leon, that's... Ahhhhhhhnnnn!"

She arched her back in response.

"It wasn't because I was too thick. Perhaps there isn't enough lubrication," I added.

"N-No. I'm pretty sure you're just too big... Ahhh!?" she gasped.

After entering her in her vagina, I immediately switched back to her ass. I had performed anal countless times—taking an ass virgin was nothing new to me—but it was certainly uncharted territory for her. I knew I had to guide her gently.

Slowly, aided by the slick arousal that coated my cock, the tight ring of muscle began to yield. "Hnghhhh!?" she gasped.

The constricted muscle allowed only a portion of my cock's tip to enter, so I rotated my hips gradually, coaxing her delicate hole to widen.

"Ah, ahhhhn, aaah...!"

Her voice wavered as she struggled to breathe against the numbing stretch, her limits being gently tested. After a while of careful widening, I endeavored to go deeper.

"Hnnnnnnn! Ah, ahhh, hnnnn!"

Her hole slowly adapted to my size as I eased forward until, finally, I bottomed out, my hips pressing firmly against her soft cheeks.

"Haa... Haa... Haa..." Rose panted, the sound mingling with the quiet rustle of our movement, as she felt my cock fully embedded in her ass. "I didn't think it would be that painful. I felt like I was being split in half... Or is your penis just big?"

"Perhaps it is because it is your first time in that place," I replied gently.

"Huh... Anyway, with this, I'm completely yours now, huh?" she whispered.

Indeed, with that act, she was entirely mine.

"However, you will be truly mine only after I cum inside you," I declared.

"Alright then... Cum inside me," she agreed softly.

I gripped her hips as firmly as I could, and with determined rhythm, I began moving my hips—pulling in and out, our bodies locked in a dance of possession and desire.

"Ahh, ahhh, yaaannnn~ Ahhhh, ahhh...! It's... a little too hard...! Ahhhhnnnn~! Ahhh, ahhh, yaaannnnnn~!"

The guttural, passionate sounds filled the dimly lit room, their intensity conveying raw desire rather than pain. I could feel the tightening around my object intensify—a constriction so precise and overwhelming that it nearly unseated my control. The way she contracted the walls of her anus around my cock, while the entrance provided a gentle, insistent suction at its base, created a pressure that resonated deep within me.

Nevertheless, I did not relent and continued our fervent anal sex with an unyielding rhythm.

"Ahhh, ahhh, ahhnnn, ahhh~! Ahhh, y... yes..."

At last, her moans confirmed her consent—a melodic affirmation that underscored the forbidden pleasure of anal sex. Many might fear its intensity, yet once experienced, few could resist its magnetic pull, longing to explore it again and again.

"Ahhhn, ahhh~! Ahhh, ahh, ahh, ahhh, ahhhhh~! Ah, yes... ahhh... You're parting my insides... It feels so good...~!"

I pounded her relentlessly with my hips, each thrust echoing through the room like a powerful bassline. The reverberations of her moans blended with the rhythmic clenching of her ridged walls against my cock, each pulse drawing me closer to the brink of ecstasy.

"Ahhh, ahhh, ahhh~ I'm... I'm going to cum...!" she suddenly declared, her hands gripping the bedsheet with desperate intensity. "I'm going to cum in my ass! Ahhh, ahhh, ahhh, it feels so good... anal... anal sex is so good...~!"

Her eyes glazed over in a rapturous haze as torrents of dopamine surged through her mind. With each passing moment, her gaze drifted, rolling back ever so slowly as she approached the pinnacle of her orgasm.

"Ahhh, ahh...! Cum... Cum with me... Ahhhh, ahhh, cumm... cumming... I'm cumming...! Cum with me... Leonnnonnnnn~!"

Her fervent invitation proved irresistible. I tightened my grip on her ass, channeling every ounce of desire as I poured my cum directly onto her stomach. The release was explosive—a torrent of passion that washed over us both.

"U~!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!~!!!"

In that charged moment, she emitted a strange, almost otherworldly sound as her feet stretched taut, arching gracefully in response to the overwhelming pleasure. I savored the sensation as my cum filled her, feeling her ass spasm in exquisite rhythm around my trembling cock, each contraction a testament to our shared intensity.

"Haaa... Ha... haaa..."

As her heavy panting filled the air, I slowly withdrew my cock. Even then, her asshole remained open and gaping wide—a lingering, tantalizing reminder of our passion—as the cum I had poured trickled down, marking the aftermath of our encounter.

Of course, our desire was far from sated.

After our intense session of anal sex, we seamlessly transitioned to normal sex, this time with her confidently on top. Her hip movements were both graceful and commanding, her body using every subtle shift to create a dance of raw, unbridled passion. With each descent, she rotated her hips

deliberately, allowing me to trace every intricate ridge of her pussy, penetrating deeper with every thrust as if stretching the boundaries of ecstasy itself.

"Ahhh, yes... Ahhh, yes...! I love your cock... It's hitting so intensely inside me... I feel so full...~!"

Not content to merely ride the waves of pleasure, I seized her wrists and pounded her upward with renewed vigor, our movements synchronized in a display of unyielding lust.

"Ahhh, ahh, ahhh, ahh, ahh, ahhh, ahhh~! Ahh, no... Ah... You're hitting it... so deepppp~!"

Her breasts swayed in a mesmerizing, circular motion with every thrust, their hypnotic movement complementing the seductive dance of our bodies. Her tongue playfully slipped out as her eyes glazed over, both betraying the overwhelming pleasure that coursed through her.

"C-Cummming...~!"

After a while, I came inside her once more—each pulse of release intertwining our desires in a moment of intimate, unadulterated bliss.

Following that, I fucked her in the bathroom. The space, much like the modest inn room we had rented, was unremarkable in its design—small and intimate, yet perfectly accommodating for our passion. Unlike the inn's room, however, the bathroom lacked soundproofing, allowing every whispered moan and heated sigh to escape into the night. At that point, though, we cared little for the possibility of eavesdroppers, lost entirely in the raw intensity of our shared ecstasy.

"Ahhh, Leon...! Ahhhhhnnnn! Ahh, ahhh, ahhhnnnn~ Ahhhhhh! Ahhhh, ahhh, ahhh... yes...~ Fuck me~
Yesssss~ It feels so good~ It feels so goddamn good~! Aaaaaaaah, ahhh, ahhhh~!"

Rose's voice rose higher, her cries echoing shamelessly through the room as if she didn't care who might hear. She was lost in the moment, completely surrendering herself to me.

I drove myself deeper into her, claiming her entirely as my own. Rose—once known as the Green-Haired Demon—was now mine, fully and completely. The pride swelled within me as I watched her trembling beneath me, her body quivering in pleasure. With that thought burning in my mind, my grip tightened around her hips, and I could no longer hold back.

I released everything inside her.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn~!!!"

Her back arched beautifully as I filled her with my cum, her voice breaking into a drawn-out moan of ecstasy. As I pulled back, her legs trembled violently, and thick, copious streams of semen spilled from her glistening slit, dripping down her thighs.

Rose now lay asleep in my arms, her breathing soft and steady. This... this was the first time I had felt true peace in what seemed like ages. Perhaps it was because I had finally gotten her back—the woman I once thought I had lost.

I had been devastated when I heard that she had left the academy, retiring from her position as a professor. The heartbreak had been unbearable, even if I didn't show it in my face that time. But now... now she was here, in my arms once more.

A sense of satisfaction washed over me, blending with the lingering thrill of conquest. Rose was mine now—fully committed to being one of my women.

Although she still seemed hesitant about sharing me with others, she had accepted it in the end. Even if she didn't like it now... well, I could make her like it eventually. After all...

"Maybe I could finally have sex with Irene, Gabrielle, and Rose all at once."

The thought alone was exhilarating—a dream come true, if I were to be honest. The idea of having those three stunning academy professors in bed together was enough to make my pulse quicken.

But... I could afford to wait. That pleasure could come later.

For now, something else gnawed at my mind—a strange feeling, as though something was stirring within this city... particularly in that dungeon.

I would need to investigate it tomorrow.

Chapter 593 - The Dungeon (1)

Rose's POV

I woke to a warm, lingering sensation that pulsed faintly through my body — a dull yet unmistakable ache centered around my hips, particularly between my legs. My skin tingled, sensitive to even the lightest touch. A soreness clung to my insides — both in my pussy and my ass — a stark reminder of what had happened last night.

My heart skipped a beat as the memories came rushing back — flashes of heated kisses, desperate moans, and Leon's body pressing into mine. My face ignited, a wave of warmth crawling from my chest to my ears.

I buried my face in my hands, groaning softly.

I can't believe I suggested something like that...

The words I'd whispered to him echoed in my mind — every filthy, reckless thing I'd said. And worse... worse than all of it...

I told him to get me pregnant...

My fingers curled tighter against my face. Why... Why did I say that? The memory played again, clear as day — me, clutching his face, gasping those desperate words into his ear.

"Fill me up... I want you to get me pregnant..."

I practically wanted to curl up and die on the spot. My stomach twisted with shame, my heart racing as I groaned again, grabbing fistfuls of my hair.

