

The World 701

Chapter 701 - Fighting Fire With Fire (1)

I made my way back to the academy, the familiar towering structure casting a long shadow under the late afternoon sun.

Just beyond the main gate, standing like a statue with her arms folded tightly across her chest, was Angelica. The moment her eyes landed on me, her expression twisted into something between annoyance and distrust.

She looked like she'd been waiting a while—and not patiently.

Her brows were furrowed, lips pressed into a thin line. That scowl etched into her face almost made me flinch, as if I'd committed a crime I wasn't aware of.

Had I really done something to piss her off this much?

I racked my brain, but nothing came to mind. Maybe I'd breathed wrong in her presence or blinked too slow. Whatever it was, it seemed I was already on her shit list.

Despite her cold demeanor, Angelica said nothing and simply turned, gesturing for me to follow. Her cape fluttered behind her as her boots clacked sharply against the stone path. I trailed behind her in silence as she led me through the academy grounds and toward the designated location—the student council room, where none other than the Princess of this kingdom, Myrcella, awaited me.

When we entered the room, I was met by a curious mix of faces. Seated around a large, polished table were Titania, the ever-so-radiant Princess of Bethlan Kingdom, as well as Trill and Yr, both of whom weren't even official members of the council but had still somehow found themselves included.

"Leon! You finally made it!" Titania's voice rang out the instant she spotted me, her tone laced with urgency. She pushed herself up off the table with enough force to make her breasts bounce against the tight fabric of her top, almost lewdly.

"Listen to this! It's terrible!" she said, her eyes wide with worry.

If even someone like Titania—who normally stayed composed—was this rattled, I knew things were seriously bad.

"Allow me to explain, Princess Nia," Myrcella's calm voice interrupted, stepping out from a side room while drying her hands with a white towel.

She had likely just been in the bathroom, judging from the faint steam that followed her out. Even now, she carried herself like royalty—poised, graceful, and deadly serious.

She turned her gaze toward Angelica.

"Angelica."

With a sharp nod, Angelica moved across the room, heading toward a set of controls embedded in the wall. She tapped a few runes, and a mechanical hum filled the air. Suddenly, a large monitor began to lower from above, its surface crackling to life with a soft blue glow.

The screen flickered for a moment before displaying something I hadn't expected to see.

The footage was raw and chaotic.

It was like a nightmare captured in real time.

It showed a village, once peaceful, now overrun.

Bandits were swarming through the streets, their faces masked and weapons drawn, torching homes and dragging screaming villagers from their homes. Women and children cried out, their wails cutting through the static of the feed. Fires roared in the background, licking at rooftops, casting eerie shadows across the chaos.

And this wasn't just any village.

This was one located inside the inner cities—areas considered the safest and most protected in the kingdom.

Well, I guess not anymore.

Even the heart of the kingdom wasn't safe now.

I found myself growling under my breath, fists clenched tightly at my sides. My jaw locked as I watched the senseless destruction unfold.

These fuckers... these heartless bastards were looting, kidnapping, and committing atrocities that made my blood boil.

They didn't deserve mercy. They didn't even deserve a quick death. Karma needed to catch up to them—and fast.

But beyond the surface-level anger, there was a deeper, more chilling realization.

How the fuck did they even get in?

It wasn't like the royal knights were slackers, and the city guards weren't pushovers either. No... this felt orchestrated. Manipulated. Someone was moving the pieces in the background, setting fire to the chessboard while everyone else played blind. I already knew that someone, but the how was still elusive to me.

"This footage was taken just moments ago," Myrcella said coldly, her voice steady but clearly laced with disgust. "And there have been other incidents—similar attacks in different parts of the kingdom. It's a coordinated effort... targeting small villages, abducting the weak, destroying lives."

Her eyes stayed fixed on the monitor, the flickering light casting harsh shadows over her features. Even she looked like she was barely holding her composure.

"But what makes this worse," she continued with a sigh, "is how fast this news is spreading. Thanks to the technological advancements you introduced to this world, Leon, we've entered a new information era. The consequences of this are now unavoidable."

She gestured toward a second panel, which sprang to life with a series of scrolling posts, comments, and feeds.

"Information that used to take weeks, even months, to travel by letter or courier is now being sent instantly across the world. Every second, every moment, people are learning about what's happening. And so are other nations—like the Republic and the Empire."

I stared at the data flooding the screen.

It was dizzying how quickly everything had changed.

The old world moved at a snail's pace—slow letters, messenger birds, and whispers passed around in taverns. But now?

One tap.

One message.

One image.

And the entire world was watching.

Myrcella's expression hardened as she swiped to another page—this one displaying posts from common citizens.

"Right now, many are turning their anger toward the king," she said.

The messages were brutal, raw, and honest.

"I hate this king so much! How can he be this cruel to his own people?! Bandits are fucking running wild and he just lets it happen! Not even outside the border—but right inside our homes!"

"We were doomed the second that greedy fuck got crowned. All he's ever done is hoard wealth and ignore the people. It's time for a revolution. Sure, we might die trying, but if we don't, we'll just die anyway under this fucked-up rule. Time to stand the fuck up."

"A revolution is the only way to burn this corrupted system to the ground. I refuse to believe this is still the same Milham our ancestors shed blood to build. This is a different land—one ruled by a tyrant who wouldn't even lift a finger to help his own people. Respect goes both ways. If the king doesn't give a shit about us, then we don't owe him anything. This is the natural consequence. Milham will rise again—without him."

"I might get executed for this, but... the king sucks."

The people were fed up.

The outrage wasn't just a whisper anymore—it was a storm.

A rising tide of discontent ready to crash through the throne room if nothing changed.

And from the look in Myrcella's eyes, she knew it too.

This wasn't just a crisis anymore.

It was the beginning of something far worse.

"Honestly..." Myrcella began, her voice quieter now, almost trembling with restrained emotion. She gazed out the tall window overlooking the academy below, her eyes dim beneath the sunlight that filtered through the stained glass. "This is nothing more than karma finally catching up to my father—for all the things he's done... or rather, for everything he failed to do for the sake of this kingdom."

Her fists were clenched tightly at her sides, the skin around her knuckles pale. She let out a soft breath, forcing a bitter smile, but it barely masked the turmoil swirling behind her eyes.

"But even so," she continued, her tone faltering for just a moment, "I don't want to see Milham—my kingdom—engulfed in flames, not by foreign hands, but by its own people. I want to use this moment... this uprising... as a chance to reach them, to show them I'm different. That I'm here for them." She hesitated, her brows tightening. "But..."

"It'll only end up biting you," I cut in, not unkindly, but firmly.

The public's fury was still aimed at the King, but any misstep from Myrcella—especially if she tried to use their rage as leverage—would likely drag her into the same pyre.

The fire didn't care who lit it. It would burn everything.

She turned to me then, slowly, her gaze softer now, touched with a kind of sadness I hadn't seen in her before. But within it was still the flicker of hope.

"What should we do about this, Leon?" she asked, almost pleading. "What do you think I should do?"

I crossed my arms and exhaled, eyes narrowing in thought.

"The person pulling the strings behind this chaos clearly understands the speed and power of the internet," I began. "They're using it as a weapon, to rapidly spread fear, misinformation, and outrage. They're crafting a narrative that makes Milham look weak and unstable. That vulnerability? It's bait. A signal to outsiders. It says we're ripe for the taking."

I met Myrcella's eyes then.

"If they're using the internet to destroy Milham's image... then we'll use the internet to rebuild it."

Titania blinked, clearly trying to follow. "What do you mean, Leon?"

"We're going to counterattack," I said, my tone sharpening. "With a dead cat strategy."

The words hung in the air.

"The... dead cat strategy?" Myrcella echoed, eyebrows furrowing in confusion.

"It's a political tactic," I explained. "Deadcatting. Basically, when you're losing ground—when everyone's focused on your failures—you throw something else on the table. Something bigger. Something louder.

Something shocking enough that the media and the public completely shift their attention. Well... It doesn't fix the original problem," I admitted. "But it redirects the narrative. Long enough for us to regroup as well as to regain control."

"A dead cat?" Myrcella asked again, eyes narrowing slightly.

"Yeah," I nodded. "You toss a bigger 'dead cat' right in the middle of the table. One so outrageous, so loud, so unexpected... that everyone forgets about what they were arguing about before. That's how we shift the spotlight."

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"How are we going to do that?" Titania asked, her voice low and uncertain, as if she herself feared the weight of the answer.

That was the core of everything.

The one question that no one could really answer with confidence.

How the hell were we supposed to fight fire with fire in a world where the flames were being fed by whispers, fear, and rage?

This wasn't just about strategy.

It was about outplaying an enemy that had mastered shadows and turned the truth into a weapon.

"Well, for one... we need something bigger. A scandal, something massive," I began, my tone firm and deliberate, letting each word drop like a stone into still water. "Something so outrageous that every single person—whether they were furious at the king, or just passive onlookers—would stop whatever they're doing and look this way instead. We need something that overshadows the village attacks completely. A reset of public focus."

"And what exactly would that be?" Myrcella asked, her voice lined with both skepticism and curiosity, eyes narrowing as she leaned slightly forward.

I let a small, knowing smile curve on my lips. "Let's just say... it involves the Sword Saint."

That hit like thunder in a dead forest.

A cold silence followed. No gasps. No immediate questions.

Just the weight of those two words, thick in the air.

I watched as Myrcella and the others exchanged glances, their expressions twitching with the telltale signs of suppressed thoughts—eyebrows slightly raised and mouths barely parted. They were asking themselves the same silent question: What does he mean? What the hell does the Sword Saint have to do with this?

