

The World 951

Chapter 951: Elven Reverse Gangbang - Asuza, Hilda, Frey, Verra, and Serra Part - (8)

Hilda looked a little lost when I mentioned "doggy style." It wasn't surprising—there was no way she'd know the word. But despite her confusion, her body seemed to move on pure instinct. She placed both hands on the edge of the tub, arching her back slightly, and in that moment, she presented me with the perfect view of her ass.

God, Hilda's body was enough to make any man's self-control snap. She was built like temptation itself—curves in all the right places, a waist that narrowed before flaring into wide hips, and breasts that were full and heavy, bouncing subtly with her movements. Seeing her bent over like that, offering herself without saying much, was almost too much. My cock was already straining, and the sight of her round, firm ass pushed me right to the edge of madness.

I reached out and grabbed her, palms sinking into her soft flesh. Her ass was plush yet firm, the kind that gave way to my grip but still pushed back, and the excess squeezed out between my fingers. I couldn't help but knead her, savoring the way her body responded. Every curve was perfect. I found myself staring, admiring the beauty of her shape and the way she moved beneath me.

"P-Please, don't tease me, Lord Leon..." she murmured, glancing over her shoulder. Her voice was trembling, her eyes both nervous and needy. The shift in her tone was almost laughable. When we first met, she looked at me with disdain, her words sharp and laced with hate for the fact that I wasn't an elf. But now, everything had changed. She wasn't speaking with pride anymore—she was offering herself to me, practically begging me. That sense of dominance, of conquest, was intoxicating.

This feeling... I could drown in it. I could get addicted to it.

I spread her cheeks wider and pressed the head of my cock against her dripping pussy. She was already soaked, her juices slicking my tip as I rubbed it along her folds. Every time I dragged it across, her lips twitched, shivering as though they were calling for me to sink inside. The heat radiating off her was maddening. Slowly, I pushed forward, and her pussy opened up just enough to swallow the head.

Her fingers clawed harder at the edge of the tub, her knuckles turning white.

Then I shoved in, hard and deep, burying myself to the very hilt in one thrust.

Her pussy instantly clenched around me, milking my cock as if it wanted to drain me dry on the spot.

"Nnnnn...!"

The sound ripped from her throat as her body trembled violently. Her teeth clenched, her body stiffened, and then she broke. She squirmed, her hips shaking as she tried to control herself. She gasped, desperately sucking in air as though she could hide it, but the truth was written all over her trembling body. She didn't want me to know, but it was too late. Her body gave her away. She came just from me pushing inside her.

"You came from penetration alone? You really are a pervert, aren't you?" I smirked, savoring the sight of her struggling to steady herself.

"Y-Yes... I'm a pervert, Lord Leon... so..."

Even though I wasn't moving, her hips began shifting, grinding back against me, as if her body couldn't wait for more. She wanted to feel it—every inch of me. She wanted to be filled.

Then she glanced over her shoulder, her lips curling into a smile I never thought I'd see from her. It wasn't shy, it wasn't nervous. It was sultry, dripping with lust, her eyes half-lidded like a seductress.

"Mess up my cunt and make me yours," she whispered.

That was it. Those words shattered any restraint I had left. I grabbed her hips harder and slammed into her, thrusting with a rhythm that grew rougher and rougher with every movement.

"Ahhhhh...! Ahh, ahh, ahhh, ahhhhh, haaaahhh, ahhhhh, ahhhnnnnnn~! Ahhnnnnnnnghhhh~!!!"

Her moans tore through the air, not even sounding like moans anymore—they sounded like sobs, like cries ripped from her throat. Her pussy clung tighter and wetter with every thrust, squeezing me like it never wanted to let me go.

My cock crashed into her womb again and again, her body yielding yet trembling with every impact. It was like her pussy was lowering itself, already prepared to drink down my cum. Even though this was her first time, she was taking me fully, completely, like she had been waiting for this her whole life.

"Ahhhhnghhh, ahhh, ahhhhh...! Ohhhhh... ahhhnnnnghhh...~ Th-this... feels so good...~!
Ahhhhnghhh, ahhh, ahhhhh...! Ahhh, ahhhhh... ahhhhh...!"

Her words broke apart into whimpers and cries, her voice cracking as her body moved against me. She wasn't just taking it—she was pushing back, her hips slamming against mine in perfect rhythm, begging for more every time I drove into her.

I didn't stop. I couldn't. I fucked her harder, gripping her hips so tightly her flesh bulged between my fingers. The sound of our bodies colliding filled the room along with her unrestrained moans.

"Nghhh, ahhh, ahhhhh... no... it feels too good...~ I'm... I'm gonna... ahhhnnnnghhh... ahhhhh!
Ahhhhh, ahhh...! Nghhhh~!!!! Ahhhhh, ahhhhh...! Aghhhh!"

She couldn't string her thoughts together anymore. Every thrust shattered her voice, leaving her gasping and crying out, overwhelmed by the pleasure rushing through her.

I leaned over her, pressing my chest against her back, still driving into her with everything I had. My hands slid up to her breasts, grabbing them firmly. They were round and heavy, yet firm enough to stay perky, bouncing only slightly as I pounded her. I squeezed, kneaded, and toyed with them while still fucking her mercilessly from behind.

Finally, I pulled her head to the side and crushed my lips against hers. Our kiss was messy and hungry, our lips smashing together, tongues tangling in desperation. She moaned into my mouth, her voice muffled as I kept slamming into her, both of us drowning in the frenzy of lust with no thought of stopping.

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Everything around me had become dizzy and blurred, as if the whole room was spinning and the only thing that grounded me was the feeling of her body clenching tight around my cock. My lust for Hilda

wasn't just rising anymore—it was overflowing, boiling inside of me until I felt like I couldn't hold back even if I wanted to. From the very start she had been enjoying every second of this, but now... now her lust had completely consumed her. She wasn't just moaning—she was gasping like her body was desperate for both air and more of me at the same time.

"Ahhh, s-so good...~! F-Feels so good...~! M-More...! Moreeee...~!"

Her voice was breaking, raw and trembling as she begged me for more, and I didn't hesitate—I gave it to her, every thrust harder, faster, slamming deeper.

Her eyes glazed over, filled with a hazy lustful glow, her gaze unfocused like she wasn't even aware of her surroundings anymore. The words spilling out of her lips were slurred, a messy mix of moans and broken sentences. Her ass had already turned a flushed red, glowing from the constant smacking of my hips against her, each impact leaving ripples across her soft flesh. I could feel the tension between us winding tighter and tighter, like a string about to snap. Any moment now, we were both going to be launched straight into bliss, right at the pinnacle of pleasure.

"Ngghhh, ahhhnghhh, ahh, ah, ahhh, ahhnghhh, ahh, ah, ahhhnghh, ahhh... L-Lord Leon, it feels so good...~ Ahhhnghh, ahh...!"