What the hell was I thinking!?

I knew I'd never sleep soundly again — not when that memory would haunt me every time I closed my eyes.

But still... despite the embarrassment eating away at me, a quiet warmth settled deep inside me.

We did it...

We had sex. We finally did it. And now... I was his. Officially.

"I guess I'm one of his women now, huh...?" I muttered quietly.

The thought stirred conflicting feelings within me. I still had my doubts about simply being one of his women. The idea unsettled me, yet I knew I couldn't leave Leon. I loved him — so deeply that the mere thought of being apart from him felt unbearable.

Even if I had my concerns about his harem, I supposed I could bear with it. But still... it wasn't something I could accept so easily. That kind of acceptance wouldn't come overnight. Yet... for him, I was willing to try.

If this is what it takes... I'll accept it. Even if it hurts...

The spot beside me on the bed was cold. Leon was gone — and not recently, either. I stared at the empty space for a moment, my heart sinking.

Where did he go?

Before I could think too much, the door creaked open. My head shot up.

Leon stepped inside.

"Oh, you're awake," he said casually.

I barely registered his words. Relief surged through me — so strong it almost made me dizzy — and before I could stop myself, I bolted from the bed and flung myself into his arms.

"Huh?" he blurted in surprise.

"I thought you left me..." I mumbled, my face pressed against his chest.

I felt his chest shake — he was chuckling.

"You seriously thought I'd just leave without saying anything?" he teased.

His voice was warm, familiar... safe. I hated how badly I'd panicked — and yet, hearing his voice now felt like the greatest comfort.

"I'm not going anywhere," he added. "Well... not yet, anyway. I just asked the innkeeper to cook us breakfast."

"Ah... I-Is that so?"

I felt so foolish — all that panic over nothing. Yet somehow, knowing he hadn't gone far filled me with such relief that I couldn't help but smile.

"You must've been scared I ran off without warning — so much so that you ran to me the moment I opened the door... butt naked, no less."

My breath caught.

...Wait... naked?

I looked down.

My bare skin gleamed in the morning light, every inch of me exposed — breasts, curves, everything.

"Ahhh!!" I shrieked, shoving Leon back through the doorway and slamming the door shut behind him.

My heart pounded violently in my chest, my face burning hotter than ever.

God, what's wrong with me!?

I slid down the door, burying my face in my hands once more.

I couldn't possibly humiliate myself any more than this... could I?

Leon's POV

After finishing breakfast with Rose, a question had been gnawing at the back of my mind — one I couldn't ignore any longer.

"How deep have you gone into the dungeon?" I asked, my tone more serious than I intended. "The one in the forest."

Rose paused mid-sip from her cup, lowering it slowly. Her gaze shifted to me, her expression curious yet cautious.

"Hmm? Why are you asking all of a sudden?"

I leaned forward slightly, my fingers tapping restlessly against the table. "Well... I want to see something for myself," I said. "I want to know what's deeper inside — something beyond those blue and green gems."

Her brows knitted in concern. "Aren't you supposed to return to Milham?" she asked. "Tomorrow's a weekday, and you have class at the academy, don't you?"

"Yeah... but I can just take a break," I replied with a shrug. "I mean, this place is packed with dungeons. Of course I'd be curious — wouldn't you?"

Rose exhaled softly, setting her cup down. "I suppose... but I've only gone deep enough to find the red gems. Those are usually located between the fifth and tenth strata. I made it as far as the seventh."

"The seventh?" I repeated, narrowing my eyes. "So... is there anything deeper than the tenth stratum?"

She shook her head. "I don't know. The adventurers I spoke to before my first excavation told me they'd only reached the thirteenth stratum. They said the mana pressure got so intense the deeper they went that they couldn't push any further."

I see...

So I wasn't imagining things. The suffocating mana I had felt while barely stepping into the dungeon — others had sensed it too, but only much deeper down.

But why could I feel it from the very first stratum?

The answer seemed clear — my mana sensitivity was sharper than most. Still, that didn't explain what was generating that pressure.

It couldn't be a typical monster... not with mana like that.

If it was a creature, it had to be something far more dangerous... or something entirely different. A presence that powerful wasn't normal.

Whatever it was... I wouldn't find out unless I went down there myself.

"Leon..." Rose's voice sharpened. Her gaze locked onto mine, and I knew that look — cold, piercing, and dangerously stern.

"You're not planning to go down there... are you?"

"Uh..."

My words caught in my throat. Normally, I'd have lied without a second thought — brushed her off with some clever excuse. But the way Rose was glaring at me now... like she'd tear my head off if I said the wrong thing... I couldn't muster a word. My eyes instinctively shifted to the side, avoiding her intense stare.

"I knew it!" she snapped, her voice rising. "You're planning to go down there, aren't you!?"

"Well... yeah," I admitted with a sigh, rubbing the back of my neck. "I want to see what's down there — mainly to figure out why the mana gets so thick the deeper you go."

Her scowl deepened, and I swore I could feel the air in the room grow colder.

I knew this wasn't going to end well.

"I know you're strong," Rose began, her voice firm yet edged with unease. Her fingers clenched tightly around the cup she held, her knuckles turning white. "And I won't try to stop you from doing what you want... but I hate seeing you throw yourself into dangerous situations!" Her eyes locked onto mine, sharp and unwavering.

"I mean... I didn't say anything when you confronted the Eclipse," she continued, her voice tightening. "That was out of my hands. But this... this dungeon? Considering how dangerous it is — and how little we know about what's down there — I can't just let you go."

Her gaze hardened, her concern shifting into something far more stubborn.

"I'm not trying to get myself hurt," I said, glancing away from her. "I just... I want to check things out. Nothing reckless."

"You're lying!" Rose snapped, her voice rising. The intensity in her eyes practically pinned me to my seat. "It's obvious you're looking for trouble! You're not fooling me, Leon — I know you too well!" Her hand slammed down on the table, rattling the dishes. "I won't allow it!"

I opened my mouth to argue, but no words came out. Rose wasn't just angry — she was determined. Even if I tried to slip past her, I could tell she'd physically stop me if she had to.

"...C-Can I at least go as far as the stratum you reached?" I asked, desperation creeping into my voice. "I just... I really need to know something."

Her glare didn't waver.

"No means no," she said coldly.

I gritted my teeth. She wasn't budging. The tension between us weighed heavy in the air, suffocating and thick.

If she's this serious... then maybe I should try something else.

"...I'll ask you to come with me, then," I said suddenly. "You know... I read somewhere that dungeon dates are supposed to work pretty well for couples. Apparently, they're great for strengthening relationships."

Her eyes widened, her expression momentarily cracking. For a second, she just stared at me — caught between disbelief and something else... something flustered.

But then her lips pressed together tightly. Her brows furrowed as her teeth clenched — she was fighting back her reaction, biting down her instinct to give in.

But she would break.

I knew she would.

"...I guess I'll come," she muttered at last, her voice low and reluctant.

A small smile tugged at the corner of my lips.

Of course... she's a romance fanatic.

Chapter 594 - The Dungeon (2)

We ventured deeper into the dungeon, pushing further until we reached the sixth stratum. By this point, the air had grown thick — not just with stale dampness but with something far more oppressive. The mana clung to my skin like a cold, invisible shroud, crawling along my arms and neck. Each breath I took seemed to drag that heavy presence into my lungs, leaving me uneasy.

Even here, I couldn't shake the feeling that something lay far deeper within — something far worse than anything we'd seen so far. This place... it felt wrong.

"Don't you feel that?" I asked Rose, my voice lower than I intended.

Rose glanced at me, her expression blank. She was dressed in a black tank top, with leather gloves snugly fitted over her hands — her typical adventurer's attire, it seemed. Even in such a grim setting, she

looked stunning. The way her top clung to her curves made it hard to focus, and though her pants covered her legs, her hips and thighs were... well, hard to ignore.

The way her body moved — toned yet feminine — left me staring longer than I should have.

Damn... if I hadn't fucked her last night, I'd probably be dragging her into some dark corner of this dungeon right now.

I wasn't the only one who'd thought about it. Plenty of adventurers were known to give in to their urges mid-expedition — some couldn't resist, especially after getting all hot and bothered during a dungeon run. But with this mana suffocating the air, I couldn't imagine feeling turned on. It was too oppressive... too unsettling.

"Feel what?" Rose asked, raising an eyebrow.

I frowned. She doesn't feel it? The mana was practically suffocating at this point, yet she seemed completely unfazed.

"Nothing," I muttered. "Anyway... looks like I can see some red gems up ahead."

"Red gems?" Rose repeated, her brow furrowing. "That's strange... They usually only show up around the seventh stratum. I figured they'd all been mined out since this place gets so much traffic from other adventurers."

"I see..."

That was strange. Unless...

Could the blue and green gems down here be turning into red ones? No, that couldn't happen — not naturally, at least. But if someone was deliberately placing red gems back here...

Why?

The thought made me uneasy. Someone tampering with this place meant there were intentions behind it — and that was never a good sign.

"Let's keep going deeper," I said.

