



Elsword Time Trouble Volume 7

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0. Reversed Relationship

Add's obsession with Eve turns him into D.

Add sighed from this hypothesis dwelling in his head then pushed away Eun's hand that was tickling his chin.

"That was a long sigh.... You don't believe me?"

"So you've played all your cards now with this."

"....."

Eun frowned then backed out when Add responded calmly.

Add suppressed his chaotic mind and dizzy head while repeatedly closing his hand into a fist then opening it again to compose himself.

The reason Add becomes D... this was difficult to accept all at once but it was somewhat understandable.

"So I guess it means if Eve was the start, then it ends with Eve as well. Kukukuk...."

"....."

Eun slightly dropped her gaze when she saw Add laughing emptily. Add shrugged then asked with a raspy voice.

"So? Is there anything else you wanted to say?"

".....It seems you believe what I said but your reaction is bizarre."

"What reaction did you expect? Denial that it cannot possibly be true? Or did you want me to burst into tears in despair?"

Add smiled coldly as he gripped his fist so tightly to the point where his hand felt like shattering. The pain revived his sense of judgement.

"I believe what you said. I'll believe you. But what I must do doesn't change. I'll return and get rid of D. Then....."

"You'll steal the girl's core and go back to the past?"

Add shook his head from side to side. That was what he was planning originally but there was another way now.

“I’ll steal the core of this universe’s Eve. I’ll apply its data to my tech to enhance my Dynamos and defeat D....then I’ll return to the past. It’s perfect.”

“.....”

Eun had a blank face as she listened to Add’s plan then she let out an empty laugh.

“Will that really go well as you think?”

“Is there any other reason why we came to this universe?”

There was another Eve in this universe and she also possessed the core. This couldn’t be a coincidence.

But Eun only smiled coldly in response.

“Boy must have not understood what I told him. I said it’s boy’s obsession toward the girl that brings him to ruin. So why isn’t he fixing his habit of always thinking with the girl as the center?”

“Because that’s the fastest way. Or is there any other way? If there was another way to defeat D, then you either would have told me already or it was a failure.”

Add opened his arms widely.

“You and I have failed countless times. You could say that we exhausted pretty much every other option. But this must be the first time that we used this method of escaping to another universe right?”

“.....”

“If D knew about this beforehand, he would have prepared a countermeasure already. The reason I’m safe right now is because this move had never been done before and wasn’t something D had expected.”

Add smiled gladly when Eun gave a silent nod.

“So this method is correct.”

“I cannot agree to it. I don’t understand why you’re concluding that there’s only one way.”

“Then what else is there?”

At those words, Eun pointed towards Add’s pocket. She was pointing towards Memory of Time and Space inside.

But Add pointed out the flaw in her suggestion.

“Memory of Time and Space.... Yes, I’ll surely become stronger if I awaken to this. Others became stronger too after all. But can you grantee that it will give me enough power to defeat D?”

“.....Boy being too smart is problematic.”

“Elsword, Ara.....and Eve all awakened their Memory of Time and Space but couldn’t defeat D. I don’t think the result will change even if I awakened to it.”

Other El Search Party members that awakened their Memory of Time and Space couldn’t handle D.....So will it make any difference even if Add joined in?

“Even if there was a difference, I have no idea how to awaken this. So we’re discarding this option.”

Eve, Ara and Elsword all awakened theirs but Add still couldn’t do it and there wasn’t any grantee that he’ll be able to.

It was a lottery that he haven’t scratched to see the result yet..... But he had no idea how to scratch it in the first place.

“We can’t rely on luck. We’ll target Eve’s core.”

“I clearly stated that the obsession boy has towards the girl is the source of all problems. I disagree with this.”

There was no reason for Add to get dragged around by Eun now. Add purposely made a mocking smile.

“Your agreeing or disagreeing isn’t important. I’m not interested in that. We’ll do things my way from now on.”

“As I thought.... I immediately get treated coldly.”

Add stayed firm despite Eun’s bitter remark.

“There’s no more information I need to get out of you. Or is there any information you’re still hiding from me?”

“.....”