Her cries echoed out, shameless and uncontrolled. The others who were watching us seemed frozen, taken aback by how far gone Hilda had become. I didn't know what she was usually like, but one thing was clear—she wasn't normally this lost in lust. Right now, she was absolutely wrecked, floating in pure ecstasy with no way back down.

"Ohhh, I'm going to cum...! I'm going to cumm, Lord Leon...! C-Cumming...! I'm going to cummmmmmm...~!!!!"

Her body shook violently, her voice cracking as she screamed that she was at the brink, her expression completely drunk with lust. It looked like nothing else existed in her mind, no thought left except the overwhelming urge to cum.

"Yes, cum! Cum on my dick! Get pregnant!"

The words tore themselves out of my mouth, my inner self breaking free with no restraint. With her body surrendering to me so completely, with the thrill of dominating her like this, it felt natural—no, inevitable—that I would claim her, that I would conquer her. This wasn't just an act, it was the conclusion that was always meant to happen.

I pounded harder into her, my hips hammering her ass and making it ripple like waves spreading across her flesh. The sound of our bodies colliding filled the room, wet, lewd, relentless.

My grip on her breasts tightened until I pulled my hands away, sliding them down until I grabbed onto her ass again, squeezing it tight as I rammed into her even faster. My pace had gone insane, my thrusts so quick and rough that she couldn't even form words anymore—she could only moan, her voice raw from how much she'd been screaming.

"Ahhh, so good...~! I-Incredible...! Ahh, ahhh...! T-This is the first time I've ever felt like this...! W-Why...? Why did no one ever tell me about such pleasure?!"

Her body convulsed beneath me, trembling with the intensity of her pleasure. She was hanging by a thread.

"I'm the one who can make you feel like this, Hilda, and no one else." I growled into her ear, forcing her to hear it, to understand. It was me—and only me—that could bring her to this level of bliss.

"T-Thank you, Lord Leon...~! F-For giving me this pleasure...! T-Thank you very muchhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh~^!!! Hnghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!"

Her pussy clamped down on me even harder, squeezing and pulsing around my cock like it was trying to milk me dry. I could feel the heat building inside me, my release rising fast, unstoppable.

"I'm cumming, Hilda! Take all of it!"

I slammed myself deep inside her one last time, shoving my cock hard against her cervix until I felt the muscles yield to the pressure. My cock throbbed, and then I exploded inside her, flooding her with thick streams of semen.

"Ahhhhhhh! S-So hottt~!! W-What is this?! It feels so goooooood...~!!!!
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh....~!"

Her back arched violently, her body jolting as another orgasm ripped through her, her legs trembling like they couldn't hold her anymore. She squirted hard, liquid spraying out of her while her body convulsed with uncontrollable spasms.

I emptied everything I had into her, every drop, until I finally pulled out with a wet pop. The cum I'd pumped into her spilled out immediately, dripping in heavy globs down her slit and splattering against the tiled bathroom floor.

Her body collapsed forward, slumping down like all her strength had drained out of her. Her legs were shaking too hard to even support her weight.

But unlike her, my cock was still hard, still throbbing, still ready. Two more elves were waiting—and they hadn't been fucked yet.

"Now then, which of the two of you is next?"

The twin elves, the same two who I'd first seen scissoring each other, stepped forward with their eyes burning in lust.

"L-Lord Leon, we want you to fuck us at the same time," they said in perfect unison, their voices eerie in how they overlapped. It was strange—like they were one soul split into two bodies, speaking as one, yet still separate.

"Leon," Artemis spoke up, her tone calm but pointed, "both of them have been together since birth. They're practically inseparable. Why don't you just fuck them at the same time?"

It was a tempting suggestion. The idea made my blood run hotter, but I only had one dick. As much as I wanted to, it was impossible to literally fuck them both at once. Unless, of course, I returned to that white space where Lilith was and had her give me another cock—but that wasn't happening here.

Still, there was a position that would make it possible in its own way.

"Well, if both of you insist, then climb on top of each other."

They looked at each other, then nodded. Without hesitation, one twin climbed over the other, stacking themselves so that both of their wet, glistening pussies were lined up perfectly. Their legs spread wide, their dripping arousal glistening in the dim light as they presented themselves to me, practically begging to be fucked.

I licked my lips slowly, my cock twitching in anticipation.

Now it was time for the last two.

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I stared at their pussies, pressed flush against each other, glistening wet and needy. The way their folds overlapped and rubbed together made it look like they were begging me, pleading silently for my cock to slip right into that tight gap and grind between them. It wasn't the kind of invitation to bury myself inside, but rather to rub, to fuck both of them at once with the only cock I had.

They wanted me to take them together, to fuck them at the same time, but that was simply impossible. I wasn't some kind of monster with two dicks. I only had one, and unless I suddenly sprouted another, which every law of nature said wasn't possible, there was no way to penetrate both at once. Science had never touched something like that. There was no research and there was going to be no miracle experiment about it either. That fantasy wasn't reality.

Still... there were ways to bend the impossible, ways to make it close enough. Exactly like what I was about to do with the two of them right now.

I moved closer, their trembling bodies already betraying just how turned on they were. Their skin was flushed, their breaths ragged, their thighs pressing together as if they were holding in the heat pooling inside them.

Verra and Serra might look like mirror images, but standing in front of them like this, I could see their differences. Verra's bold gaze carried a spark of hunger, while Serra's eyes were shy, wavering, almost

scared of how much she wanted me. They were twins, but their souls were distinct. Even so, in this moment, they were one—two halves of the same desire, two in one, bodies aligned and trembling for me.

My footsteps echoed sharply against the bathroom tiles, bouncing off the walls as I approached. My cock twitched, throbbing with need. Even though I had already cum earlier, with Artemis and Aegis wringing me dry, I was still rock hard. My stamina didn't falter; I wasn't softening. If anything, I felt even more alive, more desperate. I couldn't stop. I wouldn't stop.

Sliding my cock between their overlapping pussies, I gasped. The instant I pressed in, their folds quivered violently, twitching as if to swallow me whole. A flood of slick, hot juices coated my shaft, dripping down and smearing against me, making my cock gleam. Even though I'd only eased in slightly, the sensation was explosive. Their twitching walls felt like they were milking me already, urging me to release again. The heat was unbearable, so hot I had to grit my teeth just to hold it in.

"Ahhh... L-Lord Leon's penis... it's rubbing my clit..." Verra's voice cracked in pleasure, her hips trembling.

"Nghhh... ahh... S-Something... it feels so strange...~ But so good...~" Serra whimpered, her back arching, her hands gripping the slick tiles behind her for support.