We pushed further in, and the air only grew heavier. The mana was so thick now that it seemed to crawl beneath my skin, like cold tendrils slithering up my spine. It felt wrong. The deeper we went, the stronger that sense of dread became.

It was unsettling — not because of what we'd seen, but because of what we hadn't.

For a place so rich in mana, there were barely any monsters. The few we encountered were nothing special — weak creatures that barely put up a fight. It didn't make sense.

"What's the most powerful monster you've encountered here?" I asked Rose, my gaze flicking warily around the dimly lit tunnel.

She tapped her chin thoughtfully. "Hmm... just a Giant Lizard, I suppose."

A Giant Lizard... that wasn't particularly threatening. They were village-level threats — dangerous, sure, but easily handled by a skilled adventurer. Of course, that was assuming there was only one.

"Why are you asking?" Rose asked, giving me a curious look.

"I dunno... I just feel like there's something stronger lurking around here." My voice was quiet, almost instinctively. "Can't you feel that?"

"Feel what?"

I frowned. "Nothing... Anyway, would you mind if we kept going deeper? I doubt there's anything down here that we can't handle."

Rose gave me an incredulous look, folding her arms tightly across her chest.

"That might be true," she said firmly, "but don't you think there could be traps down here that even you can't escape from? So while I'd love to go on a deeper dungeon date with you, that's not happening — and I won't allow it. I don't want you putting yourself in danger."

Her voice was stern — her words firm — yet her eyes betrayed her concern. It wasn't just stubbornness. She was genuinely worried.

"Well, it's not like I wouldn't be careful... aren't I?"

Rose shot me a sharp look, her arms crossing tightly over her chest.

"Even so, I don't want you putting yourself in danger," she said firmly. "Not when you're my man now."

Her voice softened at the end, and for a moment, that tenderness caught me off guard.

That was... sweet. Almost enough to make me blush. Hearing her say that — claim me as hers — it stirred something warm inside me.

"I want to go deeper," I told her, my tone growing serious. "I promise I won't get myself killed. I mean... I'm planning to go deeper into you, too." I smirked. "Well... inside you, of course."

Her face instantly flared red. For a second, she just stood there — stiff, flustered — before she snapped back to her senses and smacked me hard on the back of my head.

Ouch... Okay, fair enough — that was cheesy even by my standards.

"Don't say something ridiculous," she huffed, still visibly embarrassed. "Ugh... I can't believe you said something like that... So ridiculous..."

She turned her face away, her fingers curling into her hair as if trying to shake off her flustered state. But just as she muttered those words, I caught the faintest whisper slipping from her lips.

"...And what's worse... you still managed to make my heart race."

I smirked. Even something that corny could still make girls in this world swoon, huh?

"Well... I guess we can push ourselves a bit," Rose finally said, still a little flustered. "I'm... kinda curious what's deeper down too."

I grinned. Got her.

We pressed on, venturing further into the dungeon. The air only seemed to grow heavier, colder — the mana so thick now it felt like I was walking through syrup. It clung to my skin like a suffocating fog, seeping into my pores and crawling down my spine. Each breath I took felt like inhaling smoke — cold and dry, yet somehow stinging my throat with unnatural heat.

Even Rose — who couldn't sense this mana earlier — was starting to notice it now. She stopped in her tracks, her brows furrowed as she rubbed her arms.

"I'm... starting to feel something," she muttered, her voice low and uneasy. "Something... ominous. Is this what you were talking about earlier?"

"That's right," I said grimly. "I've been feeling it for a while now."

"This... isn't good," she said, her expression tightening. "If whatever's releasing this mana escapes the dungeon... it could devastate the kingdom."

She wasn't exaggerating. Dungeon outbreaks were catastrophic.

In places like the Principality of Cohona — a kingdom built dangerously close to a dungeon — governments poured insane amounts of money into hiring adventurers just to keep disasters like that from happening.

It wasn't just about protecting lives. Dungeon outbreaks shattered economies, destroyed ecosystems, and turned thriving cities into desolate wastelands. A monster horde pouring out of this place... it wouldn't just kill people. It would cripple the land itself.

"If that happens..." Rose murmured, her voice barely above a whisper. "It'll be... hell."

"Yeah..." I muttered. "But I don't think this is even a monster."

She blinked. "What makes you say that?"

"Because..." I hesitated, my eyes narrowing as I let my senses reach out again, feeling that dense aura swirling around us.

"I've felt this mana before."

Her gaze sharpened. "What...?"

"It's different, but it's still familiar." My fists clenched at my sides. "I remember this feeling... when Sesillian opened a portal to allow the Great Darkness into this world."

Rose's breath hitched.

"W-Wait, really?" Her voice trembled slightly, her fingers tightening against her gloves.

I nodded. "No one's ever gone far enough to see the end of this dungeon, right?"

She opened her mouth to answer, but I didn't wait.

"Then I'll be the one to do it," I declared.

I clenched my fists tighter, staring into the shadowy depths ahead. If there really was an open portal hidden somewhere within this dungeon...

Then maybe — just maybe — I could use it to return to my world.

???'s POV

.....

Recharge complete.

.....

Monitor mode. Activated.

Movement detected... deeper than the 15th stratum.

Mission: Prevent any individuals from descending past the 15th stratum. Ensure the portal to the other world remains undiscovered.

The portal must remain confidential. It must be protected at all costs.

Two individuals detected...

Elimination required.

Elimination required.

Elimination required.

Elimination required.

Killer mode. Activated.

Leon's POV

We had reached the 16th stratum, and for some reason, the mana here felt even thicker — like the air itself had turned to sludge, clinging to my skin and filling my lungs with each breath.

"Don't you think we should go back?" Rose asked, her voice strained. "It's getting harder for me to breathe the deeper we go."

She wasn't wrong. The air felt heavier, and with no ventilation in sight, it was like the deeper we descended, the less oxygen there was to take in.

"I guess we could call it here..." I trailed off, but then —

Huh?

Suddenly, I felt something — a presence approaching fast. But it wasn't human...

Before I could react, something shot toward me, its arm cocked back in preparation for a punch. The strike came fast, cutting through the air like a blade. Instinctively, I raised my arm and channeled my mana, forming a protective Guardian just in time to block the blow.

BANG!

The force behind it was immense, enough to send vibrations coursing through my body.

"Leon!?" Rose gasped, her eyes wide with shock.

The figure that attacked me took a step back, and in the dim lighting of the dungeon, I finally saw it clearly.

Metal. That was the first thought that crossed my mind. Its body gleamed with cold, steel plating, limbs jointed with mechanical precision. The faint glow of red energy flickered beneath its armor, pulsing steadily like a heartbeat.

Then, in a cold, robotic voice — oddly feminine in tone — it spoke:

"Order to prevent individuals from progressing past this point is in motion."

Its glowing eyes locked onto me, flickering with an eerie intensity.

"Those who have passed... must be eliminated swiftly."

Chapter 595 - The Dungeon (3)

"L-Leon, what is that...?" Rose asked, her voice trembling slightly.

"It's an automata," I told her.

Truthfully, this was the first time I'd seen something like this, but given that Scarlet — who was a cyborg — existed, I suppose seeing a metallic body wasn't entirely unheard of.

Still... Scarlet seemed to be from another world. I hadn't asked her much about her origins since she was always away, but now, seeing something like this... it was honestly shocking.

It not only caught me off guard — it shook me to my core. Maybe a cyborg like Scarlet wouldn't surprise me as much anymore, especially since this world had things like guns, but... how could something like this exist here?

In a world governed by swords and magic... in a world where technological advancement was barely past the basics... something like this simply shouldn't exist.

No... perhaps it could. The possibility wasn't impossible — not when portals existed that connected to other worlds. If beings from other realms could pass through... then maybe something like this automata had done the same.

The real question was... which world had this person — no, this robotic woman — come from?

Calling her a robot felt like an oversimplification, especially with how lifelike her appearance was. Her skin was incredibly realistic — too realistic. If not for those unsettling metallic eyes, I wouldn't have been able to tell she was anything other than human.

Her movements were flawless, fluid, and natural — not the stiff, mechanical motions you'd expect from a machine. This was... a perfect automata.

How something like this could exist in this world was a mystery — one I wouldn't be able to solve unless I got past her.

"An automata? Is it... a person?" Rose asked hesitantly.

"It's possible," I replied.

I couldn't be sure if there was a human controlling it or if it was acting on its own. There was also the possibility that it was a cyborg — someone like Scarlet. The skin was just too lifelike, and if not for those unnatural eyes, I would've mistaken her for a person entirely.

"Can you defeat it?"

"That's no problem," I assured her.

I reached out and called forth Ayuru. The blade emerged from the space between my palm, and I closed my fingers tightly around the hilt.

As soon as I summoned Ayuru, the automata's head snapped toward me with unnerving speed — so fast that it felt unnatural, almost inhuman.

Her cold, metallic gaze locked onto Ayuru, and a moment later, she shifted into a fighting stance. Her arm shot outward, palm open and steady.