The reason Eun could half control Add’s actions until now was because she was concealing information.

It was only possible because she had hidden things like D’s identity, that Add had failed countless times and the reason Add turned into D.

But Add now obtained all the information he needed.

“Now we’ll do what we need to do. I also want to get rid of D after all.”

Add didn't know why D wanted to become the king that ruled over time and space but it didn't matter. D wasn't someone that could be negotiated with so there was no other way but to get rid of him.

".....What happens after he's defeated is the bigger problem."

"What more problems could there be? Are you thinking I'll threaten Ara after D is defeated? I'll promise that I won't."

Add made his final decision.

"Everything will be solved if D is defeated. Do you have any objections?"

".....That's true at least on the surface."

Eun's words had a strange nuance but Add didn't ask further.

He had finally turned the tides of his quarrel with Eun to determine who had the lead in their relationship. All Eun could do now was assisting with time travel if needed.

It was a situation where he could get his revenge on her for deceiving and messing with him all this time. Eun had to assist Add in order to defeat D anyways.....so she had no choice but to put up with at least light payback from Add.

Wasn't there a phrase 'get rid of the dog after the hunt is over'? Wait, isn't it 'get rid of the fox after the hunt is over' now?

Add laughed with a low voice. Eun would have already seen ahead that Add would think this way. That was why she had hidden various information until now.

"Don't do anything useless to distract me anymore. I won't take them lightly."

".....So you're not going to bring up old grudges?"

Eun sharply raised her eyebrows as if she was puzzled.

"My course of action has already been decided, you messing about will just be a needless distraction. Just watch from the sidelines quietly from now on."

"I revealed this information while being prepared for boy's vengeance. That he'll let out all the hatred he harbored against me all this time. Isn't this a time to let all the pent up shady desires explode?"

".....Target who we'll raise the affection points of will be Eve."

"I'm at a position where I'll have to bark or even strip if boy tells me to. But will he really let me go with just a warning?"

When Eun shrugged, her disheveled clothing slid down slightly. Well, both sides ignoring each other and saying only what they had to say couldn't be called a conversation.

Add had no other choice so he replied.

“Stop saying nonsense and put your clothes on properly. And don't cut me off when I'm trying to say something. It's a waste of time.”

“Isn't this a time where you say I'll give you hell! Or how dare you hide this information from me all this time! then make me suffer? I revealed this preparing to go through all kinds of insults and humiliation. It's time for all of boy's suppressed desires to burst into a huge explosion!”

Well.... it was true that he had a lot of piled up negative emotions against Eun. But bringing up past events just for just a petty vengeance wasn't Add's way of doing things. He would rather just destroy or kill if necessary.

“What will I get out of doing such a thing? Venting my anger out on you will just waste my time and buy your hate. It doesn't help me in any way for what's to come.”

“I'm prepared to willingly take any punishment boy gives me.”

“.....”

What is this? Does she want him to whip her or something? When Add stared in disbelief, Eun wagged her tails.

Five tails that was less than the usual amount moved softly.

Should he tell her to stop moving her tail because it was annoying? Add was about to warn her when Eun sighed sweetly.

“Haah..... Since boy is so rough and cruel, I who's powerless have no choice but to do whatever he says. Even if that may be some odd fantasies boy had been hiding deep inside his heart, I have no choice but to follow what he says.”

“.....”

The reason Add couldn't answer was because he was too dumfounded. Who was it that threw Add into the hot springs just before?

But if you only looked at the way Eun was sighing, she looked like a frail girl who got captured by a terrifying monster and was worrying about horrible things that might be done to her.

Add was staring in bewilderment when Eun dropped on the bed as if she was pushed down by something. Her belt must have been untied because her shoulders got revealed and front part of her collar widened dangerously.

Then she stared at Add miserably with a teary gaze then lowered her eyes.... It objectively looked like a frail and innocent girl being oppressed with sorrow. But looking at her subjectively, it made Add so dumfounded that he was about to pass out.

“Hey.....”

“Don’t do it too roughly. I understand boy’s heated heart, but this bed isn’t that sturdy.”

He wanted to punch her. He really wanted to..... but wasn’t Eun stronger?