Normally, they spoke as one, their voices synchronized like a strange spell. But now, their moans broke apart, messy and uneven. Hearing them lose their perfect sync was almost more surreal than when they were in unison. Their individuality showed, their pleasure tearing away that strange connection, and it made them feel even more real in my hands.

"You two... fuck, both of your pussies are burning hot..." I groaned, clutching Verra's ass tightly, dragging my cock back and forth, grinding between their soaking folds.

The sensation was heavenly. My shaft was sandwiched perfectly, their juices smearing all over me, soaking me until I was dripping like I'd been dunked in honey. Each thrust dragged their clits against my cock, forcing gasps and sharp cries out of them.

"Hnghh, ahhh...! Hnnnghh, ahhh... hhaaaa...~ Nghhh...! Nnn...! S-Serra... it feels so good... d-do you feel good too?" Verra's voice trembled, her hips rolling unconsciously against me.

"Y-Yesss...~ It feels so good... I feel like I'm going to melt away...~" Serra moaned back, her thighs trembling violently.

Their voices tangled together, overlapping in ragged cries. Their pussies rubbed against me like they were alive, like they were trying to pull me in even though I wasn't inside.

"Nghhh, ahh...! Haaa... ahhhn, ahhh...!" Verra's cries filled the air.

"Nghaaa...~ Haaa...!" Serra's voice followed right after, a perfect echo of lust.

After grinding between them for a while, I pulled back. My cock slid free with a loud, sticky pop, strings of their juices clinging to me, snapping in the air as I moved. I angled myself at Verra's swollen, glistening pussy.

"Now then... I'm going to put it in for real this time," I growled.

I pushed forward, sinking into Verra's pussy. Even though she had never taken a cock before, my shaft slipped in like it belonged there, her slick heat swallowing me without resistance.

"Ahhh...! T-That... that feels so good...~" she moaned instantly, her voice breaking, her walls gripping me so tight I thought I might explode on the spot.

Her pussy clamped around me, twitching wildly, her body shivering with every inch I filled.

But I didn't thrust. Not yet. Instead, I pulled out suddenly, her folds clinging to me, dragging her slickness out along my shaft.

"Ahhh..." Verra whimpered in disappointment, her eyes hazy.

"Relax," I smirked, rubbing my cock against her folds teasingly. "Didn't you both say you wanted me to fuck you at the same time? I'm just keeping my promise."

I lined myself up with Serra's pussy and pushed in hard.

"Hnghhhhh! Ahhh...!" Serra's cry was louder, rawer.

Her pussy was tighter than Verra's, more resistant, but still drenched enough that my cock slipped in with a wet glide. It wasn't soft—it was firm, snug, almost squeezing me out—but the tightness made my whole body shudder in ecstasy.

I pulled out again, her juices clinging to me, and she let out a pitiful whine, her legs shaking.

"Nn..."

"How was that? Your first taste of my cock... good, isn't it?" I teased, smirking down at her.

They looked at each other, then back at me, their eyes glazed with lust, shimmering with need. The desperation in their gaze was scorching, like they wanted nothing more than to chain me down and keep me inside them forever.

"P-Please, Lord Leon... give us plenty of your love with our holes..." they begged in unison, their voices overlapping again.

Their plea sent a jolt of heat down my spine. Like a bug trapped in golden honey, I gave in. My cock slammed forward, switching from one hole to the other with each thrust—one into Verra's soaking pussy, then another into Serra's dripping heat, back and forth, over and over, pounding them both without pause.

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I kept switching between the two of them, thrusting deep inside one before pulling out and slamming myself into the other. Each time I slid into their pussies, their walls clenched down on me differently, almost as if they were fighting over who could hold me tighter, who could make me lose control first. The wet sounds of my cock plunging into their holes echoed with every movement, mixing with their cries of pleasure.

"Ahhh, ahhh... ah, ah, ahhh..."

"Ahhh... nghhh, nnn...!"

Their voices overlapped, moaning in unison, trembling as my cock stretched them to the brim. I could feel their insides molding around me, gripping me like they were being shaped to fit my length, each thrust carving me deeper into their bodies.

"Both of you might look the same, but the way your pussies feel is completely different, huh?" I said between breaths, pounding harder, savoring the contrast between them.

And it was true. Even though they were twins, inseparable in life, the feeling of their pussies couldn't have been more unique. It wasn't something subtle—it was a sharp, undeniable difference I could sense right from the moment I entered them.

"Verra's pussy is slick as hell, sliding me in so easily. But the moment I'm inside, her muscles pull tight, sucking on me like she's begging me not to leave. Her erogenous spot sits higher, brushing against my tip every time I push deep. Serra's, though..." I groaned as I thrust into her again, her tightness almost choking my cock. "Serra's pussy is unbelievably tight. It's hard to even move, and her sweet spot is lower, gripping me in a different way altogether."

It might've been shameless to compare them while fucking them both, but I couldn't resist. Their differences made me want to push them harder, to feel every unique texture of their insides. Even as twins, even with bodies that mirrored each other, their pussies were distinct—and that made conquering them all the more intoxicating.

I kept alternating, plunging into Verra's wet, slick heat before pulling out and burying myself inside Serra's tight, vice-like grip. My cock was coated with their juices, shining with the mixture of their arousal as I kept tasting them both.

"Nghhh, ahhh... hgnnnnhhh...~ Ahhh...! L-Lord Leon...!"

"Nghhh, ahhh... W-We... we're going to cummmm...!"

Even their orgasms were in sync, their moans overlapping as if their bodies were wired to climax together.

"I'm about to cum...! Get ready!" I growled, my fingers digging deep into Verra's hips as the tension in my body coiled tighter and tighter.

"Ahhh, ahhngghh... ah, ahhh... ah, ah, haanngghh, ah, ahhh...!"

"Hnghhh, ahh... ah, ah, ahhh...!"

It was building inside me, that overwhelming sensation crawling up from the base of my spine. It wrapped around my groin like a bowstring stretched to the breaking point, every nerve sparking as if my body couldn't contain the pressure anymore. Their pussies clenched down violently, milking me, dragging me toward release.

"Ahhh, c-cumming...! I'm cumming...!"

"M-Me too...! L-Lord Leon, p-please, together...!"

Their pleading voices pushed me over the edge. My hips moved faster, harder, switching between them so quickly that it felt like I was fucking one body instead of two. The lewd, wet slaps of my thrusts echoed in the room as their moans climbed higher.

"Here it goes...!" I snarled, gritting my teeth.

"Nghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...!"

"Hnnggaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa...~!"

Both of them screamed, their bodies arching into each other, their spines curving as they clung together, shaking violently. Their pussies clamped down like iron, spasming around me as they came in perfect sync. And that was it—I couldn't hold it anymore.

I burst inside Verra first, thick ropes of hot cum spilling into her womb, filling her completely.