I had no idea what she was preparing to do... until her palm began to shift. With a sharp metallic click, her hand transformed — folding and twisting until her forearm opened to reveal a hollow cavity.

No... not just a cavity — an...

...artillery cannon.

A low hum vibrated through the air as light began to swirl inside the hollow chamber, flickering and twisting like a miniature sun being compressed into a single point. The energy surged violently, crackling with power as it gathered strength.

She's about to fire.

The blast erupted from her arm in a searing beam of light, tearing through the air with a deafening shriek. Instinct kicked in — I activated Guardian, and a shimmering dome of mana enveloped us just in time. The beam struck the barrier head-on, detonating with a thunderous explosion.

The force slammed into the dome's walls, rippling violently as the shockwave tried to push outward. Cracks splintered across the ground beneath us, and chunks of stone crumbled from the ceiling above. Dust filled the air, choking my breath.

If that blast had hit without the barrier... the entire dungeon would have collapsed on top of us.

"Don't you think trying to blow us up inside a dungeon is going a bit too far?" I called out, narrowing my eyes at her.

The automata didn't answer. She remained motionless for a moment, her glowing eyes fixated on me with cold precision. Then, her cannon-arm shifted back into a normal hand with a metallic clank. Without a word, she stepped forward — slow, deliberate, yet utterly confident.

I tightened my grip on Ayuru.

"Stay back," I warned Rose.

The automata's gaze flickered toward Rose for a brief second before returning to me. The air seemed to thicken even more, mana swirling like an invisible storm.

She's not finished.

Her fingers flexed, and the seams along her arm began to shift again. The moment her hand twitched, I lunged forward, slashing with Ayuru before she could fire again.

Our blades met — or rather, her arm became a blade, extending into a gleaming edge of steel that clashed against Ayuru with a sharp screech. Sparks erupted from the impact, illuminating her face in a harsh glow.

Her strength was... overwhelming. The sheer force behind her strike nearly made my arms buckle.

Damn... she's strong.

I gritted my teeth and pushed back, forcing her arm away just enough to break free from the lock. Without hesitation, I leapt back to gain some distance.

"Leon... she's fast!" Rose warned from behind.

I knew that already. Her movements weren't just fast — they were precise, calculated, like she could predict what I was going to do before I did it.

The automata's gaze locked onto Ayuru once again, her eyes narrowing slightly — as if recognizing the weapon itself.

Before I could think further, her arm shifted again — the blade folding back as her palm twisted open once more.

Another cannon shot...!

"Rose! Stay back!" I barked, raising Ayuru as the automata's arm began to glow.

This time... I had to strike before she could fire.

The automata's arm flared with light, the energy swirling faster — a condensed sphere of mana charging at alarming speed.

I surged forward, Ayuru's blade glowing fiercely as I channeled mana into it. The moment her cannon locked onto me, I shifted my body to the side, narrowly dodging the beam as it tore past my shoulder. The searing heat scorched my skin, but I ignored the pain — there was no time for it.

With a swift step, I closed the gap between us, raising Ayuru high.

I brought my blade crashing down, lightning crackling along Ayuru's edge. Sparks danced violently as my strike connected with her raised arm — her steel limb holding firm under the weight of my attack.

She's durable...!

The automata's glowing eyes flickered as her free hand shot out, her fingers curling into a vicious claw aimed straight for my throat.

I twisted away just in time, her metal fingers grazing my neck — close enough that I felt the cold steel brush my skin. Without wasting a breath, I spun my body and slashed across her side.

CLANG!

The sound of metal on metal rang out, but this time, I felt Ayuru's blade sink in. A gash tore through her side, faint sparks flickering from the exposed wires beneath her artificial skin.

For the first time, the automata staggered slightly.

"Leon!" Rose cried out.

I barely turned before her arm morphed again — this time into a jagged spike that shot straight for my chest.

I raised Ayuru at the last second, deflecting the strike just enough for the blade to graze past my ribs instead. Pain flared across my side, and warm blood trickled down my skin.

"Guardian!"

I roared, forcing mana into my barrier once again. The dome flickered into place, but the automata was relentless — she launched another blast from her arm cannon before my barrier could fully stabilize.

The beam slammed into the half-formed barrier — cracks instantly spreading across its surface like fractured glass.

"She could even damage Guardian...?!" I hissed, gritting my teeth.

The barrier shattered in a burst of energy, forcing me back. My legs wobbled, my breath ragged. Blood seeped from my side, staining my clothes.

The automata stepped forward once more, her expression cold and mechanical — like death itself advancing with unrelenting precision. Her arm shifted back into its blade form, gleaming under the dungeon's dim light.

"Rose...!" I called out. "Use your fire magic! Hit her from the side!"

Rose hesitated for a moment before raising her hand.

"Raaaaaaah!"

A spear of roaring flames shot from her palm, hurtling toward the automata's exposed side — the gash I'd managed to leave earlier.

The automata turned, her glowing eyes flashing as her blade shifted to deflect the spell — and that was my opening.

I dashed forward, Ayuru humming in my grip as I poured everything I had into one final strike.

The blade ignited with crackling lightning, and I drove it deep into her exposed side. Sparks erupted as Ayuru's edge tore through her frame, digging into her core.

The automata's glowing eyes flickered — her body twitching violently as arcs of lightning surged through her metallic form.

"Must... eliminate..." her distorted voice crackled. "Protect... portal... must... eliminate..."

"Raaaaaaahhhhhh!" I shouted, forcing Ayuru deeper.

The lightning intensified — her body jerking and convulsing as smoke rose from her frame. Her arm flailed weakly, her energy cannon flickering before finally sputtering out.

With a final surge of power, Ayuru's blade tore through her core completely — and the automata's glowing eyes dimmed into cold, lifeless orbs.

She staggered once... twice... before finally collapsing to her knees. The metallic clang of her body hitting the stone floor echoed through the dungeon.

I stood there, panting heavily, my grip still tight on Ayuru's hilt. Blood trickled from my side, soaking into my clothes, but I barely noticed it.

"You... okay?" Rose asked, rushing to my side.

I nodded. "Yeah... but..." I glanced down at the fallen automata. "Did you hear what she said?"

"Protect... portal..."

"...There's something deeper in this dungeon," I muttered. "And whatever it is... she was willing to die to protect it."

Chapter 596: Epilogue 11 - Welcome To A New World (1)

"Leon, where are you going!?"

Rose's voice rang out, laced with urgency and fear. Before I could take another step, her fingers latched onto my arm, gripping it with desperate strength.

I could feel the slight tremble in her hands. She was trying to stop me, trying to keep me from walking further into the unknown.

"I'm going deeper," I said, my voice steady, unwavering.

"Why? Didn't you see how dangerous this thing is!?"

I turned my gaze to her, meeting her worried expression with firm resolve.

"That's exactly why," I replied. "I want to see what lies ahead... what she was trying to protect."

The automata had spoken of guarding a portal.

If my assumption was correct—if this really was a gateway to another world—then turning back wasn't an option. There was no telling if it would remain here, if it would still exist by the time I returned. I had to confirm it with my own eyes, no matter the risk.

Rose's lips parted slightly as if she wanted to argue, but the look in my eyes must have told her there was no changing my mind. I felt her grip falter, her fingers loosening ever so slightly.

Without hesitation, I pulled my arm free.

"Huh?"

She let out a small, startled noise, but I didn't stop. Without looking back, I pressed forward, my steps echoing through the dim cavern.

But I should've known Rose wouldn't give up that easily.

"Leon, wait!" she called, her voice firm despite the hint of panic. I heard her hurried footsteps behind me. "I'm coming with you! I can't just let you march into something like this alone!"

Her breath hitched, but she kept going.

"If you're going to be reckless, then at least let me be reckless with you!"

So, instead of stopping me, she had chosen to follow—to keep me within reach, to make sure I wouldn't face this unknown danger alone.

I sighed. Well, that was better than having her hold me back.

The deeper we ventured, the heavier the air became.

The mana that filled the dungeon was thick, oppressive—pressing down on us like an invisible weight, making it harder to move and harder to breathe. It felt as though something vast and unknowable was watching us, its presence coiling around us like unseen tendrils.

The further we went, the worse it got.

Rose staggered beside me, her breaths turning shallow. Her movements grew sluggish, as if the very air around us was draining the strength from her body.

"I... I can't... breathe..." she gasped, clutching at her chest. Her face was pale, her legs trembling beneath her.

She wouldn't last much longer.

"You should turn back, Rose," I told her, stopping in my tracks. "I'll be fine on my own."

She gritted her teeth, shaking her head stubbornly. "I... I don't want to lose you..."

"You won't lose me," I assured her.

But before she could say another word, her knees buckled.

Her body lurched forward, collapsing like a marionette with its strings cut.

I caught her before she hit the ground, pulling her into my arms. Her breathing was faint, her body dangerously light in my grasp. She had pushed herself too hard.

There was no helping it.

I hoisted her up, cradling her against me, and made my way back to the inn. There was no way I could take her further. She would only end up suffocating.

Once I ensured she was safe, I turned back—alone.

And finally... I found it

At the very depths of the dungeon, hidden within the last stratum, there it was—

The portal.