Add did take the upper hand in their relationship.... But considering two of their raw strengths, Eun was much more powerful so nothing had actually changed.

Add had no idea how to react because Eun became half naked like this.

He couldn’t hit her, she was getting on his nerves but she might strip even more if he was not careful.

Add sighed from the bottom of his heart then shook his head from side to side. Closing his eyes or turning his head away would have been better.....but showing such startled reaction will make him get caught up in Eun’s pace.

“Stop saying nonsense and put your clothes on properly.”

“I’m serious right now.”

Seeing her dangerously lift the hem of her skirt and waving it made him really want to punch her. But Add kept patient as he possibly could.

All the light-colored skin made his vision dizzy but complaining wasn’t going to solve anything.

“I said I wasn’t going to bring up what happened before. And I’m not going to do something so

What should he call it? Add paused because he didn’t know how to say it when Eun smiled and told him.

“Something so erotic.”

“.....”

“Doesn’t the word something so erotic make your heart beat loudly?”

His heart was beating so much from rage that he was going get a high blood pressure. No, he was about to have a stroke already.

She shouldn’t have any information to control him anymore.... But she was trying to harass him and keep him in control by creating a strange atmosphere like this.

There were previous cases of Eun temping and provoking Add like this and Add could have just ignored or sternly scolded her each time. If those didn't work, he could have always just attacked her.

But.....it was a bit different this time. When Add hesitated, Eun spoke to him in a seductive voice.

"If I'm going to be punished by the boy anyways, wouldn't an erotic punishment be more fitting? I'd also like to strengthen my partnership with the boy with this chance."

"There's no such partnership in the world."

"Boy, you don't understand how the world works at all. Relationships between man and a woman is always like this. Isn't it an eternal truth that no matter how angry a man gets, he becomes soft in front of woman's breasts?"

Eun smiled then spoke about something practical this time.

"Doing something erotic with me should also help you get a kiss from one of the girls in the El Search Party later."

"It hasn't even been an hour since you confessed that you don't know much about human emotions."

Add spoke sharply but Eun didn't pretend to listen and was just stroking the wrinkles on the bedsheet.

Light-skinned fingers moved about on the bed dizzily.

Should he just ignore her and leave the room? But Add forcefully ignored this choice. It felt so awkward that he wanted to give up everything but nothing would be solved by running away from here.

"Eun."

"Call me more sweetly if possible."

Eun's was giving a bold request but this was the time for Add to speak honestly. He cleared his throat and spoke to Eun seriously.

"I won't say that I have a positive feeling towards you. I don't like your way of doing things and how you deceived me all this time makes me angry. But I don't intend to nitpick or take revenge on you because of that."

"How come?"

Eun who lay sideways on the bed sunk her face halfway into the bedsheet and asked.

“Your help will also be definitely needed in defeating D. That’s why I won’t bring up past grudges and I’ll pretend they never happened if we can get rid of D.”

“Burying the past wouldn’t be that easy.”

“It’s possible.”

If Add could just achieve his goal by defeating D, he had no intention of bringing up Eun’s past misdeeds. But Eun who basically almost had her chest revealed shook her head from side to side lightly.

She looked like a playful cat when she did that while her face was buried in the bedsheet.

“Maybe boy can move on like that but that’s not possible for me.”

“What?”

“Boy might be able to say it’s just something that happened in the past and forget but I can’t do that very well. I’ve lived and fought for too long.”

Add who was a victim was saying he’s not going to make a big deal about what happened in the past..... but Eun was saying that Add shouldn’t do that. Add was feeling confused when Eun stopped rubbing her cheek on the bed then got up. Her clothes got dishevelled even more because of that and her cleavage got revealed.

But Eun didn’t even bother fixing her clothes and stared at Add with a strange gaze.

“Boy might be able to ease his mind like that but I can’t do that. How much more embarrassing words is he going to make a girl say?”

“.....”

Add thought for a moment at these unexpected words.

Add had been cooperating with Eun so far but wasn’t too fond of her. Her various harassments were annoying....and it was obvious to be suspicious of someone who orders you around while not sharing much information.