"Ahhh, s-so hottt...~ It feels so good...~" she moaned in ecstasy, trembling as her body accepted every drop.

After two heavy spurts, I pulled out of her, my cock dripping with our combined fluids, and slammed into Serra instead.

"Nghhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...! Ahhhh!"

Her scream echoed as I exploded again, pumping my seed into her womb until it overflowed. My cum poured into her, stuffing her tight pussy to the brim.

By the time I pulled out of Serra, a wet, lewd pop rang out, strings of cum and juices stretching between us before breaking and dripping down her thighs.

The two of them collapsed together, trembling and rubbing against each other, their bodies quivering from the overload of pleasure.

The rush of conquest surged through me, hot and unstoppable, racing through my veins. It was intoxicating—pure dominance, pure victory. I had just fucked the elders of the elven kingdom. With the queen and princess already mine, what else could that mean except the entire kingdom was practically under me now?

I had conquered them, and I would conquer more. This was only the beginning.

"Lord Leon..."

Their soft, breathless voices drifted to me, pulling my attention behind me. I turned and saw Asuza, Hilda, Frey, and Artemis watching. Their eyes burned with lust, their bodies trembling with need. That look told me everything—this night was far from over.

"Alright, girls," I said, licking my lips as if I could already taste the victory waiting for me. "I'm going to fuck all of you. Prepare yourselves."

And I did. I fucked them all night long, their voices rising into a chorus of moans that echoed off the bathroom walls, until none of us could take anymore.

By the time the night finally gave way to dawn, Artemis was on her knees in front of me, her lips wrapped around my balls. Her tongue glided over every inch, sucking, licking, worshipping them as her hands pumped my cock up and down with practiced strokes.

"You're pretty good at licking balls, Artemis. Tell me, where did you learn that?" I asked her, my voice heavy with satisfaction as I looked down at her.

She pulled away just enough to smirk up at me, her eyes gleaming with heat as she winked. "You see, there's a man I love—an incredible pervert with countless women. I honed my tongue just for him. And now... I'm glad I did, because that man seems to be enjoying it right now."

Her sultry voice and teasing grin hit me deep.

I grabbed her head firmly, guiding her as she dragged her tongue from the thick base of my cock all the way up the veiny shaft, then back down again. She dipped low, sucking hard on my balls, making my hips twitch under the sensation.

"Well," I groaned, every muscle tightening with pleasure, "I'm lucky to be the man receiving this..."

Around us, the others were sprawled across the floor, completely spent, their bodies limp and glistening with sweat. Thick streams of cum still leaked from their well-used pussies, proof of how hard I had taken them through the night.

It was a night none of us would ever forget.

Chapter 955: Slave Market Infiltration (1)

It had been several days since that unforgettable reverse gangbang with the elves, and even now the air around the mansion felt different. Their smiles seemed brighter, their steps lighter, and their entire atmosphere radiating a kind of satisfaction that hadn't been there before. The elves truly looked happier than they had in a long while.

Frey, for one, wasn't even trying to hide her intentions anymore. She flirted with me in the open, her every move screaming seduction. Sometimes she'd deliberately tug at her collar to expose just a hint of skin, other times she'd stretch in front of me in a way that made her shirt ride up just enough. It was never everything—just fragments, glimpses. But that was the point. She knew exactly what she was doing. She wanted me restless, craving, but not giving me enough to truly satisfy. She was teasing me, tormenting me, and damn, she was good at it.

The problem was, I couldn't afford to lose focus. With the preparations finished and the actual infiltration right around the corner, letting myself slip into another round with her would be more than a distraction—it would be a mistake. I had to keep my distance, control myself, no matter how hard it was.

And Frey wasn't the only one caught up in this shift. Asuza, Hilda, and even the twins—all of them had changed the way they looked at me. Their eyes lingered longer, their cheeks turned red the moment I caught their gaze, and the once-cautious tone in their voices had turned soft, almost shy. It was as though a barrier had been broken, and now, every single one of them saw me differently. That change was clear as day, and honestly, it was hard not to feel the weight of it.

But really, I had no complaints. This was exactly what I'd wanted from the beginning. And truthfully, it was what Solaris and Artemis had expected too. With their people's dwindling birth rate, their survival had become fragile. Male elves no longer existed, and they'd been forced to use magic as a substitute for reproduction—a process that was both exhausting and unreliable. Now, their hopes had shifted to me. They wanted me to become the one who would help preserve their race by procreating with them.

Strange as it might sound, I saw it as an honor. A privilege.

Still, for the moment, that privilege had to wait. We were on the verge of putting a major plan into motion, and I couldn't afford to get distracted—not when the initiation of everything was about to begin.

"It would really be good if nothing ends up going wrong," I said quietly into the phone. On the other end, listening with that calm, graceful tone, was none other than Solaris, the Queen of the Elves herself.

"Yes, that would be good," Solaris replied, her voice smooth yet laced with realism. "But problems don't care about what we want. They show up whether we're prepared for them or not. That's why we must account for every possibility and raise concerns before moving forward, isn't it?"

"Well, you've got a point there," I admitted.

The truth was, this mission had been in the works for so long that the planning felt endless. Every step, every contingency had been gone over again and again. The sheer effort poured into this made it clear just how much was riding on its success. Now, finally, after all the talk and preparation, it was time to move.

"I heard from Artemis that you successfully had sex with the five," Solaris said after a pause. "I'm overjoyed to know they've finally opened themselves up—both in body and in mind—to you. It must have taken quite a bit of subtle work to bring them to that point."

"You must've been planting that thought in them while I was away," I said with a faint smile.

"I couldn't allow the idea of you being with me—sharing sex and intimacy with me—without first giving them the chance to understand what it means to be with a man," she said, her tone carrying both warmth and conviction. "They needed to feel it, to truly know what it is like to be loved by a man and not just... indulging lust. I've been with women too, and I know it eases the body, but it isn't love. It doesn't reach that depth."

I knew exactly where she was coming from. For them, with no males left among their kind, it was only natural to turn to one another for comfort. They needed some outlet for their desire, even if it wasn't the same as what they truly wanted.

"For that, thank you," Solaris said, her words gentle yet firm. Even through the distance of the call, I could picture her smiling. "With this, the dream of restoring the elven race—and seeing our kingdom prosper once more—will finally be within our reach."

"I'm happy for you," I told her.

"You should be happy as well," she said, her voice lilting into a soft laugh. "You will be king of this land. Isn't it only natural for you to feel joy? Once you marry Artemis, you'll take the throne alongside her. Though I imagine she'll hold the official reins of the kingdom, since you... well, you won't stop at just one nation, will you?"