But they wouldn't find the answer among themselves.

Only I knew the truth.

Because dragging the Sword Saint into this wasn't just about spectacle—it was a calculated risk. This scandal wouldn't be a mere ripple. It would be a tidal wave. One that wouldn't just shake the foundation of Milham, but would tear through the fragile balance of power between the kingdom and the Sword Saint's influence.

"But this plan hinges on one thing," I said, cutting through the thick silence. "The king has to make a statement. Publicly. Officially. If we want this to work—even temporarily—his voice is the spark that lights the whole thing."

I paused to let that sink in, then continued with a grim tone.

"If we pull this off, all the haters flooding the net with anti-king propaganda will be caught off guard. Their attention will be forcefully diverted to the bomb we're about to drop. But that doesn't mean we're safe. The kingdom's vulnerability still exists. The threat of invasion still lingers. Which is why this isn't the endgame—it's just a step. I have something else prepared, something to cover the cracks while we draw the enemy's eyes away."

I leaned in, my voice low but steady.

"I just need to adjust a few things, tweak the timing and the message. And then... we'll have the perfect misdirection. The kind of redirection that history books will mention in hushed paragraphs."

"You really do sound like you've got a solid plan," Myrcella said with a soft, impressed smile, her tone shifting from concern to reluctant admiration.

"I told you—Leon knows what he's doing," Titania chimed in, her voice lighter, almost proud.

The enemy might have hijacked the internet—a tool I personally introduced to this world to revolutionize it. But I was still the master of it. They could play their little games. But in the end, no one could manipulate digital flow like I could. They were playing on a field I built. And I never forgot how to win on it.

Without wasting time, I reached for my smartphone and called Johanne.

The plan had to begin now.

The deadcat in this scenario? Her.

More specifically, her identity. The fact that her gender had been forcibly altered before she could even speak her own name.

The scandal we were about to unleash, centered around the Sword Saint, would be more than enough to set the media ablaze. It would pull attention away from the deeper truths, giving us breathing room to protect the kingdom's image and reinforce the illusion that Milham was still one of the dominant powers in the world.

"You wanted something from me, Leon?" she asked the moment she stepped in, her expression unreadable, but her voice carrying an edge of curiosity.

"Have you talked to your father yet... about your real gender?" I asked, locking eyes with her.

Her lips pressed into a thin line. Then she shook her head.

"No," she admitted quietly. "I honestly don't know what to say to him. Of course I want to understand what went through his mind... but I can't just throw it in his face without knowing how to process it myself. What if... what if he really was disappointed that I was born a girl? Did he see me as so worthless that he chose to change me into a boy just to make it easier on himself?"

"So it's true...? You really are a girl, Johanne?" Myrcella asked, her voice cracking slightly under the weight of disbelief.

Her eyes were wide—too wide, in fact, like two saucers. The kind of wide that only came when a truth shattered the foundation of everything someone thought they knew.

And considering how close she and Johanne had been since they were children, her shock was understandable.

Not once in all those years did she notice Johanne was a woman.

"It is true," Johanne said softly, but firmly, a sad smile tugging at her lips. "I'm sorry for keeping it from you all this time. I never meant to lie... I just... couldn't."

"No... it's okay," Myrcella said. "This isn't something you could just say to anyone on a whim. I get that. But... how are you feeling about all of this?"

Johanne let out a long breath before answering.

"I feel... conflicted. Deeply. I still don't know what to do with all these emotions. But at the same time, if my story can help with this deadcatting strategy... then maybe I can find meaning in it. Maybe it'll serve a purpose greater than just my own identity crisis."

"You don't have to go through with this if you're not ready," I said, my tone softer, my gaze fixed on hers.

But Johanne simply smiled at me.

"Don't worry. I think... this is the right thing to do. For the people. I don't want to watch our kingdom collapse from within because of someone's manipulative scheme. If this helps shift the chaos away—even for a moment—then I'm in. If it prevents war, or riots, or the collapse of everything we've fought for, then it's worth it."

"That's the plan," I replied, nodding. "But we can't just rely on this scandal alone. We need to manage the public perception of Milham itself. Right now, people think our kingdom is bleeding, weak, and ripe

for conquest. That's why I've written two articles. One exposing your father's scandal. The other? A show of strength. Something to tell the world that Milham is still in control. Still playing the long game."

I turned the laptop around and showed them the screen, the faint glow casting light on their curious faces.

This laptop—like many other technological wonders such as refrigerators, televisions, and other modern tools—had been introduced to this world long ago by the people of Leonamon. Though this world thrived on mana, these tools had quietly woven themselves into daily life, becoming indispensable instruments in both strategy and survival.

And right now, it was our greatest weapon.

Displayed on the screen were two articles I had written myself.

The first headline read:

"The Truth About the Sword Saint's Heir."

Followed closely by the second:

"The Princess of Milham Succeeds in Allowing All Academy Students to Graduate as Magic Knights."

The room fell silent for a moment.

"Wait, Leon..." Myrcella's voice broke the hush, her eyes flickering between me and the screen with concern. "I haven't succeeded in that part yet."

I looked at her, a small, confident smirk forming on my lips.

"Well, no one needs to know that, do they?" I said casually, leaning forward as I rested my elbows on my knees. "If people stumble across this online, it's going to blow up like wildfire. These articles are going live on one of the most visited article sites in the world. It's guaranteed to gain attention, stir people's emotions, and shift the focus completely."

Her eyes stayed on mine, reading me, trying to grasp the full extent of my plan.

"And even if it's not completely true right now, it doesn't really matter. No one can instantly verify the validity anyway. The only ones who'll get questioned will be the academy's administrators. Sure, they'll try to deny everything, maybe release a statement or two. But that won't stop the story from spreading like an uncontrollable blaze. People believe what they want to believe. Like they say—where there's smoke, there's fire."

I paused for a beat before adding, "Besides, even if it's not true at this very moment... you're going to make it true eventually, aren't you? We're just speeding things up a little. Preempting the future."

Myrcella stared at the screen again, then back at me. A slow, sincere smile spread across her lips, her expression softening.

"You really do think far ahead of any of us, Leon," she said, voice warm with admiration. "That's what I love about you."

She leaned in, the world around us fading into quiet, and pressed her lips against mine.

Chapter 703 - Fighting Fire With Fire (3)

Johanne's POV

The moment Leon and the Princess's lips met in that quiet, suspended second...

Something inside me shattered.

It wasn't just a crack.

But it was a sudden, painful rupture that echoed through my chest like glass breaking under pressure.

The sensation was so raw and so visceral, that no mask or forced composure could hope to hide it.

My entire body tensed, my shoulders stiffening as if trying to hold together the pieces of something that had already fallen apart.

I didn't know what the emotion was. I couldn't name it.

It was ugly.

It twisted my expression into something unrecognizable—even to myself.

My face burned, not from embarrassment, but from the intensity of something far more unsettling.

I couldn't explain it. Couldn't analyze it. Couldn't rationalize it.

And above all—it hurt.

It hurt so much that I found it difficult to breathe, as if someone had reached inside my lungs and squeezed all the air out.

The pain sat in my chest like a heavy stone, pressing harder and harder until I felt like I might collapse under the weight of it.

If I had been absolutely certain—undeniably confident—that I was a man through and through, maybe I could've dismissed it. Brushed it off as a strange flutter. A fleeting affliction. Something bizarre that didn't make sense but wasn't worth thinking too deeply about.

But then I remembered Tris's words.

"The witch... I mean, Miss Dorothea said that the reason you turned back into a girl was because you kissed your true love."

When I first heard that, I froze. Shocked. Stunned.

But now... now it all started to fit together like cruel puzzle pieces sliding into place.

I was a woman now. Leon was a man.

And that could only mean one thing—I loved him.

Not as a friend. Not as a teammate. Not as a comrade-in-arms.

I loved him... as a woman.

Even though I had once been a man, I kissed him. That kiss alone was enough to revert me back into my female form. A form I was still stuck in now... but not for long. Tomorrow, I would return to being a man.

And with that return came a crossroads. A decision that would change everything.

Would I live the rest of my life as a woman...?

Or would I reclaim my identity as a man?

There were only two roads ahead of me. No shortcuts. No in-betweens. Just a hard, irreversible choice.

If I chose the first—if I chose to remain a woman—I had no doubt I could find happiness. If I accepted that part of myself, I could imagine being one of Leon's women, standing by his side not as a friend, but as a lover. That kind of happiness... it was tempting. So tempting.

But if I chose that path, then wouldn't I just be running away?

Wouldn't I be turning my back on the duty and responsibility that I was supposed to uphold? As a man. As who I once was.

I didn't know how to deal with this confusion. These feelings were like a storm inside me.

It was violent, chaotic, and impossible to navigate.

I was lost.

Torn between what I wanted... and what I believed I owed to myself.

What should I do...?

Part of me screamed to follow my heart. To stop thinking and just feel. To leap toward the warmth I desired.

But the burden of what I'd have to give up if I did... it dragged at me like chains.

Responsibility... duty... identity...

They pulled me back, clawing at my soul just when I thought I might be able to move forward.

Leon's POV

Everything was in motion.

Every piece, every sentence, every image had been checked, double-checked, and polished to perfection.

The articles were flawless with text aligned, formatting crisp, and the photos positioned exactly where they needed to be. Every line was crafted with intention. Every statement verified for truth and impact.

The entire thing was ready to go.

The moment I clicked "publish," I knew there would be no turning back.

The scandal—especially the one involving the Sword Saint and his child—was massive. The twist about Johanne changing genders... it wasn't just news. It was dynamite. And it wasn't baseless.