There was no way you’d be fond of someone who orders you around while sitting on top of your head.

But.... Add had never thought about how Eun felt about herself in those situations. Add not being fond of Eun was obvious, but what did Eun think about her own situation?

They had conversed many times but she had almost never revealed her inner thoughts.

“If you....”

Have a sense of guilt or a guilty conscience? Add was about to instinctively say this but closed his mouth. Eun's gaze right now, this wasn't an harassment that she had done up till now.

She was serious.

".....If you think you've wronged me in the past then repay me by cooperating with me from now on. That should be fine."

"Like I said, that kind of conclusion is only considering boy's perspective."

One who should be giving the punishment, one who should be taking revenge was saying he was just going to let things slide but the perpetrator was demanding that she couldn't accept this.

"What I mean is, there needs to be something to tie things up for us to shake off all the negative feelings and fight together."

"....."

This stupid seduction was for that sake? She wasn't provoking him?

When Add stared dumbfounded, Eun flapped her collar.

But Add didn't turn away his gaze this time. He clicked his tongue instead and spoke as if telling Eun to listen up.

"What a stupid fox....."

"I may not look it but I'm...."

"That wasn't even a seduction. How useless."

Eun frowned when Add spoke sharply. But Add's words were faster than Eun's response.

"I can't trust you in the first place so doing something like this will just make me think you have something else up your sleeves. Do you think I'm an idiot?"

"It's normal for men to just jump in when they see women's breasts."

"That's something only mindless beasts do."

Well Add didn't know what other men were like and he wasn't interested anyways. What was important right now was his method.

"Stop trying to gloss this over with something stupid like this. It's not like I'm going to trust you even if you do this, and what you've done won't be erased. I said I won't make an issue of it, I didn't say I'll forget about everything."

"That's why....."

“So if you have any sense of guilt or aching conscience.....”

He had never thought Eun had such emotions but if it was true, then there needed to be something to tie this all up.

“So cooperate properly with me until the end.”

“That’s why....”

“I have the upper hand now so why are you keep doing something that I didn’t even ask of you? Not only that but you even threw an injured person into the hot springs, you’re keep making me say tiresome things.”

Talking with her won’t get anywhere. Add boldly approached the bed and sat.

Eun seemed slightly surprised but Add didn’t pay attention to her and lay down putting his head on her tail.

“At least your tail is useful. I’ll use it as a pillow from time to time.”

“What?”

“This is my first demand. I’m tired so I’m going to sleep for a bit.”

Add said this and closed his eyes.

Well, if Eun really had a guilty conscience from what she did to Add then there needed to be a gesture of reconciliation. Add could also accept if it was just borrowing her tail.

Also, it was comfortable when he slept on it before.

“Sigh.....”

Add could hear Eun’s sigh but he ignored by pretending he was asleep. Then other tails moved to cover Add’s body.

“Boy is also too soft-hearted.”

Add wanted to refute her but he was asleep right now, let’s ignore her. When he didn’t answer, Eun didn’t say anything more.

Add who was covered by tails sighed in relief internally then started to make plans for his future actions.

Problem with Eun was roughly resolved. Only Eve’s core and getting a kiss from the El Search Party remained. He should also defeat Scar while at it.

There were various issues but he just had to solve them one by one. Add was coming up with an order to solve these issues but then got startled when he actually started to get sleepy. But he gave up resisting.

He wasn't fully healed yet.....and the real fight started tomorrow when the other members arrived. It was a reasonable choice to sleep in order to prepare for tomorrow.

Also

Her tails were warm.



1. From kiss

El Search Party group that headed to the Temple of Fire arrived at Hot Springs. Add heard that members who just arrived went to bathe to relieve their fatigue so he made up his mind and also headed to the men's bath.

He didn't like bathing with other people but he needed information.

When Add arrived, Raven, Elsword, Ciel and Chung were already inside the water enjoying their bath. Elsword waved his hand to greet Add.

"Big Brother Add, was everything fine on this side?"

"....."

'Lu and Rena had a big fight and Elesis and I got captured' was too long of an explanation.