She wasn't wrong. Solaris and Artemis both knew of my ambitions. My goal was complete domination of this world, to rule it all. She said it so casually because she already understood. And honestly, I didn't even crave the title itself. King, emperor, ruler—it was just a word. What mattered was control. And with Solaris and Artemis beside me, I already had the kingdom in my grasp, title or no title.

"Well, you're right about that," I replied with a small grin. "But... I don't think marrying Artemis alone will be enough. I want to marry both of you."

"Oh my..." she chuckled softly, her voice carrying that playful edge I adored. "You've gotten bold, haven't you? If you're tossing out marriage proposals like that, then I'll happily hold out my hand. You can slip a ring onto it, just like your human traditions dictate. Isn't that how it goes?"

Despite her millennia of existence, Solaris could still act so incredibly cute. That innocence, mixed with her power and wisdom, was exactly what drew me to her. I wanted to be with her forever. Not just her, of course, but with all of them.

"Well then, look forward to that," I said with a smile of my own.

Chapter 956: Slave Market Infiltration (2)

After finishing my conversation with Solaris, I decided to head back to where the others were waiting. My steps were steady, my thoughts still replaying fragments of what had just been said. But before I could even make it halfway, I stopped dead in my tracks.

Someone was standing there.

It was Su.

No—that wasn't quite right. This wasn't Su. This was Han.

It took me a moment of carefully watching her, observing the subtle tilt of her chin, the sharpness in her gaze, and the way her lips curved ever so slightly in amusement, before I finally confirmed it. I could now tell the difference between the two.

"Hello, Leon," she greeted, her voice smooth and carrying an almost teasing lilt. "Looks like you've been enjoying a nice little talk with someone back there." A small smile tugged at her lips.

"How long have you been listening?" I asked immediately.

I didn't sugarcoat it or bother to dance around the subject. I had no hard proof she had been eavesdropping, but the fact that she appeared so suddenly—right after my call with Solaris—was too suspicious to ignore. It was enough for me to just throw the question out and see how she reacted.

And when I did, she smiled.

"Why assume I was eavesdropping?" she replied, her tone light, but her eyes gleaming with mischief. "You know, accusing someone without a shred of proof isn't really something you should be doing so carelessly." She tilted her head slightly, smirk playing across her face.

That expression... it was almost unsettling. Su's demeanor was always softer, almost timid at times. Han, on the other hand, was bold, daring, and carried herself like she owned every conversation she walked into. They were like light and shadow, day and night—complete opposites trapped in one body. Seeing the same face make such wildly different expressions was disorienting. At times, it honestly made me feel like I was hallucinating.

"Well, you just happened to show up right after that call," I said, narrowing my eyes. "It's only natural for me to assume something, don't you think?"

"Fufufufu..." she chuckled, the sound low and playful. "I guess there's no point trying to twist my way out of this, huh? Especially since the truth is—I want to know more about you." She leaned slightly closer, her smile turning cheeky. "I mean, isn't that only natural? Considering you might be the man I'll be living with from now on?"

She then turned away from me, walking a few steps ahead with a light, almost careless stride. Then, she stopped and slowly looked back over her shoulder. The mischievous glint in her eyes was sharper now, and the smirk on her lips made it clear she was enjoying herself far too much.

"After listening to your little chat with that woman just now," she said, her voice carrying a sly tone, "I realized what you're planning for the long run. And although, by all means, it might be impossible thanks to natural forces, I can't deny—it sounds adventurous. Dangerous. Exciting. And I find myself... very interested in it." She crossed her arms under her chest, her smirk widening. "So, what do you say? Would you let me in on it too? I promise I'll be good."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

I already knew what she was hinting at, but I wasn't about to play directly into her hands. I wanted her to spell it out, to lay her intentions bare. Playing along too easily with someone like Han would be reckless. Dangerous.

"You know exactly what I mean," she said simply, her eyes narrowing ever so slightly. "Conquering the world."

So, that was her goal after all. I had already guessed, but hearing her openly admit it, and then offer her help, still caught me a little off guard.

"And why would you want that?" I asked, my voice calm, but my gaze fixed firmly on her.

"Simple," she said, almost without hesitation. "I just want to see this entire world bend at the feet of a single entity."

I let out a faint breath. "You've got a very intriguing... and honestly, kind of bothersome hobby," I replied. "But tell me—what would you even gain from that? Other than entertainment?"

"You and I both know entertainment is the only thing I'd get," she said matter-of-factly. "But imagine how fascinating it would be if someone actually succeeded. No one has ever managed it. Not once in history."

She wasn't wrong. Many had tried, but none had conquered it all. Failure was the only outcome so far.

"All of those so-called conquerors drenched themselves in blood, slaughtered innocents, and clawed for power like rabid animals," she said, her voice carrying a sharp edge now. "They were fools—every single one of them. Instead of becoming gods above the world, they weakened it with their hunger and violence. But you..." she paused, her smirk returning. "Your approach—I've never seen anyone try it like you."

There was weight behind her words, as if she had lived through countless generations, watching one empire rise and another crumble. Su and Han shared one body, but Han was clearly something more... Well, I guess something ancient. Using Su as her vessel was just the current Chapter in her long existence. That much, I could feel.

Still, hearing her acknowledge me like this—it was surprising.

"You actually like my approach?" I asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No one's ever done it like you," she replied, her grin widening. "Everyone else used brute force, and in the end, people rebelled against them. They called them madmen—and madmen never stay in power for long. But you, Leon... you're different. You're conquering women of influence, using them to gather the power you need. Clever. Subtle."

She tilted her head, eyes gleaming with playful curiosity. "I wouldn't even be surprised if the Princess of the Elven Kingdom isn't the only royal woman in your little harem. I'd wager there are more. Maybe even a queen or two already. Cucking a king—that would be bold, if I do say so myself."

Well, I hadn't exactly cucked any king yet... but the possibility wasn't out of the question. The future was unpredictable, and that kind of scenario could very well happen.

"I'm genuinely curious to see how you'll pull it off," she said, her voice softening, though her gaze was still sharp and piercing.

"How you'll bring this entire world down on its knees. Out of all the conquerors who've ever lived, and even the ones plotting now, the one I'm placing my bets on—the one I'm rooting for—is you."

She took a step closer, her tone carrying a rare sincerity. "So, Leon... would you let me witness it?"

Chapter 957: Slave Market Infiltration (3)

Well, she really did sound like she wanted it—like deep down, she genuinely wished to see me succeed, to watch me rise and conquer this entire world, to make it mine piece by piece. It made me wonder... how would someone like her, who had always been there on the sidelines, quietly watching, secretly rooting for me, actually feel if I finally pulled it off? If I actually achieved something that grand?

"But what would be in it for me, though?" I asked, my tone casual, though my eyes stayed sharp on her.