Johanne had approved it.

That meant I had full clearance. All that remained was to pull the trigger.

There was also a second article. One that, on any other day, would've been the headline—the confirmation that the academy now permitted every cadet to graduate into full-fledged Magic Knights.

That alone was groundbreaking.

We had photos. Documents. Logs. Proof stacked like bricks in a fortress.

I glanced toward Myrcella. She gave me a firm, unflinching nod. A silent "Do it."

I hit the button.

Thirty minutes passed.

And the views exploded past one hundred thousand.

It was going viral. No—it had gone viral.

Everything was falling into place.

But still... I couldn't relax.

Saying that everything was proceeding "smoothly" at this stage would've been naïve. Foolish. Suicidal, even.

We were playing a dangerous game.

The deadcatting strategy was already in motion—designed to draw attention away and to manipulate focus—but it only worked if people didn't realize it was bait.

If they discovered that it was exaggerated or fake... if even a sliver of doubt crept in...

Then it was over.

Trust in the leadership? Gone.

Trust in me or the entirety of Leonamon as the publisher? Destroyed.

Which is why we had to be meticulous.

Every claim had to be backed with irrefutable proof. Every paragraph had to hold weight.

I knew the academy would be scrambling by now with them labeling the article as misinformation, trying to discredit it in any way they could. But I was already one step ahead.

I was going to throw the full might of Leonamon into this fight.

We had our proof.

We had our platform.

We had our voice.

And now... with everything set in motion...

Let the game of internet chess begin.

Galdea's POV

I slowly woke up, my body wrapped in the lingering warmth of my bed.

A strange but welcome sensation washed over me—peace. True peace.

For the first time in what felt like ages, I had slept soundly.

My thoughts weren't burdened, and my chest felt light.

The stress that usually clung to me like a second skin had, for once, slipped away.

Maybe it was because today was finally my day off?

The moment I opened my eyes and blinked away the soft haze of slumber, I was struck by how calm everything felt.

No papers to sign, no schedules to attend, and most importantly—no crusty old men breathing down my neck about budget revisions and funding reports.

It really was a beautiful day, the kind I rarely got to enjoy.

I stretched my arms above my head and let out a long, slow yawn.

"Haaaaaaaa~..."

It wasn't the sort of yawn born from exhaustion or fatigue.

No, it was the kind of luxurious, drawn-out yawn that came after a night of uninterrupted rest—a yawn pulled straight from contentment.

It felt... divine.

It had seriously been forever since I'd last experienced such a restful sleep.

Even longer since I'd taken a proper break from my duties as an administrator.

As the technical treasurer, I was responsible for managing the academy's annual budget—a thankless, soul-draining job that required a precise balance of diplomacy and calculation.

Every single number had to be accounted for. Every decimal mattered.

But right now? I wasn't in that world.

I was in my old bed, in my family's home. Familiar walls, the scent of old wood, and clean sheets.

It felt like stepping back into a forgotten version of myself, one untouched by politics and responsibility.

Still groggy, I blinked slowly as I felt strands of my hair stick to my cheek, glued there by dried-up saliva from sleeping like a log. Gross, but weirdly comforting.

That's when my phone suddenly buzzed on the nightstand beside me.

Grumbling, I reached over, squinting at the glowing screen.

One of the senior administrators.

Of course.

Without even thinking, I hit the red button and declined the call.

I mean—seriously? They knew I was taking today off. It had been approved, signed, and logged. So why the hell was he calling me?

With a sigh, I tossed the phone back onto the nightstand and rolled out of bed.

First thing's first: a long, hot bath. It had been too damn long since I'd had the time to properly rinse off and enjoy a quiet morning without rushing.

After washing away the tiredness and soaking in some much-needed steam, I stepped back into my room with nothing but a towel loosely draped over my damp body. Water still trickled down my skin as I rubbed at my wet hair with another towel.

Just as I was halfway through drying my hair, my phone buzzed again.

I stared at it with a deadpan expression.

"...What the hell now?" I muttered. "Is this old man seriously trying to woo me again? Doesn't he have a wife?"

I groaned, dragging the towel over my head.

"Why are all these old married men constantly after me...?"

I declined the call once more.

Today was my day. My rare, sacred day of rest.

So, I figured... why not enjoy it properly?

I flopped onto my bed, opened my phone again, and launched social media.

Social media was such a weird thing—ridiculously powerful, though.

News spread through it like wildfire, and with how far technology had come, it only took a few taps to send out a message across the continent.

This device—my smartphone—was my lifeline. It made everything easier.

But just as the screen lit up and loaded the feed, the very first thing I saw made my heart skip a beat.

A headline.

"The Academy Now Allows All Cadets, Regardless of Class, to Graduate and Become Magic Knights."

My eyes widened in disbelief. My breath caught.

And before I could even react—thud—the towel wrapped around my body slipped and fell to the floor.

"What...!?"

Chapter 704: Fighting Fire With Fire (4)

"The statements made in that article... were complete lies."

My voice rang out, calm but ironclad, across the gathered courtyard, the sound echoing faintly against the academy walls behind me.

"The Academy has never allowed just anyone—especially not those who haven't made it into the Gold Class—to become Magic Knights. That article, with all its baseless claims and fabrications, was nothing more than an underhanded attempt to smear the name of Milham Academy of Magic Knights."

I paused for a moment, letting my words settle in the silence that followed.

Dozens of eyes were fixed on me... every face a different mix of curiosity, suspicion, or unease.

"This institution," I continued, with more force now, "has always upheld a proud and sacred tradition that only those who've proven themselves through merit and sheer determination can ever hope to rise to the title of Magic Knight. That tradition is our foundation as well as our legacy. What was said in the article contradicts that legacy and undermines every single individual who fought tooth and nail to ascend to the Gold Class and earn that honor."

I stood tall, my hands clasped in front of me as I faced them all.

I had returned to the academy on my day off, just for this—just to cut through the poison that had been injected into public discourse with a single, calculated piece of fake journalism.

"I'm here today," I went on, "to stamp out any notion—any rumor—that the current administration is relaxing standards and allowing unqualified students from any class to graduate as Magic Knights. That's simply not true."

My eyes swept over the crowd, holding each person in a stare that dared them to doubt me.

"And to the person who published that disgraceful article—filled with nothing but blasphemous lies—I say this: your actions have consequences. You've deliberately sown confusion, distrust, and unrest across the kingdom. And whether you believe it or not, justice will find you. But if you come forward—if you surrender peacefully and retract what you wrote—there is still a chance for leniency. A small one. But a chance nonetheless."

I gave one final, solemn bow to the crowd before me, feeling the weight of the moment press against my shoulders.

Most of them were members of the press, now holding the dual power of paper and internet at their fingertips.

These weren't just ordinary reporters.

They were part of the new wave—media conglomerates who could flood the world with news in mere seconds thanks to modern technology.

That's why I brought them here. I needed the truth to reach as far, and as fast, as the lies had.

But deep down, I couldn't help the simmering frustration.

Who the hell had the nerve to ruin my rare day off with this bullshit?

And if they ever stepped forward... I swear, this wouldn't end peacefully.

One of the journalists had the audacity to ask me if I'd spoken with the Princess about the matter.

When I did, she simply gave a polite smile and calmly stated that she had nothing to do with the situation.

But that smile...

It was too perfect.

Too composed.

It almost felt like she knew something—and was hiding it behind that gentle mask.

This whole thing was a damn mess.

Nothing made sense anymore.

Why had this happened?

What was the motive?

Who was behind it?

I stared out at the crowd again, scanning their faces.

And then—

Just for a fleeting second—

I saw something.

No... I didn't really see it.

It was gone too fast.

Maybe it was just my imagination.

But I swear, I saw a face...

Split into a faint, knowing smile.

Leon's POV

I released a new article—one that picked apart every word Galdea had uttered during her little press conference.

She thought she had buried the first article, the one exposing the Academy's so-called new policy.

But in truth, all she did... was hand me more material.

Now, I was going to twist it again.

Subtly.

Beautifully.

In a way that made it sound like she wasn't exactly confirming what was in the first article... but also wasn't really denying it either.

Galdea had no clue.

No...

The whole world had no idea that Leonamon already owned nearly every media outlet across the globe.

And the people Galdea had addressed at her conference?

Every single one of them—those note-taking reporters, those people—were my staff.

The articles went out immediately.

Faster than she could blink.

And instead of quelling the flames, she only stoked them higher.

Sure, we included her quotes.

We even published most of her speech word-for-word.

But we wrapped it in such a way... that it only fueled more doubt.

She might've thought she'd been clear—but by the time the articles hit the public eye, it looked like she had danced around the topic.

Like she hadn't firmly denied anything at all.

That was the trick.

It wasn't even a blatant twist of words.

No.

Her original phrases were mostly left intact.

Just framed differently.

The right omissions.

The right emphasis.

The blemish—that forceful denial she gave—we buried it under layers of context.

To the public, it was as if she had avoided the truth entirely.

"You're really good at this, huh?" Titania purred beside me, her body still warm, still flushed from the sex we just had.

She lay naked in my bed, her long golden hair tangled across the pillow, cheeks glowing with the aftermath of our pleasure.

I glanced at her, a satisfied smirk on my lips.

"Well, I did invest a ridiculous amount of resources into this. There's no way I'm losing now," I said, my voice cool and confident.

"You really are such a good man, Leon," she whispered, curling up against my chest, her fingers trailing down my stomach in lazy circles.

I turned slightly, brushing her bare thigh with mine.

"More than that, Nia..." I murmured softly into her ear, letting my breath brush against her skin as she lay beside me. "Has your father ever mentioned anything... anything at all about your kingdom recently?"