"Listen to what happened on our side from the others. How did things go on your side?"

"Didn't Ms. Ignia come before us?"

".....I haven't talked properly to that priestess."

Add couldn't make the time to talk with Ignia because the information Eun revealed was too shocking. Raven explained simply.

"There were demons lying in ambush. It took some time to defeat them."

"Didn't Lu cause trouble?"

Add shrugged when Ciel asked amiably. The reason Add came to the men's bath wasn't to give trifling explanations.

"Things seems to be complicated amongst girls. It's difficult for me to explain."

".....It must be."

Raven must have guessed what might have happened because he sighed. He must also understand Rena's feelings.

Anyways, the main topic starts from here. Add nervously looked at the other guys then carefully brought up the topic.

"I have something I want to ask. But I first want a promise from all of you that you'll keep this a secret from the girls."

“What?”

“Secret?”

Chung asked confusedly and Ciel stared at Add with a strange gaze for a bit then made a mischievous smile.

“Interesting. I’ll keep it a secret.”

“Is it something you can’t tell them? What is it?”

“If it’s just consulting.....”

Elsword and Raven seem to have accepted as well. Add gulped then.....warned again.

“I’ll say it again, if you don’t keep this a secret.....”

“There must be a girl that’s on your mind, who is it?”

Add shut his mouth when Ciel asked while smiling. He wanted to deny Ciel’s words so strongly but he didn’t know if denying right now would help with the conversation that will follow.

“Let me first say that this doesn’t concern this universe.”

“Alright, so?”

Add got wary when Ciel unexpectedly showed strong interest in this topic.

Come to think of it, Add didn’t have any information about Ciel unlike the other search party members. You could conclude others were just generally naive despite this being a different universe, but there was no precedent information about Lu and Ciel.

But to catch a tiger, you must go into the tiger’s den.

“.....I’ll be straightforward. Have any of you ever kissed a girl?”

“Hmm?”

“K, kiss?”

Elsword and Chung’s eyes widened and Raven and Ciel had no responses.

Attitudes of two men keeping their silence strangely contrasted each other. Raven had an expression as if he was reluctant about this topic while Ciel looked like he was trying to prevent himself from laughing.

It will look lame if Add withdrew the topic now that he started it.

“There’s someone I have to kiss. But I don’t know how I should do that. If any of you have experience with it, I’d like to hear about your experience or any other information regarding it....”

“.....”

Add trailed his words because he got troubled from the stares of the guys.

“.....I know it’s strange to ask something like this.”

“N, no. I, it’s not strange at....all.”

Ciel was covering his mouth with his hands and shivering. Add became annoyed when they made eye contact because Ciel was looking at him with a strangely warm gaze.

Add ignored Ciel then looked around at the other three.

“.....What does that mean?”

“Hmm.....”

Elsword was making a face as if he was bewildered and Chung was embarrassed with his face all red. Two of them didn’t seem like they’d be much of a help.

Raven had his head turned away with his mouth shut. It seemed like he was going to spare his words much as possible.....and Add didn’t have intentions to pressure him to talk.

“Pfft, pfft.”

The problem was.... only one remaining after the elimination rule was Ciel who was currently struggling not to laugh.

When Add looked back at Ciel with a reluctant gaze, Ciel covered his mouth with his hands then turned away.

“Don’t laugh at me.....”

“I, I’m not..... ah.”

Ciel was shaking trying not to laugh. Add felt like hitting his bare exposed back.

The reason for Add’s face becoming red probably wasn’t only because heat from the hot spring.

“.....I’m asking seriously.”

“Hmm.....”

Elsword must have realized this wasn’t a joke and groaned troublesomely then spoke.

“Want me to ask Big Sis about it for you?”

“.....Don't do it ever. I already said this is a secret from the girls. I won't forgive you if you do.”

Elsword scratched his head troublesomely when Add glared at him.

“But isn't that something guy and girl does together? Wouldn't it be better to ask what girls think about it?”

That was a rather mature(?) opinion coming from Elsword but Add shook his head. Add said this was about his universe but that was just an excuse. This was something that had to be done in this universe in order for him to go back to the original universe.