"This isn't my body, so I can't just give it to you," she said smoothly, tilting her head a little. "You'd need Su's consent first. I can't exactly let you have sex with me while using her body, can I?" There was a hint of mockery in her voice, but also something playful beneath it. "Well... if you managed to get to her, then maybe we could strike a deal. You'd get Su and me together. Don't you like the sound of that? Two in one. You'd basically be getting two women in your harem at the same time."

Her words hit like a little spark in the back of my mind. I won't lie... I liked the idea. It was tempting. Basically, she was offering herself up, but not at the expense of Su's will. Even if I tried to romance Han and ended up having sex with her, it was still Su's body, which meant I had to get Su's consent first before moving forward. And yeah, that made sense. I liked the proposal, but if I was being honest with myself, it wasn't something I really needed right now. It didn't feel like enough to match what she wanted from me. Just giving herself wasn't equal to the demand she was making.

I needed more. Much more than what she was currently offering.

"It seems like our body isn't exactly enough for you, huh?" she teased, her lips curling into a sly smile that looked both amused and knowing. "Well, that's fine. I didn't expect you to agree right away. That's why I'm going to offer you something else. How about our assistance with your infiltration mission? We're slaves there, after all, and we've seen plenty. We know the terrain better than most, even in the deepest levels."

"Oh?" I raised a brow, leaning in slightly, testing her words. "So you're offering me your assistance? Honestly, I feel like that's something we really could use... but why do you think that alone would be enough to make me agree?"

"Level five," she answered, her tone dipping lower as if she was about to spill a secret. "That's where we were locked up. And I think you'll find something pretty... and I mean, really pretty interesting there to add to your little collection. Just the day before you bought me, I overheard the guards. They said they'd caught a mermaid."

My head tilted. "A mermaid?"

The word alone pulled me into memory. Mermaids. They were beings I only ever knew as myths back in my previous world. They were half-human, half-fish, and they were always described as living in the sea, in particular in the infamous Dark Ocean. That place wasn't just dangerous. I heard it was a nightmare, a vast expanse of water where even the most skilled pirates had to tread carefully to survive. And yet, somehow, there were people crazy and talented enough to pull off something as insane as capturing a mermaid from there.

Catching a mermaid wasn't some easy task, though. It was damn near impossible. That's why selling one was ridiculously expensive, costing no less than a thousand gold coins just to buy a single mermaid slave. And still, it wasn't like mermaids would ever willingly allow themselves to be captured alive either. No. The moment they were taken out of their waters, they'd unleash their deadly poison magic, killing everyone around them instantly—though the cost of it was their own life.

So yeah, capturing one alive was almost unheard of. Even then, when they eventually died, their bodies could be harvested. The poison would fade, and what was left could still be valuable. Mermaid blood, for example, was one of the main ingredients for—

"Not just any mermaid," Han cut in, pulling me back to her words. "They said she's such a beautiful catch that some of the bandits wanted to take turns with her. Raping a mermaid... even famous pirates back

in my days hadn't done so. So naturally... they were too scared and really terrified she'd release her poison magic and kill them all in one go. However, do you wanna know why she hasn't used it yet?"

I thought for a second, my gaze narrowing. "Considering that using it would kill her, my guess is she's too important to throw her life away... or maybe she doesn't even know how to use it yet. Or at all"

"You're right with that assumption," she said, smirking like she was enjoying this little game. "She might just be the princess of the mermaid kingdom. Wouldn't that be fun for you? Imagine it—having not only an elven princess in your harem but a mermaid princess too. Isn't that something worth looking forward to?"

"And how the hell am I supposed to believe what you're saying is true?" I asked flatly. "For all I know, this could just be a bluff. There might be no mermaid at all, and you're just luring me into a trap."

"I don't find any fun in boring tricks like that," she replied without missing a beat. "You already know that about me, don't you?"

Well yeah... she wasn't wrong. From what I'd seen of her, she really didn't get her kicks out of doing mundane, predictable crap like that.

For now, I had to take her words as they were. If what she said was true, then there was a real chance I might gain something huge out of this.

Chapter 958: Slave Market Infiltration (4)

A mermaid princess, huh? I've never actually seen one, only glimpsed mermaid scales once in the black market. It was a dull iridescence tucked into crates, traded like spices. Still, from what I know, the mermaid kingdom and the elven kingdom probably share the same bone-deep resentment toward humans: they hate what humans did to them—binding them in chains, selling them off, committing unspeakable things. I don't imagine either kingdom would welcome someone like me without immediately growing hostile.

Even if it were me personally, I'd expect suspicion—exactly like with the elves. Which meant the same approach would be necessary. Get inside through someone they trust. With the elves it had been Artemis. Now if Han's rumor held any truth and someone important from the mermaid court had been

taken, that might be the opening I needed. Find a connection they trust, use it as cover, and hope that trust buys us a way in without blood spilling at the doorstep.

"I want you to lead the way on that," I told her, steady voice.

"All right." Artemis smiled, soft but certain. "I'll help you, but I'm not doing any physical or magical fighting. You handle that."

So she would guide and help, but not throw punches or cast spells. Fine. If she could hold her own enough to not be a liability, I didn't need her swinging at anyone.

With that settled, she was coming with us to the slave market for the infiltration.

The night we'd picked for the infiltration had settled thick and low over the capital. People still filled the streets in other districts, but here—this slice of the city—felt hollow, quiet in the way that promised opportunity. The plan moved cleanly so far; that quiet worked in our favor.

We crouched on the market's roof, breath shallow, bodies pressed into shadows. The wind up there was thin and smelled faintly of smoke and old rope, but below, the market's lights bled into pools of jaundiced color. We were ready. The only thing left was to get down without announcing our presence.

From the roof I could see the guards. They were stolid, bored men leaning on spears and watch posts. They looked hired for intimidation rather than skill; they were the kind who carried authority but not mastery. I signaled the team. When we dropped, I threaded levitation into the descent, a quiet, floating fall that kept our boots from striking stone. I cast it on the others too, giving them the same silent glide.

We hit the ground like ghosts and moved. The first sentries went down quick—unconscious before they could shout. The slaves scattered in the sudden silence, eyes wide, mouths already forming the plea to run. We put a hand up and signaled them to stay quiet. Keep still. The shock on their faces flashed and then dulled—fear locked to the bones.

After we'd dragged the fallen guards off the main path and hidden them, we climbed down the market's second level. There were more watchers here, heavier eyes and thicker armor. Still, none had seen us. We flowed through the shadows, keeping to the walls, the plan holding its shape.

To get to the third level—where I expected elves and higher-stakes scrutiny—we had to be surgical. Any alarm raised now would cascade upward with the third level's guards would be on instant alert. We had backup plans if things went wrong, of course, but backups were messy and costly. Better to slip through unnoticed than to fight our way through a hornet's nest. So we moved faster, quieter, folding and sliding like ink through fabric.