My breath hitched.

A massive vortex of swirling energy lay before me, a churning mass of deep blue and violet hues. Its surface rippled like liquid, yet there was an undeniable force pulling toward it, as though it were a living thing—hungry, waiting.

I scanned the cavern. The walls were lined with glowing gemstones, their eerie light casting long shadows across the ground. But unlike the red and purple gems I had seen throughout the dungeon, the ones nearest the portal had turned black.

A black gemstone.

Corrupted.

I had never seen one before. It was clear—the closer they were to the portal, the more they darkened, as if being consumed by the very energy that radiated from the vortex.

I clenched my fists.

For nineteen years, I had lived in this world. Never had I imagined I would stand before something like this. I had thought it would take decades, maybe even centuries, to find proof that such a thing existed.

But now, I was here.

And I was one step closer to my goal.

The goal that had burned within me since my past life.

For the ones who had wronged my sister.

For the ones who had taken everything from me.

And now... now, it was only a matter of time.

There was no telling where this portal would lead.

No certainty that it would take me to another world.

No assurance that it would bring me back to Earth.

No way of knowing if I would even remain on the same plane of existence—nor if I would ever find my way back.

A dark abyss swirled before me, its surface rippling like liquid midnight, pulsing as if it were alive. The air around it felt heavier, charged with an energy that made my skin tingle. My heartbeat drummed against my ribs, a steady reminder that I was standing at the edge of the unknown.

Yet, despite the uncertainty, there was no other choice.

I had to step inside.

Gritting my teeth, I moved forward, allowing the void to consume me.

The sensation of crossing the threshold was unlike anything I had ever experienced.

For a brief moment, it felt as if I were weightless—adrift in nothingness, my body suspended in an endless void. My vision blurred, colors twisting into unnatural shapes, my senses distorting as if I were being unraveled at the seams. Then, in an instant, it was over.

I stumbled forward, my feet meeting solid ground once more.

Blinking rapidly, I struggled to adjust to my new surroundings. The air was thick with dust, the scent of damp earth filling my lungs. The space around me was dimly lit, the walls jagged and uneven. It resembled the dungeon I had been in earlier—except for one crucial difference.

The glowing gems that had once lined the cavern walls were gone.

"Where... am I?" I murmured, my voice barely above a whisper.

I turned to look behind me.

The portal was still there.

That meant I might still have a way back.

Still, the uncertainty gnawed at me. There was no way to be sure if stepping through it again would take me to where I wanted to go. For now, I needed to focus on my immediate surroundings.

"I guess the first step is finding a way out," I muttered, my voice steady.

I pressed forward, my footsteps echoing softly against the rocky ground. Shadows stretched across the cavern walls, shifting eerily with every step I took. A strange sensation prickled at the back of my mind—an awareness that something about this place was different.

After what felt like an eternity, I finally saw an opening.

Stepping outside, I found myself on the peak of a towering mountain. The wind howled around me, biting against my skin as I gazed down at the landscape below.

A sprawling city stretched out before me.

At first glance, it looked like any other metropolis—towering buildings, lights illuminating the streets below. But something about it was off. It wasn't a city from the world where I had been reborn.

And it certainly wasn't Earth.

This was somewhere entirely different.

I exhaled slowly, a mix of disappointment and intrigue settling in my chest. The possibility of returning to Earth had felt closer than ever, but now... it seemed just as distant as before.

Still, this world was unlike any I had seen.

Descending the mountain, I took in the details of my surroundings. The level of technology here far surpassed both Earth and the world where I had been reborn.

Vehicles hovered above the ground, sleek and efficient. Towering skyscrapers reached into the sky, their surfaces shimmering with advanced materials that seemed far beyond Earth's capabilities. People moved with purpose, seamlessly interacting with technology that felt almost otherworldly.

And then, there were the automata.

Mechanical beings, their bodies crafted with precision, moved alongside humans. They weren't mere machines—they were aware, responding to their environment with an uncanny fluidity.

"So... this is the world that automaton came from," I murmured, watching them carefully.

But before I could gather my thoughts—

A sharp, gut-wrenching sense of danger crashed over me.

A split second was all I had.

Instinct took over. My hands moved on their own, summoning Guardian.

But—

The attack tore through it effortlessly.

My eyes widened.

For the first time, Guardian—the ability that had shielded me from countless threats—had failed.

I barely had time to react before a voice rang out, authoritative and unyielding.

"Otherworlder."

I looked up.

A figure loomed above me, their presence heavy with power.

"Surrender now," the voice commanded. "Or face immediate execution."

Otherworlder, huh?

I slowly raised my hands, keeping my posture relaxed. "I come in peace," I said, my voice steady.

The figure didn't falter.

"People from your world seek anything but peace," they countered coldly. "We have been watching your world closely, preparing for the inevitable invasion. Countless realms have already fallen to your people's conquest. We will not be next."

It was clear—they saw me as a threat.

"I'm not here to invade," I stated firmly. "If you guarantee my safety, I'll go with you willingly. And if I can prove that I mean no harm, will you let me go?"

A moment of silence.

Then, the voice responded.

"That depends on how you intend to prove your innocence."

I had no intention of leaving just yet.

There was something here—something I needed to uncover. If this world possessed the technology to create portals, then perhaps I could learn how to open my own. If I could do that... I wouldn't have to rely on chance anymore.

For now, I had to play along.

"I surrender."

The moment the words left my lips, the world around me shifted.

The figures moved in, securing me with precision. Cold, metallic restraints locked around my wrists. The air thrummed with an energy I couldn't quite place, and for the first time in a long while—

I felt truly trapped.

Chapter 597: Epilogue 11 - Welcome To A New World (2)

Rose's POV

Three months had passed since then.

Three long, agonizing months without Leon.

The days stretched endlessly, each one blending into the next, empty and cold. I had already informed Gabrielle about everything—his disappearance, my choice to stand by him, and the fact that I was now one of his women. But when I finally gathered the courage to say it aloud, expecting some reaction, she merely adjusted her glasses and said, I see...

Her voice was flat. Unfazed. As if she had expected it all along.

Not a single sign of surprise crossed her face. Not a hint of jealousy, resentment, or even mild amusement. It was as if my confession was nothing more than a passing remark, insignificant and unworthy of further discussion.

I later learned that Gabrielle had already informed Leon's other lovers about his disappearance. The possibility of reaching him was practically nonexistent. The deeper strata of that place—the very location where the portal was—were smothered in thick, oppressive mana. Breathing down there would be next to impossible. And without a way through, all we could do was wait.

"I'm going to send the Master's Shadows to investigate," Gabrielle said, her voice steady as ever. Then she turned to me. "What about you, Rose? What do you plan to do?"

I tightened my grip around the fabric of my shirt, my nails digging into the soft material.

"I'm... going to wait," I murmured.

Leon had promised me. He told me he wouldn't leave me. That he wouldn't disappear.

So, even after three months had passed, even when uncertainty clawed at my heart, I would wait.

Surely... surely, he would return to me.

"I see." Gabrielle pushed up her glasses again and exhaled through her nose. "Haa... I suppose it really is happening."

I blinked, tilting my head. "What is?"

She sighed. "Master claiming me, you, and Irene."

I stiffened at her words.

"I never wanted it to happen, honestly," she continued. "I despise Irene. And though I don't hate you as much, we still had our differences on that graduation day. But now, you're part of Master's harem... I don't think it'll happen right away, given the circumstances, but once he returns, I wouldn't be surprised if he demands a threesome with the two of us."

"A... a threesome!?" I felt the heat rush to my face. "T-There's no way I could ever do something like that!"

Gabrielle gave a small smirk, one that sent an uncomfortable chill down my spine.

"Oh, you say that now," she said, crossing her arms, "but Master has a way with words. By the time you realize it, whether you like it or not, you'll find yourself in bed with him and someone else. I don't even know how it happened, but he somehow got me in a threesome with Irene."

My breath caught.

Leon... managed that?

Gabrielle and Irene were enemies. Their relationship was nothing short of toxic—pure hatred brewed over years of conflict. And yet... somehow, somehow, he had coaxed them into sharing a bed?

I swallowed hard, my pulse hammering against my throat.

No wonder Gabrielle looked resigned. If even she couldn't escape his pull, what chance did I have?

The thought of a threesome sent a wave of unease through me. I hadn't even fully processed the fact that I was now part of a harem. The idea of sharing such an intimate moment with another woman was too overwhelming to even consider.

"But well," Gabrielle continued, "that won't happen while Master is still trapped in there."

I hesitated before speaking.

"You're really devoted to him, huh, Gabrielle?"

She blinked at me, her gaze steady. "Aren't you?"

"Well..."

Of course, I would devote myself to Leon—I loved him. But Gabrielle's devotion was something else entirely. It wasn't just love. It was something deeper, something unwavering and absolute.

She would die for him. I could see it in her eyes.

"That much is only natural," she said. "I owe him my life, after all."

I frowned slightly.

There was something in the way she said those words. Something heavy.

I wanted to ask. I wanted to know what she meant. But the look in her eyes told me this wasn't the time.