"Hmm?" She turned her head lazily to face me, her long lashes fluttering as she blinked. "No, not really. I haven't received anything from him yet. Why do you ask?"

"Nothing in particular," I said. "I was just curious if... you know, if anything bad had happened back there."

"Well, I'm a bit worried too, with everything going on," she admitted, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear. "Bethlan Kingdom's not exactly big. But knowing my father, I'm sure he's fine."

She gave me a warm smile, the kind that tried to hide the unease behind it.

"If something had happened to him," she continued, "he would've contacted me right away. He'd tell me not to come back and to stay safe here."

That was... reassuring, I suppose.

Still, I'd heard whispers, or rather... vague reports of strange activity involving some of the magic knights stationed near that region.

Something about it felt off.

What exactly were the magic knights doing, gallivanting across the world like this, while their own homeland sat on the edge of instability? What kind of sense did that make?

Just as the thought settled heavily in my chest, my phone began to ring, its vibration thrumming against the nightstand like a warning.

I reached over, picked it up, and answered without even glancing at the caller ID.

"Hello?" I said, my tone neutral.

"Hi, Leon." The voice on the other end was soft and tentative. "Um... can you come over to my dorm for a moment? I really need your opinion on something. Is that okay? I hope I'm not interrupting or anything..."

It was Johanne.

"Well, you're not," I replied after a pause. "But... weren't you supposed to be meeting with your father today?"

"I was," she said quickly, a hint of tension in her voice. "But I really need to figure something out first. I've been going back and forth, thinking about whether I should show up as a man and confront him about how he changed my gender... or show up as a woman and face him with my real body."

A heavy silence lingered for a second.

Honestly, this wasn't the kind of thing that had to be said in person—it easily could've been a phone call. But from the sound of her voice, I could tell this meant something more to her.

"All right. I'll come," I said. "Just wait for me there."

"Okay. Thank you, Leon," she said gently, and then the line went silent.

I ended the call and turned to see Titania shifting her position on the bed.

"Johanne?" she asked, already knowing the answer.

"Yeah," I replied simply. "She said she wanted to talk."

With a low chuckle, Titania rolled over onto her stomach, her smooth, bare skin exposed as her hips swayed slightly. Her tone turned playful.

"Fufufu~ Are you planning on making hers as well?" she teased, flashing a wide, mischievous grin. "I mean, I did find it strange when she was still a man... but now that she's been revealed to be a woman all along? I think I'm totally on board with it."

She was clearly enjoying herself, toying with me in her usual flirty way.

"Well, I am a man of opportunity," I said with a grin, pulling my shirt over my shoulders. "And who wouldn't want the Sword Saint's heir all to themselves?"

"Leon, you bad boy," Titania purred, giggling as her legs kicked lightly against the bed.

My gaze dropped to her thick, round ass which was still firm and still flawless. I reached out without a word and delivered a sharp slap to it.

SMACK!

"Ahhh!" she moaned, her voice rising in pleasure as a red imprint of my hand began to bloom across her snow-white cheek.

The sound of that satisfying impact echoed faintly in the room, lingering for a few seconds longer than it should have.

With that little indulgence done, I finished getting dressed and walked out of the room, heading toward Johanne's dorm.

Chapter 705: Choose The Real You (1)

I finally made it to the dormitory.

The Gold Class dormitory, to be exact—the kind reserved for the elite, the prodigies, and those burdened with expectation.

Its towering frame stood proud beneath the orange glow of the descending sun, casting elongated shadows across the marble steps.

Every inch of it exuded prestige.

And right there, waiting for me near the grand entrance beneath the wide stone arch, stood Johanne.

She was motionless, like a statue carved from obsidian, dressed sharply in her academy uniform.

That black military uniform.

It clung to her tall frame with a cold precision, stiff in design, formal to the point of discomfort.

But the cut didn't quite match the curves she now possessed.

It was clearly tailored back when she was still a man, and the difference in body structure made it subtly awkward—just enough to notice.

The fabric folded strangely at the shoulders, and the buttons pulled ever so slightly at the chest, despite her efforts to conceal it.

Despite being female now, nothing about her screamed femininity.

In fact, it was quite the opposite.

She stood there, legs planted firmly, shoulders squared, chin lifted in that stiff, soldier-like posture that could've been taken straight from a training manual.

There was no elegance in her presence.

Her chest was bound tightly with cloth, the rough wrappings pressed so firmly against her skin that not even the outline of her breasts was visible.

It was flattened—intentionally and forcefully.

She didn't want anyone to see.

She didn't want to be seen.

When her eyes met mine, her expression softened.

She smiled.

It wasn't a wide smile, not radiant or charming. It was just subtle, controlled and almost hesitant.

The kind that told you more about what someone was holding back than what they were showing.

"I'm here. Sorry for being late," I said as I reached her.

"No. You're just on time," she replied, her voice calm and level, like always.

"Shall we go to your room, then? I don't think this is the best place to have a conversation."

The moment lingered.

Students were passing by, stepping through the dormitory doors, their voices a steady murmur of chatter and footsteps.

But I could feel their eyes with some being discreet but others not so much—drifting in our direction.

Specifically, toward Johanne.

Well, I suppose it was to be expected.

The news had already exploded across the internet.

The article revealing Johanne's true gender had spread like wildfire.

A figure everyone had respected as a man... only to be unmasked as a woman.

It was shocking.

That kind of revelation doesn't just fade away.

It sticks in people's minds. It festers in whispers and stares.

And because of that, we couldn't afford to talk out here.

Not when people were already whispering behind their hands, glancing sideways as they passed.

Without another word, we turned and began walking toward her room.

The silence between us was weighty—not awkward, just... dense. Or loaded, I guess. It was the silence of people preparing to say something important.

When we finally reached her door, she unlocked it and stepped aside, motioning for me to enter first.

The moment I stepped inside, I understood something about Johanne.

Her room was... incredibly simple.

Painfully so.

A neatly made single bed sat in the corner, clean white sheets pulled taut.

A couple of utilitarian cabinets lined the wall—probably holding folded uniforms and a few personal items. There was no decorations. No signs of personality either.

And on the wall hung a single item... a sword scabbard.

It wasn't decorative. It wasn't for show. It was used.

The whole room radiated a kind of disciplined minimalism... the kind you'd expect from someone who lived by the blade, who woke up to training and went to sleep to the rhythm of a strict mental code.

"Sorry. I haven't had the time to clean up lately. I've been... busy with a lot of stuff," she said, a faint blush touching her cheeks. The redness stood out against her pale skin.

"It's fine," I replied casually. "If this is what you call messy, you should see my room."

Mine wasn't disgusting, sure—but compared to this, it was a disaster zone. Heaven and earth.

If this was 'unclean' to her, then my room was basically a battlefield.

"For starters, do you want to have a seat?" she asked, gesturing to a simple chair near the wall.

I nodded and took the seat, the wooden legs creaking faintly as I leaned back.

She walked across the room and sat down on the far side—purposefully leaving some space between us.

It wasn't distance out of discomfort... more like formality.

She was preparing herself.

"So?" I began, eyes fixed on her. "What do you want to talk about?"

Of course, I already knew what was it.

She had told me over the phone.

Still, I played along.

I wanted to ease her in and give her room to speak. The kind of room she probably didn't have with anyone else.

"Uh... well..." she mumbled, glancing down for a moment before closing her eyes.

Then, after a few breaths, she opened them again and met my gaze.

"I want... to have you... um, I mean... I want you to help me decide, Leon."

"Why?" I asked her softly.

This wasn't my decision.

If she wanted to go back to being a man, I would understand.

I'd have to let go of the idea of fully dominating her—but I'd respect that choice.

If she wanted to stay a woman, that was fine too.

This wasn't about anyone else.

Not me.

Not the academy.

Not society.

This choice belonged to her—and only her.

It was her right to make.

She didn't need me for that.

"I want to reaffirm something," she said quietly.

Her eyes closed again, her breath hitching slightly like she was bracing for something.

"I want to understand what I really feel. I want to know which choice is the right one... and if that choice will lead to something good. I just... I really want to know."

Her voice wavered.

She was holding back so much.

There were so many questions and so much fear, maybe even guilt.

Honestly, I wasn't entirely sure what she was trying to say.

But I could see it in her eyes.

It was conflict.

A storm of doubt brewed behind those irises.

A man who had lived believing he was born male.

A woman who was now standing in her original skin.

Anyone in her position would be torn apart by that.

"I wanted to know..." she whispered, her voice trembling, almost cracking. "That's why... I called you over here. So that I could know..."

Her words trailed off, caught in her throat.

That tremble... it probably wasn't just nervousness. It was vulnerability. Fragility behind the mask of discipline.

I didn't interrupt her. I didn't rush her.

I just waited.

After a while... she finally spoke.

"...Can you have sex with me?" she asked.

Her voice cracked near the end, and the moment the words left her lips, she cast her eyes down to the floor, squeezing them shut as though trying to block out the embarrassment clawing up her spine.

Her fingers fumbled anxiously in her lap, twisting around each other, knuckles pale from how hard she was gripping.

"I know this must sound completely shocking," she continued, "but... I think I've been in love with you for a while now. Even back when I was still a man. I've never... never felt this way about anyone before. Not once. That's why I was so confused at first. I kept trying to deny it, trying to convince myself that it was something else. But I've finally realized what it really is. And even though it's a little shameful to admit... even though I was a man back then... I think I'm in love with you."

She bit her lower lip and let out a breath that shook with vulnerability.

"No... that's wrong. I know I'm in love with you. I think... I think I already knew it before I even admitted it to myself."