We neutralized more guards and hid them—carefully and thoroughly. We made sure their breathing would be slow and their memories wiped until Tuesday. No one fast enough to come after us. The work was nervous, efficient, and ugly in the way those ops always are.

As we moved, I noticed beast-people among the crowd—rabbitfolk with quick, nervous glances. One of them stood out. She had a figure with stark white hair and smooth pale skin, striking enough that I felt the old, unseemly pull in my chest. For half a breath I felt the greedy thought flit through me, an ugly, private wanting that I shoved back down. This wasn't the time.

"Looks like someone's got a taste," Han murmured behind me, keeping close. Her voice was a whip of amusement and warning. "You really have an appetite—no, insatiable. I'm afraid our frail bodies might not handle all of one man's lust, Su. If I pass out, you take over for me."

I didn't bother answering. Her jokes and asides were the kind you didn't parse in the moment. We kept moving.

By the time we rose toward the third floor, the air itself changed. The architecture became grander—smooth tile underfoot, pillars rising like the ribs of a stately beast. The light here was stronger, casting hard shadows and clear outlines. Sounds carried more easily. From the far end came laughter and the clink of glass, cheers folding together with the tang of spilled alcohol and something fouler under it. It was the hot, unmistakable stench of sex.

The third level's noise grew, the celebration at the far end bleeding into the corridor. The pillars threw the sound between them like a net with cheers, slurred songs, and the low, ugly moans that came from rooms where men practiced breaking others for profit. The air tasted of sweat and cheap wine.

Up close, it was worse—like rot hidden under perfume. The third level thrummed with a different life with men who thought the world owed them bodies and the right to break them, suppliers and buyers and those who trained slaves for what would come next. This was, from all reports, where the worst of the market's supply chain took shape. Here they turned people into merchandise—pleasure, exploited and packaged.

"Looks like they're at it in there," Han muttered, voice low and tight. "This level's where scum get their thrills. Here they train slaves in sex—pleasuring them until they're ready to be sold to brothels."

Her words landed like a knife. The place smelled of that promise—of bodies used and washed and used again. It was the kind of place that sharpened my resolve instead of dulling it.

"Leon," Artemis said softly—short, sharp.

"Right." I felt the weight of it settle. This was the point. No more half measures. "This time, we won't hold back. Not against these scum."

The words were a promise. The ambush we'd rehearsed slid into motion—quiet, precise, and fueled by a hard little fire.

Chapter 959: Battle On The Slave Market (1)

We didn't hesitate for a second—we moved in and executed those bastards on the spot.

The moment our blades sliced through the air, some of them finally noticed us. But by the time they did, it was already too late. They were too drunk on lust and pleasure to even think straight, much less reach for their weapons. Their reflexes were dulled, their bodies sluggish. In the blink of an eye, we were already on them—steel flashing under the dim light, blood spraying across the walls like crimson rain.

We cut one down, then another. Screams filled the room, mixing with the frantic sounds of chains rattling and flesh being torn apart. Still, we weren't fast enough to kill them all before a few scattered back, panic setting in on their filthy faces.

The slaves—terrified and shaking—stumbled away from the chaos. Their eyes were wide, reflecting fear and disbelief. For a brief moment, they froze, unsure whether we were enemies or saviors. Thankfully,

someone from our side rushed over to them, her voice calm but firm, telling them to stay low, to stay safe, and that we would handle everything from here.

As expected, the elves didn't even need to break a sweat. These men were trash—untrained, arrogant, and drunk on their own cruelty. Cutting them down felt almost too easy, like slicing through paper. Our swords and arrows sang through the air, a deadly rhythm of vengeance and precision. When the last of them dropped to the ground, we realized the battle had already ended before it even began.

I looked around at the women. Some were sobbing uncontrollably, some covering their faces, too broken to even move. Artemis was already with them, kneeling down and gathering them close, her hands gently pulling their trembling feet together. She whispered softly, rubbing their backs, her tone soothing and full of warmth—telling them that it was over now, that it was okay, that they were finally free.

Even then, I could see doubt in their eyes. After everything they'd been through, who could blame them? Trust didn't come easy when you'd lived in chains. But still, they wanted to believe. They clung to that faint glimmer of hope, as fragile as it was. Anything was better than going back to the hell they came from.

"It seems that if we'd been even a little later, those women would've ended up as the eternal playthings of some noble scum," Han muttered, his voice low and disgusted. "Some might've even been sold to brothels. Honestly, human greed still amazes me. But then again... humans are greedy by nature. I guess I can't be too surprised."

"We've opened every cage on this level, Lord Leon," Asuza reported, her tone serious. "Levels two and one have been freed as well."

So far, things were still in our favor. As long as we kept moving, we could finish this without too much resistance.

"Now then..." I exhaled deeply, tightening my grip on my sword. "Next is the fourth level. Ready yourselves, everyone."

The air grew heavier. The guards below probably hadn't been alerted yet, but that wouldn't last. I wondered just how strong they were compared to the ones we'd already faced. From what I

remembered, they weren't ordinary warriors—they knew how to fight. Maybe not on my level, but still... enough to make things interesting.

I peered toward the entrance. The flickering torches barely illuminated the space beyond, but I could make out the outlines of cages—rows upon rows of them. People sat inside, some staring blankly at the floor, others clinging to what little hope they had left. Some still had light in their eyes, while others had long given up. It was a pit of despair... and we were about to tear it apart.

Then, just as I was about to move—

"Huh? What the fuck happened here?"

A voice came from the shadows, rough and confused. Then another. And another. About twenty of them stepped into the light, their faces twisting in realization.

"Fuck! Intruders! We've got intruders here!"

The shout echoed through the entire level, bouncing off the stone walls. That must've alerted everyone above. So this was it—the real battle was about to begin.

"Shit... and we haven't even gotten the chained ones out yet!" Asuza cursed, her teeth clenched in frustration.

Time was running out. The prisoners were still bound, unable to move—helpless in the middle of a battlefield. It made them a liability. The elves were skilled, no doubt, but fighting while trying to protect them was going to make things a lot harder.

I reached out and summoned Ayuru. With just a pulse of mana, her form materialized, the hilt solidifying in my grasp. She was cold to the touch, humming faintly with a cursed energy that only I could feel.

Ayuru wasn't just any sword—she was a Cursed Blade. Normally, these weapons drain the life and mana of their wielders, feeding until their host collapses into nothing. But I was different. I had more mana

than she could ever consume, so instead of devouring me, she accepted me. She drank freely, and in return, she obeyed. She chose me as her master.

Killing these bastards would be child's play.

I blinked.

And in that instant, it was over.

When I opened my eyes again, the twenty men who'd been shouting moments ago were nothing but corpses, their bodies collapsing in silence. Blood pooled beneath them, soaking into the cracks of the floor. The only sound left was the faint drip of it echoing through the chamber.