For now, all we could do was wait.

Wait... and hope.

A sudden tremor ran through Gabrielle's body. Then, without warning, she slapped a hand over her mouth, her eyes widening in alarm.

Her entire frame stiffened—then she turned sharply and bolted, staggering as she barely made it a few steps away before collapsing to her knees. The sickening sound of retching filled the air as she violently expelled the contents of her stomach onto the ground.

I stood there, frozen, watching as she gasped for breath between convulsions. Her body trembled like a leaf in a storm, her skin turning ghostly pale.

Even though I had never experienced this myself, I instinctively knew what it was.

It could have been something else entirely, of course... but I highly doubted it.

After all, Leon had a habit of cumming inside whenever he had the chance.

And knowing him, he never held back.

"...Gabrielle, you..." I hesitated, watching as she wiped the back of her hand across her lips.

A weak, almost bitter chuckle escaped her lips. "Heh... I wanted Master to be the first to know." Her voice was hoarse, barely above a whisper. "I wanted to surprise him." Her fingers curled into the fabric of her skirt. "But by the time I realized it... he was already gone, lost somewhere in that portal." Her voice trembled slightly. "I wanted to tell him myself... that after all these years, our love has already borne fruit."

A sharp breath left my lips.

That said everything.

Gabrielle was pregnant.

I looked at her more closely, and for the first time, I noticed it—the subtle but unmistakable swell of her lower abdomen. The realization hit me like a punch to the gut.

Leon was the father.

"...I'm sorry for calling you here, even though you're like this."

She shook my head. "It's fine."

Gabrielle exhaled and steadied herself, pressing a hand against her stomach. "I'm still functioning properly, so it's not as bad as it looks." Her voice grew firmer. "That's why I'll stay here. I'll wait for Master's return... and when he comes back, I'll tell him myself."

Her determination was unwavering.

Despite carrying his child alone, despite the uncertainty of when—or even if—Leon would return, she refused to waver.

Could I ever be that strong?

If I got pregnant with Leon's child, would I be able to stand firm like Gabrielle?

...No.

I knew I wouldn't.

I would break. I would cry. I would blame him for leaving me alone while I carried his child. No matter how rough and resilient I thought I was, I wasn't this strong.

Gabrielle was much, much stronger than me in that regard.

I reached out and gently rubbed her back. "You don't have to worry," I said softly. "Leon will come back to us."

For the first time in a while, Gabrielle's lips curled into a faint, tired smile.

"I know," she whispered. "Master is... incredible, after all."

Titania's POV

Leon had been missing for three months.

Professor Gabrielle had informed me of what happened—that he had stepped through a portal that likely led to another world in order to investigate something.

I knew Leon was strong. He was the kind of man who could tear through anything in his path, who could break past any obstacle.

But even knowing that... I still couldn't stop the worry gnawing at my chest.

I wasn't the only one.

Trill and Yr were just as anxious. Sir Johanne carried the same concern. Even Princess Myrcella, for all her composure, wasn't unaffected.

At the moment, I sat inside the student council office.

Princess Myrcella—the current student council president—had personally recommended me for the position of Vice President, and I had accepted.

She sat across from me, the porcelain teacup in her hand radiating a faint trail of warmth. She was sipping her tea in silence, her expression unreadable.

Finally, with a soft clink, she set the cup down.

"It was rather reckless of Leon to leave without informing any of his lovers, don't you think?" Her eyes flickered toward me. "I must admit, I didn't expect such carelessness from him."

Even she was worried.

I exhaled quietly. "I'm sure it was something important. That's why he hasn't returned yet."

"Oh, I don't doubt that." Myrcella folded her hands neatly in her lap, her gaze sharpening. "Which is exactly why this is concerning." Her voice was calm, but there was an unmistakable weight to it. "I hope he returns soon. Otherwise, I may no longer be able to cover for his continued absence at the academy. I've made plenty of excuses so far, but there is only so much I can do before they run out."

I nodded, my fingers lightly curling against the desk.

"I hope for his return as well."

A breath left my lips, quiet but heavy.

Are you alright, Leon?

Please... come home soon.

Chapter 598: Epilogue 11 - Welcome To A New World (3)

Leon's POV

I had lost all sense of time.

Trapped in this lifeless void, where the sterile white walls bled into one another, time had become meaningless. I couldn't tell whether it had been days, weeks, or even months since I first set foot in this place. But one thing was certain—my women must be worried sick.

I should have left them a message. At the very least, a single word to let them know what I was about to do.

But it was too late for that now.

My current reality was a cold, isolated prison cell. The design was meticulous, reinforced with materials that reeked of paranoia—walls engineered to withstand destruction, doors that locked with an ominous finality. There was nothing here but a single white bed, and even that felt more like an insult than

comfort. My wrists and ankles were shackled, thick chains anchoring me to the wall, their cold bite a constant reminder of my captivity.

I exhaled slowly.

How long are they planning to keep me here?

I had assumed they would at least attempt to determine my intentions—to judge whether I was a threat or not. But no trial came. No questions. Only this silent, drawn-out imprisonment.

I could escape.

These bindings, no matter how advanced, were nothing more than an inconvenience. If I truly wanted to, I could break free within seconds. But doing so would only cause unnecessary trouble. Right now, I needed to be patient.

Still, this situation was grating.

Not only was I restrained, but I had been deprived of something far worse—intimacy.

It had been far too long since I last had sex. I could normally control my urges, but this was stretching my patience to its limits. When I first arrived, I had expected to resolve everything in a matter of days, perhaps a week at most. Yet time dragged on with no end in sight.

Lying on my back, I stared at the ceiling, my mind drifting between thoughts—until a sudden metallic clank shattered the silence.

The door to my cell groaned as it swung open.

Immediately, the atmosphere shifted.

A wave of uniformed officers flooded the room, their movements precise and calculated. In their hands, they carried firearms unlike anything I had seen before—massive, sleek weapons pulsating with an eerie glow. These weren't conventional guns. They weren't designed to fire bullets. No, these things looked like they could disintegrate anything they struck.

And all of them were aimed directly at me.

Then, amidst the armed personnel, a lone figure stepped forward.

She was the only one unarmed. The only one without a uniform.

I recognized her instantly.

The same woman I had spoken to before being dragged into this cell.

Everything about her radiated intelligence—from her sharp, calculating gaze to the poised way she carried herself. She appeared to be in her mid to late twenties, her stark white hair cascading over her shoulders, contrasting against her piercing crimson eyes.

She exuded authority.

And when she spoke, her voice was crisp and commanding.

"Otherworlder," she began, her gaze unwavering. "Your trial—regarding whether or not you pose a threat to this world—will now commence." Her eyes flickered to my restraints, her tone sharpening. "I strongly advise against any foolish actions. The weapons aimed at you possess enough firepower to reduce you to ashes in an instant."

A slow smirk tugged at the corner of my lips.

"I already told you—I'm not going to do anything." My tone was laced with boredom, my chains rattling slightly as I shrugged. "And besides, what the hell took you so long? Do you have any idea how bored I've been?"

Her expression remained unreadable, but something in her gaze darkened.

"You have no right to complain about leisure," she stated coldly. "And whether or not your innocence is proven, know this—you will not be granted freedom. You will be under constant surveillance, monitored twenty-four hours a day, every single day."

I narrowed my eyes slightly.

So, no matter what happened...

I was still a prisoner.

Then, without warning, I was yanked from the bed, my body dragged upright as the cold chains binding my arms and ankles to the wall rattled ominously. The moment the locks disengaged, the metal restraints snapped together like magnets, forcibly clamping my wrists together in front of me.

"Now, move," the woman commanded, her voice devoid of emotion.

Two officers stepped forward, each taking position at my sides. Their weapons—those futuristic firearms pulsing with lethal energy—were now pressed against me at point-blank range, ensuring I had no opportunity for resistance. Without hesitation, they forced me forward, shoving me out of the sterile confinement of my cell.

These weapons...

They weren't ordinary firearms. They were something far beyond conventional technology—capable of piercing even a Guardian. The sheer advancement of their weaponry was astonishing, beyond anything I had expected. How had their civilization reached this level? And if they had, what else were they hiding?

As I was being led through the stark, lifeless corridors, something caught my eye.

A group of researchers stood gathered around what appeared to be... a portal. It was small, flickering with unstable energy, but unmistakable in its purpose. A gateway. They were studying it intensely, their movements careful, meticulous. This wasn't just a theory—it was an active experiment. They were researching interdimensional travel, the possibility of traversing between worlds.

Fascinating.

"What are you looking at? Move!"

A rough shove from behind jolted me forward. The officer's voice was sharp, impatient.

However, I had already made up my mind.

I wasn't staying here any longer.

I was breaking out.

Summoning Ayuru, I felt her materialize instantly in my grasp, her familiar weight settling into my palm like an extension of my own will. Without a moment's hesitation, I unleashed my strength, shattering the restraints binding me.

The officer who had shoved me barely had time to react before my blade found his neck.

In one swift motion, his head was severed, his body collapsing in a graceless heap.

"Wha—!?"