Then her mouth started moving too fast for her own thoughts to keep up.

She started spewing words.

Her words were rushed, frantic, almost like her brain was trying to dump everything before her courage ran out.

It all turned into a blur of jumbled phrases and half-formed sentences.

Her voice picked up in speed, stumbling over itself like a train going off the rails.

I couldn't even follow it anymore. It was just a mess of sounds.

"I—When I kissed you back then... I-I turned back into a woman. I didn't understand it at first, and it freaked me out, but... but after Miss Dorothea explained everything to me... it all made sense. I realized... I believe I'm in love with you."

I slowly stood up from my chair, not saying a word.

Her eyes flicked toward me, and the color visibly drained from her face.

"I-I see..." she stammered, her voice small and strained. "Even though I have the body of a woman now, I was still a man in your eyes. That... that kind of thing doesn't just change, does it?"

She blinked rapidly, her expression crumbling. It was clear that she thought I was rejecting her.

"You must be disgusted. Of course you would be. I'm sorry," she muttered, biting down hard on her words. "Just... please forget about it. Pretend I never said anything."

She started to rise from her seat, probably intending to end it all there and to run away before it hurt more.

But before she could take another step, I reached out and grabbed her hand.

A pause.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Huh...?" she blinked, startled.

"If you have sex with me... you might not be able to go back to being a man," I told her, my tone turning serious.

I wasn't talking about her body.

I was talking about something deeper—something beneath the skin.

The moment she experienced those feelings with me—those sensations, those emotions, those desires awakened as a woman—it would be something she couldn't unfeel.

She wouldn't be able to erase it from herself later, not even if she tried to return to the identity she once had.

That's why I needed her to be certain. This wasn't just about sex. It was about her choice and her path forward.

She went quiet.

Her throat moved as she swallowed hard—so hard, I could hear it.

It was like her saliva had thickened into syrup. She winced a little, struggling to get it down.

Then she nodded, slowly... but with resolve.

"I'm sure," she said softly. "I want to know... my choice."

Chapter 706: Choose The Real You (2)

Johanne's POV

The cold water cascaded down my bare skin, each droplet crashing against my body like tiny needles.

I stood there beneath the stream, letting it pour over me, as if it could wash away the confusion, the doubts and the fragmented thoughts swirling inside my mind.

This body... the body I now possessed...

It was a woman's body.

And that realization—no matter how many times I whispered it to myself—still sent shivers down my spine.

Not from the temperature, but from the sheer weight of everything I'd come to accept. Or rather, everything I could no longer deny.

I was still struggling to process it all.

Still wrestling with the truth I had been circling around for so long.

I had become this.

No...

I had always been this.

Looking back, perhaps it had never been a transformation.

Maybe it had always been inevitable—fate, reality, or perhaps, truth—finally pulling me into its embrace.

I had been a woman ever since I was born.

Not by force, not by illusion... but by something far deeper.

I raised my eyes toward the mirror in front of me, its surface fogged and hazy from the rising steam.

My hand moved instinctively, wiping a streak across it.

And there—slowly—my reflection emerged.

What stared back at me was soft, unfamiliar, and yet... painfully familiar.

My facial structure had softened.

Rounded cheekbones.

A slender jawline.

Lashes that seemed too long.

Lips that looked naturally pink.

I studied them with a quiet intensity.

Did I still resemble the man I used to be?

Was there even a trace of him left?

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't bring his face to mind anymore.

That version of me—his expressions and his features—had started to blur.

Like a distant dream that dissolved the moment you tried to remember it.

Because for over a year now, I had lived as a woman.

No.

That wasn't quite it.

The truth was... I had returned to being a woman.

Because this—this flesh, this skin, as well as this soul—it had always been mine.

I had always been a woman.

Through and through.

In every breath.

In every heartbeat.

That was the reason for the aching cramps that visited me each month without fail.

That was why seeing Leon standing close to another woman felt like someone was tightening a vice around my chest, squeezing until I could barely breathe.

It all made sense now.

This—what I had become—was never a mistake.

The person I was when I lived as a man... that was the lie. The mask. The act.

This body—this soul—this was real.

My gaze dropped lower, scanning the lines and curves of my body as they reflected in the mirror.

Wet skin glistened under the light.

The faint outline of toned muscles clung beneath the softness of my shape.

Would this body... be enough to make a man call me sexy?

I had trained harder than anyone I knew.

I pushed myself beyond what my body could endure, even back then—when I was still a woman the first time around.

Maybe not just sexy.

Maybe... my body could be described as muscular.

Muscular... but still a woman's.

Would Leon like that? Would he be disgusted?

No. He probably already found me repulsive.

And yet... what could I do?

These muscles—they were a result of years of discipline. Years of effort. Years spent thinking I had to be a man.

Now... it wasn't something I could undo.

Even if I wanted to.

And truthfully, it was far too late to think about that.

Because today... I would finally find the answer I'd been chasing.

Today would be the day I would know whether I wanted to remain a woman... or go back to being a man.

Today, I would have sex with Leon.

And no—this wasn't a reckless decision made in the throes of emotion.

I had already spoken to Tris.

I had looked her in the eyes and told her everything.

"If what you want is to stay with Leon, that's fine with me," she had said gently, with a calmness that startled me. "For years, I've been thinking... that I wanted to set you free. Free from your role as the Sword Saint's heir... and free from the responsibility you feel toward me as my husband."

She smiled at me as she said that. It was a soft, melancholic smile.

"But," she added, her voice barely above a whisper, "in truth... you don't love me at all, do you?"

I remembered how I had sucked in a deep breath when she asked that. It was like something had been yanked out of me. Like I'd been stripped bare in a single second.

"Fufufu... don't worry, Johanne," she said, her tone light, almost teasing. "I feel the same. I think I have feelings for you as a friend... but anything beyond that? I couldn't force it. I've known, even since we were little. I've always known you were a girl."

Then she looked at me, serious again.

"If your mind can't decide what path to take... then why not follow your heart instead? I know how you feel about Leon. But if you choose duty and become a man again, you're afraid that you'll lose him. Because love between two men is considered taboo. Isn't that why you keep hesitating? So why not stay as a woman? Don't let your mind shackle you. Follow your heart. It already knows the way."

Now, in the present moment, I stared at myself once more.

The bathroom lights hummed above me, the sound of water still dripping onto the floor echoing through the stillness.

This was the day.

The day Leon would make me into a woman—not just in body, but in soul.

And it would be the moment I would finally make my decision.

One way or the other.

With only a towel clinging to my damp skin, I stepped out of the bathroom—and stood before him.

Fully exposed.

Completely vulnerable.

Ready to face everything.

Even if it shattered me.

Leon's POV

Johanne stepped out of the bathroom, the only thing shielding her flawless body from view was a single, thin towel hanging precariously around her upper body.

She had discarded the usual cloth that bound her breasts, and now the towel barely did enough to conceal her curves.

It clung loosely but couldn't hide the undeniable truth that her body was nothing short of breathtaking.

Her breasts were firm, full, and impossibly large.

The way they pushed against the fabric, pressing just enough to tease the eye, sent a low heat rolling through my gut.

The sheer sight of them was overwhelming.

It was almost cruel how much power they had over me, without even trying.

Only that thin strip of towel stood between me and the stunning reality of her bare skin.

She spoke softly, breaking the silence that had settled between us, as if she could feel my gaze lingering too long on her.

"I'm... too muscular for a female, right? I'm sorry," she said, a hint of vulnerability threading her voice. "If I'd known I was a woman all along, I would've trained more... carefully."

Her words were quiet and unsure, like she feared I'd recoil, or worse, judge her.

But the truth was far from that.

I wasn't bothered. Not even a little.

If anything, I was fucking captivated.

My mouth felt dry, my heart hammered in my chest just from seeing her like this.

"No," I said firmly, cutting off any self-doubt before it could take hold. "I'm honestly impressed... amazed. Your body is incredible."

Her cheeks flamed crimson as she looked down, shy but somehow relieved.

"T-Thank you... that means a lot. Really."

I could tell my words had eased some of the tension knotting her shoulders.

Good. I wanted her to feel safe.

She looked up at me, her eyes searching and uncertain.

"W-What do we do, Leon?" she asked, voice small but earnest.

It was clear she had no clue what was coming next... what steps to take.

That's why I was here.

To guide her. To show her.

"For starters," I said softly, "lie down here."

She hesitated only a moment before obeying, lowering herself gently onto the bed.

The towel still hugged her body, but her shyness was palpable.

"Show me, Johanne," I urged, trying to keep my tone gentle.

"But..."

"Don't worry," I reassured her. "Your body is amazing. Besides..."

I pulled back my pants just enough to reveal my cock.

It stood at full attention, flushed and throbbing.

"Ah...!"

She gasped, eyes widening in shock and awe at the sight of it.

"My cock's hard for you right now," I said, voice low and certain.

She swallowed hard, clearly nervous but intrigued.

"I-It's really big, huh?"

I grinned. "Yours was big too when you were a male."

"T-That was just..."

"I'm kidding," I cut in with a teasing smile. "Now then..."

Her breath hitched as she gulped again.

Slowly, carefully, she pulled the towel away, revealing herself fully to me.

And I swallowed hard.

There was no denying it.

She was stunning.

Lean and fit, every curve sculpted perfectly.

Her waist cinched in dramatically, hips flaring out. She has an hourglass shape that demanded attention.

"For starters..." I said, leaning down, my hands gently taking hold of her legs.

"I'm going to get you ready..."

Then, without hesitation, I lowered my face toward her pussy.