Everyone around me froze. Their eyes widened in disbelief. I could almost hear their hearts pounding. It was probably the first time they'd seen what I could really do.

Then I heard a soft thud behind me. Frey had dropped to her knees, her expression dazed, her lips slightly parted.

"I-In just one blink... he killed them all..." she whispered, trembling. "A-As expected... L-Lord Leon is... amazing..."

Her voice trembled, and I noticed the heat in her face, the way her breathing quickened. Wait... was she seriously getting turned on by that? I couldn't believe this woman.

"Don't waste any more time," I said sharply, trying to refocus everyone. "Get the people out of their chains. Lead them to Lord Cross's manor and help them escape this country using the teleportation circle."

"As you command, Lord Leon," Hilda said immediately, bowing her head with newfound respect. "As expected of the man chosen by Her Majesty Solaris to save our race... you're truly powerful. Now... I want a child with you."

"H-Hey, Hilda! I'm first!" Frey snapped, still red-faced.

"N-No, it's me!" Asuza shouted back.

"I-It's us!" the others joined in.

Artemis just sighed, smiling sweetly—but there was a sharpness in her gaze that made them all flinch. "What are you all even arguing about?" she said softly. "It's obviously me." Her smile didn't reach her eyes, but it was enough to make everyone shut up. "Now stop wasting time and do as Leon says."

"Y-Yes, Princess!" they all said at once before rushing to follow orders.

It seemed Artemis had earned both their admiration and their fear. To them, she wasn't just a leader anymore—she was becoming something greater, like Solaris herself. A queen in the making. She really had changed a lot.

Chapter 960: Battle On The Slave Market (2)

Artemis, Aegis, and I—along with a ragged line of others—pushed deeper into the complex. The fourth level loomed ahead, its entrance swallowing the light and spitting back the metallic scent of old blood and oil. My pulse thrummed against my teeth; this was where things could get messy.

The instant I put a foot over the threshold, a hail of arrows screamed at us. They came in tight, ruthless lines, black points glittering for a heartbeat before they dove. I didn't hesitate—Guardian flared into being, a halo of shimmering force that slammed into the volley and chewed it apart. Arrows met an invisible wall and exploded in twinkling shards; none of them reached us. The sound of impact was a dry drumbeat that echoed down the corridor.

I shoved Aegis forward with a quick motion. "Go," I barked, stepping aside. She darted to a pillar, sliding into shadow as if she'd grown there, finding the one blind spot where Guardian wouldn't block her shots. She crouched, bow already nocked, eyes cold and steady. From behind, Artemis gave me a curt nod—an electric confirmation that made my bones relax a fraction. I smiled; for now, it looked like we had this under control. Plans had shifted, yes, but the pieces still moved where I wanted them to.

Somewhere deeper inside, a voice snapped orders like a whip: "Kill them! Don't you dare let anyone live!" Desperation flavored the shout—business owners protecting what little power they had left. Pitiful, considering how hard they'd bulldozed others to keep it.

Aegis let loose a string of arrows. Each shot cut clean and true, plucking armored men from the dark. These guards moved with the rigid efficiency of training; their armor clinked and flexed differently from the lower-level trash. Their stance said they were a cut above the usual dregs. Still—skill only goes so far when it meets intent. We had more of that. They were good, sure, but not good enough.

When their initial barrage died down, Artemis and I surged. I drew Ayuru and spun, a wide arc that carved through three guards in a single, savage sweep. The blade sang as it moved; metal met flesh with a wet tearing sound. The three of them toppled in a grotesque ballet—their upper halves slipping away as if some cruel seam had been pulled. Their screams split the air, ragged and stunned, and I let them taste that pain. Patricia had warned us these were the ruthless ones: people who worked slaves until bones broke and hearts stopped. Mercy wasn't an option. They'd taken dignity from others; I wanted them to lose it too.

Around us, the enslaved people within cages started to stir with something fiercer than hope—anger. Even barred, they fought. Hands jabbed through the gaps, claws and fingers snatching at armor, jerking guards close enough to choke. A pair of hands would latch on a throat; a sling of a limb would twist, and a seasoned fighter nearby would take advantage. Their rage was messy and blunt, but it worked. They weren't content to watch their oppressors go unpunished.

A new voice cut through the cacophony—low, amused. "Well, well... it seems there are people brave enough to storm this place. I see now—it's you, huh?"

I turned and froze. The woman who stepped forward was a mountain of muscle wrapped in dark skin, a cruel, beautiful thing. Two massive horns jutted from her forehead like broken spires; long red hair fell over broad shoulders. Veins throbbed along her arms, corded and fierce. She had that bull-like presence—solid, relentless, and terrifyingly alive. Up close, the light kissed the ridges of her muscles and made her look like a living statue forged for war.

"You've got guts, kid," she rumbled, amusement edged with danger. "And those women with you too... elves, huh? Haven't seen any of your kind in a while. Is the era of war coming back? If so, count me in."

She cracked her knuckles as if flexing a promise to break skulls. It made her look ready to smash anything that moved. I couldn't help wondering how someone like her ended up caged on the fourth level—she belonged higher, in places meant for the truly dangerous.

"I'll lend you a hand. That alright with you, human boy?" she asked, a smirk pulling one side of her mouth.

"If that's what you want, then I'll back you," I said without thinking. Her presence made the air feel thicker, like the world had tilted slightly toward violence.

I sliced through the bars of her cage with Ayuru—steel whispering, metal giving like old leather. She stepped out, stretching as though she'd only been waking from a nap. "You cut through that like butter... even though it's supposed to hold someone like me? You're interesting, human boy. Now—how should I kill these bastards who dared capture me while I was napping?"

She'd been napping when captured. I blinked. The idea of this horned juggernaut being taken asleep was absurd—but it fit her, somehow: so powerful she could be careless.

She didn't wait for an answer. She charged, and the corridor turned into a battering ram of bone and fury. Guards met her shoulder and bounced as if against an immovable wall. Blades glanced harmlessly off her, and the shouts around her curdled into a nervous, fearful silence. I watched her shove a man into a stone wall like an annoyance; his armor caved inward and he slumped, surprised by how little resistance she'd given. What was she made of—granite? Steel? A living siege engine?

"Leon," Han's voice called from the rear, sharp but practical. "They can handle this here. Why don't we push on to the fifth level?"

"Alright," I said, breath even, nodding. "Artemis—can you hold things down here?"

"Yup. Go ahead, Leon," she answered, quick and certain. There was a knowing in her tone—an acknowledgment of something I hadn't said: I might be on the lookout for another recruit for my...circle. She didn't scold or pry. She simply trusted the choice.

I smiled, a small thing, and turned toward the stairwell. The fifth level waited below, darker and thicker with promise. We moved on.