The others froze in stunned silence.

That hesitation was their downfall.

I lunged, my movements swift and precise, cutting through them one by one. There was no mercy, no hesitation—only the cold efficiency of death as Ayuru carved through flesh and bone, severing heads with brutal precision.

Some attempted to retaliate, their fingers instinctively pulling the triggers of their weapons.

I dodged.

The energy blasts seared through the air, scorching everything they touched. The sheer force behind them was immense. Had even a single shot landed, I would have been reduced to ashes. But as long as I wasn't hit, it didn't matter.

The sterile white floors and walls of the facility were no longer white.

They were painted in crimson.

Blood pooled beneath fallen bodies, seeping into the once-immaculate environment, turning it into a grotesque masterpiece of slaughter.

Dodging, slashing, killing—until no one was left standing.

Except for her.

The woman stood motionless amidst the carnage, her crimson eyes wide, momentarily caught in shock.

Then, her expression hardened.

Snapping back to reality, she lunged for a fallen officer's weapon, gripping it tightly before swinging it up to aim directly at me.

Then, she fired.

I didn't even flinch.

The shot streaked past me, searing the air just beside my body. Though she had aimed directly at me, her accuracy was abysmal. There was no need to dodge.

She fired again. And again.

I stood still, watching impassively as she emptied her weapon, her hands trembling ever so slightly. I let her. There was no urgency, no reason to move. Eventually, the gun ceased firing, the trigger clicking uselessly as she desperately attempted to shoot once more.

So, it had limited ammunition.

I lowered my gaze, meeting her eyes.

She was trying not to show fear. Her crimson irises burned with defiance, a steely resolve refusing to break even in the face of inevitable defeat. She was brave—determined, even. But defiance was not what I needed.

I needed her.

Without a word, I brought the blunt side of Ayuru down against the back of her neck. Her body tensed for a brief moment before she collapsed, unconscious.

Then, suddenly—

Blaring sirens filled the air.

The entire facility was bathed in flashing red and white light, a clear indication that an emergency signal had been triggered. The sound was deafening, an ear-piercing alarm meant to summon reinforcements.

I turned sharply, my eyes locking onto the source.

One of the researchers—

A woman with jet-black hair, cut into a hime style, her long bangs covering most of her face—stood before a terminal, her hand pressed firmly against a large red button.

So, she was the one who activated the distress signal.

I had no time to waste.

In an instant, I dashed toward her, closing the distance between us in mere seconds. Before she could react, I struck the back of her head with the blunt edge of my blade. Her body crumpled, her consciousness snuffed out in an instant.

Without hesitation, I grabbed both unconscious women, securing them in my arms—

And fled the scene.

Chapter 599 - Sirraurus (1)

A whole week had passed since that night.

In that short span of time, I had become more than just a fugitive—I was now a wanted criminal, an enemy of humanity itself. My face was plastered across every broadcast.

"The otherworlder responsible for the deaths of officers within the facility remains at large. Despite extensive efforts by the authorities, there are currently no leads regarding his whereabouts. However, rest assured, every measure is being taken to bring him to justice."

The words echoed through the streets from a massive billboard screen, the bright glow casting an eerie light over the gathered crowd. Murmurs spread like wildfire, hushed voices dripping with unease and fear. Eyes darted toward the screen, scanning my image with expressions ranging from concern to outright terror.

To them, I wasn't just a criminal—I was a monster. An anomaly that had no place in their world.

As if to solidify that notion, the portal back to Earth had been locked down, now under relentless surveillance. The guards stationed there were unlike the ones I had encountered before—these were elite forces, clad in advanced armor, wielding weapons so intricate and lethal that even a glance at them sent a chill down my spine. I had no desire to find out just how devastating their firepower was.

I exhaled slowly, leaning back against a cold metal wall, my fingers tapping idly against my thigh.

"I have to admit... this world's technology is beyond anything I could have imagined."

Earth had always prided itself on modern advancements, yet in comparison, it felt primitive. This world wasn't just ahead—it was leagues beyond, at least four times more advanced than anything humanity had ever achieved.

For now, though, I had more pressing concerns.

I was hiding out in a modest complex—an unassuming structure that housed dozens of residents. From the outside, it looked like any ordinary apartment building, blending seamlessly into the city's urban landscape. It was precisely why I had chosen it. Crowds offered anonymity, and anonymity was survival.

I stepped up to a familiar door and knocked lightly before entering. Almost immediately, the rich, mouthwatering aroma of sizzling oil and seared meat filled the air.

Fried food?

The scent was thick and savory, clinging to the walls, teasing my senses. A moment later, the door swung open.

"Welcome back, Master."

A woman stood before me, her voice smooth and melodious. She wore a crisp maid uniform, her delicate hands gripping a ladle. But what caught my attention—what always caught my attention—was her.

She was breathtaking.

Long, silky hair framed her flawless face, her piercing eyes holding an unreadable depth. Her curves were sculpted to perfection, an impossible blend of elegance and seduction. She was the kind of woman who seemed as if she had been plucked straight out of a dream, the embodiment of unattainable beauty.

an absolute bombshell of a woman, the kind that seemed almost too perfect to exist. The idea of someone like her waiting at home, cooking meals, and addressing me as 'Master' was unreal.

But, of course, she wasn't human.

This world's technological marvels extended far beyond simple machines. Here, artificial beings weren't just a concept—they were an integral part of society. Automata had been created to surpass human limitations, designed not only for companionship but for reproduction as well. Their bodies mimicked life in every way, down to the warmth of their skin and the beating of their synthetic hearts. Some were even built with functioning wombs, capable of bearing children. Naturally, male automata existed as well, further solidifying their integration into society.

And the woman standing before me—Anne—was one of them.

She was mine.

"The food is ready," she announced with a gentle bow. "Would you like me to serve your meal and prepare your bath as well?"

I nodded, rolling my shoulders. "Yes. Oh, and keep the portion smaller this time."

"As you wish," she replied, her voice unwavering, her expression serene.

With a graceful turn, she disappeared into the kitchen, leaving me standing in the doorway. The scent of fried food lingered in the air, but now, it was accompanied by something else—something warm, something dangerously close to comfort.

"How long am I destined to remain in this world?"

That question had plagued my mind countless times.

It had been three months since my arrival. Three months since I entered this world. At first, I had been nothing more than a prisoner—a caged specimen, locked away in a sterile facility like an animal waiting to be dissected. But now? Now, I was something else entirely.

A fugitive.

A shadow on the run. A specter that the authorities were desperate to hunt down.

Returning to my world was nothing more than a distant dream at this point. The portal that could take me back was under heavy surveillance, guarded by weapons whose destructive capabilities I didn't care to find out.

As I stepped further into the dimly lit apartment, my gaze swept the room, taking in the sight before me.

Seated at the cluttered table in the living room was her.

The woman I had taken from the facility.

The very same researcher who had sounded the alarm against me—who had pressed the red button that had sent an entire swarm of enforcers to capture me. And yet, here she was now, hunched over a stack of documents, flipping through pages with a focused intensity.

She wasn't trembling in fear. She wasn't cowering in the corner, desperate for an escape.

She was... studying.

There were no chains binding her wrists. No locks keeping her confined. No looming threats hanging over her head. And still—she hadn't run.

It made no sense.

I parted my lips to speak, but before I could utter a single word, she abruptly raised a hand, silencing me.

"Shh! I'm on the verge of a breakthrough," she snapped, her eyes never once leaving the pages before her.

I blinked.

What the hell?

Of all the reactions I had anticipated—terror, resistance, defiance—this wasn't one of them.

It was unnatural.

Leaning against the doorframe, I folded my arms, studying the other one who was also there, just seeping a cup of coffee. "Mind if I ask why you're so calm about all this?"

She was the one who was together with the enforcers and was about to lead me somewhere. Like the researcher, she wasn't bind and chained or anything, but she didn't so much as try to escape from her.

At my question, she finally lifted her gaze.

"What, is that strange?" she mused. "Isn't it only natural that the victor claims their spoils? You won, so we have no reason to resist anymore. If anything, it's strange that you haven't done anything to us yet. Instead, you went and bought yourself an automata. A maid-programmed one, at that. Not even one with combat capabilities."

She tilted her head. "I suppose even an otherworlder like you prefers automata over real women, huh? Well, the same can be said for women, too."

Her words carried an odd weight to them, one that I couldn't quite place.

I frowned. So, this really is the law of the jungle here?

It was starting to make sense now.

This world functioned on a different set of rules—a system where the strong dictated the fates of the weak. And in a society where humans had long blurred the lines between flesh and steel, where automata were more than mere machines, it seemed that even companionship had become artificial.

I had seen it with my own eyes. The brothels lined with artificial bodies, catering to customers as if they were flesh and blood. I had questioned the mechanics of it at first, wondering how such a thing even worked, but in the end, I realized—perhaps they were simply cleaned afterward.

Not that I would know.

I hadn't used Anne for that kind of thing, after all.

Exhaling, I shook my head. "I suppose our values don't align. That's the beauty—and the burden—of differing customs."