Chapter 707: Choose The Real You (3)

I dragged my tongue slowly across the smooth, delicate folds of her pussy, savoring every inch of it with my tongue.

"Ah...!"

Her entire body jolted in response, a soft, trembling gasp slipping from her lips as my tongue made contact.

I felt it immediately... the way her entrance twitched under the touch, a subtle but undeniable pulse that told me just how sensitive she was.

Her body reacted instinctively and vulnerably.

And then the scent hit me. It was a raw, intoxicating, unmistakably feminine scent.

It was the smell of a woman.

There was a tangy sharpness to it, layered with a faint citrusy sweetness that clung to the air like perfume.

The moment it reached my nose, my mouth began to water.

The urge to bury myself deeper into her only intensified.

"Hnnnghhh~!"

She moaned again, the sound shaky and sweet.

The legs I held gently quivered in my grip, her thighs tightening slightly as she tried to handle the sudden waves of pleasure.

"Are you okay, Johanne?" I murmured, glancing up at her.

"Mmm..." she gave a small, almost embarrassed nod. "I'm fine... I just... didn't expect you to lick it..." Her voice was breathy and unsure.

"Well," I said, offering her a soft smile, "I'd rather get you ready first, so it won't be too hard on you."

"O-Okay..."

With her quiet agreement, I leaned in again.

This time, I took my time, savoring her.

Her pussy tasted as unique as she smelled.

It was slightly tangy, kissed with that citrusy edge, and just the faintest note of salt.

It was delicious, to say the least.

My tongue moved eagerly, slow at first, then firmer, teasing and tasting, determined to draw out every reaction.

"Hnng, ahhh~ ahhh!"

Her voice began to rise, inching up into a higher register as her hips shifted, her body growing more sensitive with every lick.

I could feel her pussy getting wetter, her juices coating my tongue as I continued my rhythm.

The lewd sounds of my tongue working her echoed quietly in the room, the slick, wet, and utterly obscene sound.

Her moans mixed into the air, melodic and addictive, ringing in my ears like a beautiful bell I never wanted to stop hearing.

"Ahhh~ Ahh... S-Something is... coming...~!"

Her voice caught, breath hitching sharply as her body suddenly tensed.

She arched her back slowly, her spine lifting off the mattress in a graceful, trembling curve as if trying to escape the pleasure—and failing.

I kept her steady, my grip firm on her thighs, my mouth relentless against her pussy.

My fingers dug into her soft skin as her legs tightened. Her toes curled with perfect, involuntary tension.

"Ahhh...~ Ahhh, ah, ah, ah, ah, ahhh!!!"

It came out in quick bursts, the moans caught between confusion and bliss. And then she snapped.

Her hand shot out, grabbing the back of my head with sudden strength, pushing me down harder against her soaked slit.

"Hyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaannnnnn~!!!"

She cried out, her body jerking violently as her back arched to the limit—like a bow drawn tight and ready to snap.

Her pussy erupted.

A gush of warm, clear liquid spilled from her, a wave that hit me without warning.

I drank every drop without hesitation.

She tasted divine. Sweet, tangy and primal. I couldn't stop even if I tried.

Finally, her muscles gave out, her body going limp. She collapsed onto the bed, her breathing ragged and heavy.

"Haaa~, haaa~... W-What was that...?" she asked between panting breaths, her chest rising and falling.

"You just orgasmed. Have you ever felt that before?"

"...No," she admitted softly, eyes wide with wonder.

"Did you like it?" I asked gently.

"I did..."

She looked like she'd just stumbled upon one of life's most sacred secrets.

Her face was dazed, glowing, eyes distant with afterglow.

But we weren't done.

Not yet.

Now that she was soaked, her body trembling and glistening, it was time for the next step.

I reached down and lifted my cock so it was level with her gaze, the thick shaft twitching slightly with anticipation.

Then—

"Ah... Y-You're going to do it now...?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

I stroked myself slowly in front of her, letting her see every motion.

"Yes," I said simply.

She squeaked and quickly brought her hands up to cover her face, clearly overwhelmed by everything.

Then... she lowered them slightly.

"Okay..." she whispered.

With her permission, I leaned down and positioned myself above her.

She was tall, and though my body didn't fully cover hers, we still fit—perfectly. There was no awkwardness as well as hesitation.

Just heat and readiness.

I guided the head of my cock to her entrance, pressing it gently against her soaked lips.

She shivered violently the moment it touched her, her breath catching.

"I'm going to enter now," I said. "Is that okay?"

She turned her head to the side for a moment before giving me a small, silent nod.

That was all I needed.

She didn't stop me.

There was only one thing left to do.

I pushed my hips forward, slowly.

Her warm folds opened for me, parting around the head of my cock, welcoming me inside.

It was the beginning.

Then...

Slowly, inch by inch, my cock was swallowed deeper by her warm, slick heat.

I could feel her pussy lips parting gently around me, like soft velvet giving way without resistance with her body almost begging to be filled, as if any tightness or barrier was fading into nothingness.

"Ah...!"

With deliberate slowness, I pushed further inside.

The sensation of her inner walls stretching and parting smoothly for me was exquisite.

It was as if they welcomed me, sliding open willingly with every tiny advance, teasing my senses with their softness.

From the corner of my eye, I caught her face... or the faint flicker of discomfort mingled with anticipation as each inch sank deeper.

Her brow furrowed slightly, a quick wince betraying the newness of the feeling.

Her fingers clenched the sheets beneath her with white-knuckled intensity as I continued to ease into her, the wet warmth engulfing me completely.

"Ah...! Hngghhh!"

Then, finally—I bottomed out.

My cock pressed past the last barrier, sinking deep until the very tip kissed her cervix which was a tender, hidden place that only I could reach.

"Are you okay?" I whispered, watching her closely.

She winced but forced a soft, reassuring smile.

"I'm alright."

"Think you can handle it if I start moving?" I asked gently.

She nodded, breath steady despite the flush on her cheeks. "I think I'm fine."

That was all the permission I needed.

I began to move.

My first thrust slipped in slow and sure.

"Ah...!"

The second drove deeper with a sharper edge.

"Nn...! Nghhh!"

The third—

"Ahhh, ahhh~!"

Each stroke drew a new, delicious expression from Johanne's face. Starting with her lips parting, eyes fluttering, and then with a shiver running through her frame.

Her pleasure was intoxicating, fueling a hunger inside me that demanded more.

I grabbed her legs, lifting them to rest over my shoulders, opening her even wider as I pressed in deeper.

With every pounding thrust, her moans grew louder, richer and dripping with wet heat and desperation.

"Ah, ahh, ah, ah, ahhh, ah, ah, ah, ahhh, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ahhh~!!"

The room filled with the slick sounds of our bodies colliding with the wet slap of flesh meeting flesh blending with the melodic rise and fall of her moans.

"Ahh...! Ahh, ah, ahh...! W-Wha...!? Ahhh! AhhH~!!"

Though it had started with a rough edge, her cries now carried pure, unfiltered pleasure.

So I picked up the pace, driving harder and faster.

"Ahhh...! Yahhhnnn~ AhhhH! Ahhh, ahh~! Ah, ah, ahh...!"

"Does it feel good?" I grunted, my hips pounding into her relentlessly.

"Ah, yahhhnnn~! Ahh, ahhh... y-yess... it feels... it feels good~!!!"

I gripped her hips tighter, feeling the muscles tense under my hands as her toes curled and buckled just like before.

My hands sank into her soft flesh, holding her steady as I fucked her deeper in this position.

"Ahhnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn~!!!"

Suddenly, she shattered.

Her pussy clenched hard around me, and a gush of hot, salty juice spurted out, soaking my cock instantly.

I eased back, letting her rest, breathing heavy and ragged.

"Haa... haa...~"

Her chest rose and fell rapidly, her face flushed and dazed as if they were lost in the swirling haze of post-orgasm bliss.

I pulled my cock free for a moment, letting her catch her breath, but then—

"Where are you going...?" she murmured, eyes glazed with lust, pupils shaped like hearts. "We're still going to continue, right?"

Her legs locked tight around my waist, pulling me close again.

Maybe all her hard training gave her this stamina—the ability to go on even after cumming so hard.

But it didn't turn me off.

If anything, it made me even more desperate.

"Of course," I promised, my voice low and rough, before diving back in and pounding her with renewed hunger.

Chapter 708: Choose The Real You (4)

I slammed my hips forward, my cock plunging deep into her slick pussy with every thrust.

The wet, obscene sound of her soaked folds squelching around me mixed with the rhythmic slaps of skin against skin.

It echoed softly throughout the room, bouncing off the walls like a sinful melody, wrapping us both in heat and lust.

"Ahnghhh~ ah, ahhh, ahhH~! Ah, it feels so good...~ S-So deep, hmmnnn~!"

Johanne's voice trembled, her words spilling out in broken moans as her head tilted back.

Her face, once composed, gradually contorted into one of pure, unfiltered pleasure.

Her expression was a twisted blend of ecstasy and helpless surrender, every muscle in her body responding to the way I hammered her from above, deliberately angling my hips to hit that sweet, sensitive spot deep inside her over and over again.

My hands were gripping her hips with increasing force, my fingers digging into her smooth skin like I was trying to hold on for dear life.

Her legs wrapped tightly around my lower body, locking me into place with a strength that told me she didn't want me pulling away—not even a little.

"Ahhh...! Ah, ah, ahh, ahh, yann"

Her voice cracked, her breath catching on every thrust.

One of her arms lifted instinctively, her delicate hand reaching up and gripping the pillow under her head.

She was using it as a brace, her knuckles turning white from how tightly she held on, trying to ground herself through the overwhelming waves of pleasure that racked her body.

That one motion exposed her upper body more clearly to me.

Her breasts bounced with every thrust, heavy and full, moving with a hypnotic rhythm.

And between that movement, I caught sight of something else—her armpit, glistening faintly with sweat.

There was something about that sight that made my restraint crack even further.

The subtle dip and outline of her underarm... It called to me in a way that felt primal.

Without thinking, I leaned forward, my hand wrapping around her soft but toned upper arm.

I brought my lips to that sensitive spot and dragged my tongue along the warm, sweat-kissed skin of her armpit.

"Hyaann~!! Ah...! W-Wha...?!"

Her whole body jolted violently, her back arching as her pussy clenched down on my cock so hard it felt like she was trying to milk me dry then and there.

Armpits were a secret weakness for some women.

A hidden erogenous zone that, once touched the right way, could unravel their entire mind.

Johanne was one of them.

"W-Wait, Leon...! Ahhh, fuuu~ Nnn..."

Her voice wavered between resistance and surrender.

But I didn't stop.

I couldn't.

The scent of her skin—clean and faintly musky from sweat mixed with a lingering trace of body soap—drove me insane.

It was intoxicating, drawing me in deeper, clouding all reason.

I lapped at her armpit again, tasting the faint salt of her sweat.

Her skin twitched beneath my tongue.

Her thighs clamped tighter around my waist, and I responded by pounding harder and deeper.

The friction, the heat, the desperate way her body clung to me—

It was maddening.

Her full breasts mashed against my chest as I leaned forward, the soft flesh pressing against my skin.

I could feel her nipples beginning to harden, poking out with sensitive tension.

When I finally pulled away from her armpit, a thin string of saliva still clung between my lips and her skin.

It was slick, glistening, and connecting us for just a moment longer before it snapped.

I'd made a mess of her.

She turned her face toward me, cheeks flushed red, embarrassment and arousal swirling in her expression like a storm.

"P-Please, stop doing that..."

Her voice was breathy and weak—but so fucking cute I could barely hold myself back.

This was the Sword Saint's Heir.

The woman who had sworn to live and die by the sword.

Who had chosen a path of relentless training, cold focus, and unmatched strength.

And right now, I was breaking her down with nothing but my cock and touch.

I kept pounding into her, watching her tits bounce again with each deep stroke.

I couldn't take it anymore—

I reached out and pinched her hardened nipples between my fingers.

"Nnnh, nggghhhh, ah, ahhh, fuuuuh... nghhh..."

Her voice hitched with every twist and roll of my fingers.

I leaned in, taking one of those swollen peaks into my mouth and sucked hard.

"Nghh... Nnnhhh~!"

Her legs, still wrapped around my waist, yanked me forward again, forcing my cock even deeper inside her dripping cunt.

I dragged my tongue around the areola, flicking it against her stiff nipple before sucking again.

I tugged gently with my lips, and the flesh yielded to me easily, as if begging for more.

"Ah... N-No it feels... ahhh~! Ahhhh! Ah, ah, ah, ahh, ah, ah...~"

Her moans turned delirious.

Her pupils dilated and then shifted—becoming faintly heart-shaped as her body completely submitted to the pleasure.

We were lost in it.

A trance where nothing else existed.

Just the feeling of our sweaty, overheated bodies grinding and slamming together in rhythm.

Her skin was unbelievably soft—yet firm from training.

A body sculpted for the sword but now trembling under me, being reshaped by something else entirely.

It reminded me of Rose's form... but Johanne's was firmer, more battle-hardened, and just as addicting.

I slid my hands down to grab her thighs again and started thrusting faster, harder and relentless.

Splurch! Splurch! Splurch! Splurch! Splurch! Splurch! Splurch! Splurch!

The raw, wet sound of my cock bottoming out inside her echoed sharply now, louder, and drowning everything else.

She looked up at me, teary-eyed, mouth open as her body shook beneath mine.

And then—

"Ahhhhh! Ah, ah, s-something is coming again...~ Ahhhh!"

The way she looked with her expression twisted in pleasure, her voice trembling, her body twitching—it was too much.

"I'm about to cum too..."

I growled, my voice hoarse and low.

I kept thrusting, pounding, and grinding—until I finally leaned down and kissed her.

Her lips parted for me instantly, welcoming me in.

Our tongues clashed, twisted together, rolling around in a sloppy, desperate mess of saliva and heat.

My mind hit its limit.

My vision blurred.

I couldn't hold it back any longer.

"Mnn~!!!!"

She came first.

Her pussy spasmed and tightened like a vice, clenching down with such force I could barely stay in control.

That pushed me over the edge.

I exploded inside her.

"Ah...~! S-So hot...!!"

My cum flooded her womb, thick and scalding, filling her completely.

The pressure made her abdomen rise slightly with her insides stretching to take it all in.

Well...

We didn't stop there.

No, we kept going, fucking relentlessly, exploring every angle, pushing ourselves to new heights with every thrust and moan.

What struck me most about Johanne's body was her incredible stamina and her fierce endurance.

Even after I had made her cum multiple times, each wave of pleasure seemed to barely scratch the surface.

She was insatiable, like a fire that never burned out.

"Ahhh... yannn~! Ahhh, ah, ah, ah...~!"

I held her close in a tight spooning position, my arm wrapped firmly around her thighs, lifting her legs high so I could drive my cock deep inside her from behind, reaching every inch with forceful precision.

The bed beneath us was drenched, soaked through with sweat and slick fluids, our passion leaving its unmistakable mark everywhere.

"Nghhahaahhhh~~ ahhh~!"

Her voice shattered the air in broken, soaring octaves, each sound trembling with the intensity of her orgasms as I pushed her further, guiding her over the edge again and again.

Without hesitation, I pulled her up, pressing her to her feet.

Spinning her around, I plunged into her from behind while she stood, our bodies pressed tight.

"Ahhh, ahhh, ahh, fuahhh, ahnn~ Ayhh...! Nghaaaa~!"

The wet smack of her ass against me echoed sharply around the room, a rhythmic pounding that sounded like thunder in the quiet space.

And then...

We shifted again.

This time, she took control in a reverse cowgirl position, straddling me, her hips riding as I thrust upward into her raw, wet pussy.

Her hands braced against my chest for balance, steadyng herself as her breasts bounced wildly with every movement, soft curves rising and falling in perfect time with our joined rhythm.

My hands gripped the supple flesh of her hips, digging in deep as I held her steady, feeling the heat and the pulse of her body beneath my palms.

"Wahh! My... ahhh~ Ahhh! Ah, ahh, mnnn~! Ahh, oohh! Ahhh, ah, ah, ahhh!"

I sat up abruptly, wrapping my hands around her ass, squeezing the soft, yielding flesh hard, pulling her closer.

She arched her back against me, pressing her warm skin to mine, then glanced over her shoulder and silently begged for my tongue.

I didn't hesitate.

I kissed her deeply, our mouths melding in a wet, hungry exchange.

My hand slid along her side, down to find the sensitive bundle of nerves at her clit.

I circled it with my fingers, teasing and stroking in tandem with my steady thrusts.

The tension between us built to a fever pitch—

I was on the brink of exploding again.

"Fuuu... ha...~"

Her pupils dilated, transforming into heart-shaped pools of pure, unfiltered desire.

She seemed to dissolve into nothing but sensation, lost in the perfect storm of pleasure and need.

And then, I lost control.

I came hard inside her, my cum flooding her tight pussy for the fourth time.

"Cum... Cumming~!!!"

She cried out, voice raw and breathless as she took every drop.

I pulled out slowly, the wet plop echoing as my cock slipped free from her drenched, swollen cunt.

A thick stream of warm cum dribbled out from between her legs.

Chapter 709: Choose The Real You (5)

Johanne and I lay together in a quiet aftermath, our bodies tangled beneath the still-warm sheets, basking in that serene glow of post-coital bliss.

The soft rise and fall of her chest matched the rhythm of her breaths with them being calm, steady, and full of satisfaction.

Her delicate frame rested against my arm, her head nestled perfectly into the crook of my shoulder, like it was always meant to be there.

Her eyes were closed, her expression peaceful, with the faintest smile tugging at the corners of her lips.

It felt... surreal.

Like the world outside had paused just for the two of us in this moment.

"So? What do you think?" I asked, breaking the silence with a voice that was both curious and careful.

Her eyes fluttered open slightly. "What do you mean, 'what do I think?'" she asked back, her tone soft and almost teasing.

"Well... you said you wanted to have sex with me so you could figure things out, right?" I said, looking at her face, trying to read her expression. "So, what's your decision?"

She shifted slightly, pulling away just enough to adjust the blanket that clung to her bare body.

The silky fabric had started to slip, threatening to reveal more of her skin, but she tugged it back up with gentle hands, keeping herself modest—if only barely.

"Well... for starters, I feel..."

"What?"

"Rejuvenated, I guess?" she answered after a short pause, as if searching for the right word to describe it.

"Rejuvenated how?" I asked, intrigued.

"It's just... it's who I am," she said quietly, gazing down at her hand resting on the sheets. "At my core, I've always been a woman. Even though my father forced that change on me and turned me into a man, my body still acted like a woman's. I had periods... I still felt emotions like love... deep, vulnerable love."

Her voice trembled slightly as she lifted her gaze to meet mine.

"And because of that... I really feel like I should live my life fully as a woman now," she continued, her voice steadier this time. "To leave behind who I was before... completely." Her eyes flickered with guilt. "Though... I still feel bad. Guilty, even. For doing this to Tris—she married me, after all. But..."

"But what?" I asked gently, brushing her hair back from her face.