To them, I was the outsider. But in truth, they were the ones foreign to me.

Earth had always been a place of diversity. A world filled with different cultures, ideologies, and ways of life.

I had accepted long ago that no two people saw the world the same way.

Still...

This entire situation was unsettling in ways I couldn't quite define.

"To be honest, I'm also here because I want to monitor you closely," she said, her tone eerily calm. "What you did back there... No ordinary person could have possibly done that. It was unnatural—beyond anything I've ever witnessed. And the way you killed... without hesitation, without mercy."

She took a slow sip from her cup before setting it down gently on the table, her gaze steady as it met mine.

"At that moment, I realized something."

Her voice dropped just slightly, the weight of her words pressing down like an unseen force.

"You are the most terrifying thing this world has ever known."

Across the room, the researcher remained unfazed, completely engrossed in her work, her pen scratching against the paper in steady, methodical strokes. It was as if our conversation didn't concern her in the slightest.

Meanwhile, the woman before me leaned back in her seat, her expression unreadable.

"Right now, I can't do anything to you," she admitted. "But one day, I will."

A slow smirk tugged at her lips.

"Right now, I'm just a spoil of war. But that doesn't mean I'll stay that way forever. At some point, I will do something you won't expect. I mean... if even the most loyal automata can betray their masters, then what about a real person?"

A heavy silence settled between us.

I studied her carefully, her confidence almost admirable in its recklessness.

"You're bold," I finally said. "Saying that to my face."

She let out a quiet chuckle, tapping a finger against her cup.

"I believe in granting my enemies the mercy of knowing what will kill them."

My eyes narrowed. This woman... there was something seriously wrong with her.

Chapter 600 - Sirraurus (2)

"And so, would you mind telling me exactly what she was doing?" My voice carried an edge of curiosity as I pointed toward the woman hunched over a pile of scattered papers.

At my words, she lifted her head, her sharp eyes burning with irritation. There was a brief silence before she clicked her tongue, glaring at me as if I were the sole cause of her suffering.

"It's because you kidnapped me from the facility that I have to keep working like this!" she snapped, her voice laced with frustration. "And because of you, I can barely do anything! How the hell am I supposed to conduct proper research without my equipment, my resources, my lab!? And how am I supposed to work under these pathetic conditions with nothing but a pen and some scraps of paper!?"

Her hands clenched into fists, trembling slightly, her breathing uneven from the sheer force of her anger.

Even without her words, it was obvious—this woman was someone who lived and breathed research, someone willing to sacrifice everything for the pursuit of knowledge. And now, I had ripped her away from her element.

"It's all your fault," she muttered, venom dripping from every syllable.

I arched a brow at her but remained composed. "And what exactly are you trying to find out?"

My gaze drifted toward the disorganized papers strewn across the floor. The sheer number of notes was overwhelming, filled with markings and symbols that I didn't immediately recognize. But as my eyes scanned the text, a strange realization hit me—despite the foreign script, I understood what was written.

"Portals to another world—why they appeared in this world and whether it is possible to recreate one."

A heavy silence settled in my mind as I absorbed those words. The sheer ambition behind the research sent a thrill through me, stirring something deep within.

I flipped through a few pages, my eyes quickly skimming the dense text and complex equations. Even if I had the intelligence to process it all, there was simply too much information to take in at once.

But just from the title alone, I already knew—this was something big.

And that title had certainly caught my attention.

"Is it even possible to create a portal to another world?" I asked, my voice calm yet laced with intrigue.

She barely spared me a glance, her hand moving furiously across the page. "Huh? Well, in theory, it should be possible. Right now, we're studying existing portals, trying to decode their structure and function. But..." she let out a sharp sigh, gripping her pen tighter, "we haven't had any major breakthroughs yet. Wait—why the hell am I discussing this with you? This is only going to distract me and waste my time!"

Wow. She really was obsessed with her research. Even as she spoke, her focus remained entirely on the paper before her, as if her hand refused to stop moving. The sheer determination in her movements was almost hypnotic.

Meanwhile, the other woman in the room merely sipped her coffee, utterly unbothered by the heated exchange happening right next to her.

A smirk played on my lips. "What if I said I might be able to help? Would that increase your chances of a breakthrough?"

For the first time, her movements faltered. The tip of her pen hesitated against the paper, and she lifted her gaze—only to give me the briefest glance before returning to her notes.

What the hell? Did she immediately lose interest in me the moment she saw my face? That was just rude.

"Help me, you say?"

At least she was still listening.

"Yes," I continued, my voice steady. "I might be able to assist you with your research."

She let out a dry chuckle, shaking her head. "And how exactly would you be of any help to me?"

I took a slow step forward, meeting her gaze with unwavering confidence.

"I'm a person from another world. Someone who came through a portal. Surely, that alone gives me insight that could be useful for your research?"

That did it.

Her fingers finally stilled, her pen coming to a halt against the paper. Slowly, she lifted her head, her sharp eyes locking onto mine, scrutinizing me in a way she hadn't before.

The weight of my words hung in the air between us, thick with unspoken possibilities.

"Hm..." She pressed a hand to her chin, her expression shifting into something more thoughtful. "Now that I think about it... you might actually be useful."

She rose from her seat with slow, deliberate movements, her long, straight hair swaying slightly as she straightened her posture. This was the first time I had ever seen her stand up—until now, she had always remained seated, her presence defined by stillness and quiet intensity. Her hime cut veiled her eyes completely, a curtain of dark strands that left me wondering what lay hidden beneath.

And yet, as she finally stood, there was an undeniable weight to her presence, as if the air itself shifted around her.

"Hmm... Hmmmmmmm~..."

A low hum of curiosity left her lips as she studied me, her gaze dragging over my body with an almost clinical yet unsettling intensity. It wasn't the kind of look one received from an admirer or even a predator—it was the look of someone utterly fascinated, as if I were a specimen placed under a magnifying glass.

Then, with no warning, she spoke.

"Would you mind removing your clothes? I would like to examine your body."

"Huh?"

"Huh?!"

Both I and the other woman in the room reacted at the same time, voices overlapping in sheer disbelief. The words had been spoken so plainly, so naturally, yet they carried such an absurd weight that my brain nearly short-circuited trying to process them.

"Uh... Did I hear that correctly?" I asked, still caught off guard.

"Hm? I believe I was quite clear," she replied, her voice calm and unwavering. "I said I wish to examine your body. Therefore, I would like you to remove your clothes."

This time, her articulation was even sharper, leaving no room for misunderstanding.

"Uh... okay," I muttered. "But... here?"

"I would like her to observe as well," she added matter-of-factly.

"Eh?"

The other woman nearly choked on her drink, her composed demeanor finally cracking.

"I mean, I wouldn't be able to reach a conclusive analysis if I were the only one observing," she continued, as if discussing mere scientific protocol.

"Why do I have to be involved in this?!"

"As I said, I would also like your insight."

"Why? That's—it's weird!"

Even she, who had remained calm all this time, was flustered now. Her cheeks flushed slightly, her hands gripping the cup in her lap just a bit tighter.

And honestly, I couldn't blame her. The entire situation was beyond strange.

Still, if this was meant to contribute to her research, I supposed I could go along with it. After all, my curiosity matched hers—I wanted to know if portal creation was truly feasible. Could we actually manipulate these anomalies? Stabilize them? Direct them to specific locations rather than leaving them up to chance?

Of course, something like that couldn't happen overnight. The complexity alone made it seem nearly impossible. But if there was even a sliver of a chance...

Before I went through with stripping, I needed to clarify something.

"Before I take anything off," I said, "there's something I need to ask."

"Eh? Why?! I want to see it now! There's no time to waste!"

"This is something that should be asked beforehand," I replied, my voice firm. "Is it possible to configure a portal to transport someone to a specific world of their choosing?"

"Huh?" She blinked, momentarily caught off guard by the question. Then, tapping a finger against her chin, she mused, "Well... Theoretically, yes. It should be possible. However, achieving such precision would take a considerable amount of time. Given that naturally occurring portals don't operate with that level of control, I doubt we would reach a conclusive answer anytime soon. But as I said, it is within the realm of possibility. Now then—can you please remove your clothes already? We are wasting precious time!"

Frustrated by my hesitation, she suddenly reached forward, gripping the hem of my shirt with both hands. And without another word, she yanked it upward, pulling it over my head in one swift motion.

Lady, you're really going for it, huh? You haven't even taken me to dinner first.

Cool air brushed against my exposed skin as my shirt was cast aside. I felt the weight of two sets of eyes on me—one brazenly analyzing every inch of my torso, the other hesitantly flicking toward me before quickly averting.

The woman who had been sipping tea moments ago averted her gaze, but the betraying pink hue dusting her cheeks told me all I needed to know. Despite her best efforts, she couldn't help sneaking glances out of the corner of her eye, her fingers tightening slightly around her cup.

"Now then," the researcher continued, her voice still composed. "Remove everything."

Wait—the pants too?

A strange tension settled in the air as I hesitated. At this point, I couldn't even tell if she truly understood what she was asking for—or if she was completely oblivious to the implications of her demand.