She inhaled deeply, cheeks flushed with color. "The happiness I feel right now... it's making that guilt slowly disappear," she confessed with a shy blush. "I don't understand it all that well myself... It's just that, right now, being beside you like this... I'm genuinely happy."

She nestled her head closer to my chest again, resting against me with a softness that made my heart skip a beat.

There was something deeply comforting about having her body so close.

"So... are you going to stay like this forever?" I asked, my voice low.

"Well," she began, her tone a bit playful, "seeing as the entire kingdom probably knows the truth about me now, there's really no point in pretending anymore. I mean, would you prefer me to be some muscular guy instead?"

I didn't even allow myself to imagine that.

The thought of lying naked in bed with a man, pressed up against me like this—it was enough to make my brain scream in protest.

If that image got into my head, I knew I'd be haunted by it forever. No way in hell.

"Yeah... no thanks," I muttered.

"In the end, it's your choice," I told her after a moment. "Whether you stay as the man you once were, or live as the woman you were always meant to be. Either way, it's up to you."

She grinned.

And for some reason, that grin was radiant. It was full of confidence and something undeniably beautiful.

"I'm going to choose the real me," she said with conviction. "This right here... this is the real me. The me who is your woman."

Her body curled in closer once more, and her hand gently traced its way to my chest, resting there like it belonged.

She looked so calm... so content... like all the chaos and confusion of her past had melted away in the warmth of this bed.

Then suddenly—

"Heheheee~"

A bizarre giggle rang through the air.

I blinked, frowning. "Uh... what the fuck was that, Johanne?"

Her eyes widened a bit, and she scratched her cheek nervously with a finger.

"I-I'm sorry, Leon..." she mumbled.

I let out a long, slow sigh, already feeling that something ridiculous was about to happen.

I extended my hand and used wind magic to force open the nearby closet door.

A whoosh of air swept through the room—and out came a body tumbling forward.

"Uwaaaaah!"

A shocked yelp echoed as the figure crashed onto the floor, landing forehead-first with a nasty thud.

There she was. A short-haired, wearing glasses, and sporting a sharp hime cut.

It was none other than Johanne's wife.

Tris.

"Ouch... That hurt..." she groaned, still face-down on the ground. Her voice was muffled against the floor, but her tone carried an odd sense of satisfaction. "Hehehe~ But man, that was a hell of a show! Premium content for my web novel, if I do say so myself!"

With an exaggerated motion, she pushed herself up and stood, laughing through her nose in that creepy, nasally way of hers.

Blood was dripping from her nose—and judging by the sparkle in her eyes, it wasn't from the fall.

"Oh, it's going to be amazing! My fans are going to love this!"

I stared at her, still completely naked under the blanket, trying to make sense of this fever dream.

"Tris, what the hell are you even doing here?" I asked, my voice tight. "Don't tell me... you watched the entire thing?"

"Hehehe! Of course I did! There's no way I'd pass up on the chance to witness some male-on-male action! Well, okay, since Johanne's technically a woman now, I guess it's not exactly man-on-man... but it still has that essence to it, you know? She used to be a guy, after all! That gives it the perfect spice! And with all the juicy stuff I got from watching this, I can finally update my story with some real heat!"

"Wait... did you just say you're writing a web novel now?"

I blinked in disbelief. No way this was real. Were things like that really starting to pop up in this world?

"Well, yeah!" she replied, like it was the most obvious thing ever. "I submitted my first draft to a publishing company, but they rejected it instantly—those snobs wouldn't know a masterpiece if it bit them in the ass. But then, I found this amazing site online where you can just post your stories directly! And people read them! I already have tons of fans! Look, look!"

She pulled out her phone with a proud grin, holding it up for me to see.

She didn't even acknowledge the fact that I was still lying there, completely naked.

I glanced at the screen.

And what I saw there made my heart stop.

My eyes widened in pure, undiluted horror.

Chapter 710: Confrontation (1)

What I was seeing right now... was something so utterly insane, so wildly disturbing, that it shouldn't have ever seen the light of day. '

And yet, there it was... posted to thousands upon thousands of people online.

My eyes twitched.

My brain felt like it momentarily shut down from the sheer disbelief.

"The hell is this hideous thing?" I finally managed to croak, my voice caught between horror and exhaustion.

"What do you mean, 'hideous thing'?" Tris whipped around with a huff. "What are you calling a hideous thing, huh?!"

Her brows were furrowed, her expression somewhere between offended and confused, as if she genuinely had no idea why I looked like I just witnessed the end of the world.

Whatever kind of thoughts were spinning in her chaotic little head right now, there was no way they even came close to matching the absolute storm going off inside mine.

I blinked slowly, trying to process what was in front of me.

Seriously... what was this?

A digital title glared back at me from the screen like a cursed artifact: "I Put My Sword into the Swordsman's Scabbard."

I felt my jaw clench. Who the fuck wrote this?

But no—worse. Who the fuck drew this?

Because that illustration... that cursed, wildly inappropriate, utterly humiliating illustration... looked exactly like me.

And right there beside me in the image—Johanne. Except in her male version.

And that wasn't even the worst part. No. The moment I saw the view count, my stomach dropped like a stone.

Almost a million views.

I was numb. The number stared back like a punchline to a joke I wasn't in on.

And the reviews—there were nearly a hundred of them.

Enthusiastic, five-star, glowing reviews.

People were out there, praising this wild fanfiction-turned-web-novel like it was the second coming of literature.

"This is a masterpiece, Leon! A masterpiece! My masterpiece!" Tris beamed like she had just won the damn Nobel Prize. "So many people are praising the writing! And the love story between Leon and Johanne—it just keeps blossoming and blossoming!"

I just stood there, mouth slightly open, blinking like an idiot. My brain refused to reboot.

"You didn't even bother to change the names?" I asked, my voice low, flat—already drained of emotion. "I would've honestly felt better if you at least tried to tweak them slightly. Like you did before. But now? You didn't even try?"

She just shrugged, completely unfazed. "You don't need to worry, Leon. This is a work of fiction."

I stared at her in silence as she continued.

"Names, characters, places, and incidents are purely products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental."

She said that last part like she had it memorized. Probably copy-pasted it from a disclaimer screen.

"You and Johanne having the same names as the characters in this fiction is completely coincidental," she added with another shrug. "You don't have to worry about it."

I let out a heavy sigh, the kind that came from the very depths of my soul.

It was seriously messed up—but honestly? I didn't even have the energy left to deal with it. My mind was already drowning in the absurdity.

Then, out of nowhere, Tris casually said, "But man... you've got a nice cock, huh?"

"...Why the hell were you even looking?" I asked.

"No reason," she said smoothly, waving a hand like it was no big deal. "I just can't believe that thing actually went inside Johanne. Did it hurt?" she asked, tilting her head toward her.

"T-Tris! You can't just ask stuff like that!" Johanne squeaked, her face going crimson as she quickly pulled the blanket up until it covered the lower half of her face. "It's... it's embarrassing! B-But... yes, it hurt a little... but it felt good eventually."

The tone in her voice softened toward the end, like the memory of it was already warming her up again.

Tris leaned in, her eyes glinting with a wild, teasing spark. "Is he good at it? I mean, just from what I saw earlier, it's obvious Leon's good at sex. The way you were moaning so loud—girl, it was something else. But I still wanna hear it from you. Is he really good?"

"T-Tris!" Johanne's entire face was beet red now, her eyes darting toward me in panic as she buried herself even deeper into the blanket. "I already told you! You can't ask something like that!"

Tris didn't even flinch. She just turned to me with this devilish, knowing grin that made my spine shiver. That expression... that dumb, shining, too-excited grin on her face...

There it was. Her full-blown fujoshi mode.

"I can't believe you two went that far and actually had sex," she said, her cheeks flushed with excitement. "And I've gotta admit... I really enjoyed the show."

She leaned back slightly, her eyes glazing over like she was daydreaming, voice dreamy.

"Hey... is this what it feels like to be a cuck watching their husband getting fucked?" she asked suddenly, her voice way too serious for comfort. "Like... that was wild. Even my heart started pounding."

Then she looked at me again, mouth curling into that stupid, smug grin. "Seeing you on top of Johanne like that—damn, Leon. You're a beast. No wonder you've got so many women around you. You even managed to get that Black Witch on your side. That was really, really surprising!"

As she ranted, a single droplet of drool trailed down the side of her cheek. A nosebleed began to trickle from her left nostril, totally unbothered as she wore that dopey grin like a badge of honor.

Honestly... she'd probably be a dumbass, but a fun one to keep around.

Johanne had finally made up her mind.

She was going home.

Specifically—back to the home she shared with the Sword Saint.

She was ready now. Ready to face him. Ready to confront everything.

Earlier today, the entire front entrance of the Sword Saint's mansion had been swarmed with people—journalists, concerned citizens, gossiping neighbors. Everyone was clamoring for answers. But the Sword Saint hadn't said a single word.

Not one.

I had no idea what kind of thoughts were churning inside that man's mind. But Johanne... she seemed to understand.

Because that man was—after all—her father.

"I'm going now, Leon," she said softly, her smile gentle but full of resolve.

"You want me to come with you?" I asked, standing beside her.

She shook her head. "No. I can handle this by myself."

And then... she paused.

"Um..."

Her cheeks turned a soft pink as she looked at me, lips slightly parted.

I didn't need her to say anything else. I already knew.

I leaned in and kissed her—slow, warm, and full of all the emotion words couldn't capture.

"Uhehehe~"

That ridiculous, giddy laugh from the side broke the silence.

Of course... it was Tris.

Watching us the entire time.