It was an information that shouldn't be revealed to the girls of the Search Party. He wanted to keep it a secret much as possible.

“I'm sorry Mr.Add. I don't think I'll be much help.”

“I didn't expect much from you.....”

Chung made a complicated expression at Add's sharp response. Raven was still keeping silent and Ciel was struggling to hold in his laugh.

“.....”

Add anticipated only ones amongst the El Search Party that likely had this kind of experience was Raven and Ciel who were older.

But Raven's atmosphere was as if he didn't want to talk and Ciel was.....

“Pfft, hahahaha.....”

Going to die from laughing too much. Add internally wished he really did drop dead right now.

“I was skeptic but you guys can't help me after all. Let's stop talking about this. Remember, don't.....”

“Ah, wait Add. Pfft, hahaha.....”

Ciel waved his hands to stop Add. It was annoying how he burst out into laughter in middle of his words but Add decided to listen to what he had to say for now.

“Alright, so do you mean there's a girl who's on your mind in your universe? Who is it?”

“Do I have to reveal that?”

“I can't give any advices if I don't know who.”

Add didn't answer right away to Ciel who finally stopped laughing, no, who was still laughing but stopped laughing out loud.

Who will he kiss?

“.....”

Although Add bought time by keeping silent, he couldn't get a quick answer to this question. Add had asked the guys because it might be a good reference if he heard about the guys' experience.

This had been originally for gathering information. But Add couldn't ignore Ciel's suggestion.

“I see, so it changes depending on who.”

Eun did also say something similar while mentioning about affection points. Add delved into his thoughts while stroking his chin. So far, he had blindly thought that he was going to raise the affection point of someone.... But that was too vague.

It needed to be more thorough.

“I see, that's right.”

Ciel was watching with an excited gaze as Add delved into his thoughts. Although Ciel was being annoying, he was the only consultant right now.

“You said Lu and I weren't there so that leaves the girls except Lu..... Is it one of Aisha, Rena, Eve, Elesis or Ara?”

Chung stared straightly at Add when names of the girls were mentioned. Elsword stared piercingly at Add when Elesis was mentioned.

And Raven was just staring quietly.

Add's expression became nervous when gazes of three naked(because this was a bath) guys focused on him. Three of them didn't say anything.....but were giving off a strange pressure.

The atmosphere was as if there might be trouble if Add said something wrong.

“Big Brother, you can't possibly be.....”

Elsword stopped in middle of his words and scratched his head. Elsword was groaning as if he couldn't organize his thoughts then glared at Add.

“Thinking about Big Sis right?”

“.....You think I'm that suicidal?”

He'd be glad if he didn't lose a limb or two after kissing her. Add wasn't putting Elesis in the list of candidates in the first place.

Just dealing with her was bothersome enough, so affection points? Ridiculous.

Add answered with detest at the idea but Elsword didn't seem like he was listening.

"I don't want to meddle.....but you have to beat me first if you want to do it with Big Sis."

"....."

Elsword was acting like he would have pulled out his sword if this wasn't a bath. Add was so bewildered that he retorted.

"Do you think I'm crazy? Why would I make approaches to that girl? Stop speaking nonsense....."

What do you call these kinds of guys again? Sister complex? But Elsword calmly expressed his opinion despite Add's annoyed response.

"I won't accept anyone who's weaker than Big Sis. Fight me first."

"....."

Is he saying if anyone wants to kiss Elesis, they must beat him first? How does that process come about? If you want to kiss the older sister, you must fight and beat her younger brother? What universe is that culture from?

"Drop it. Didn't I say clearly that it wasn't Elesis?"

"Then who is it, Mr.Add?"

Add closed his mouth at Chung's question. This situation felt like he fastened the first button of a coat wrong. Add hasn't been wary of the other members because he was focusing only on his own tasks, but.....

'Wait.... So guys here are mindful about girl members as well?'

Hypothesis that Add hadn't even thought about passed through his mind.

Elsword cares about Elesis. Although Elsword's reaction was over the top, this was understandable since they were siblings..... But others too?

"....."

It felt like he carelessly touched upon complicatedly tangled feelings and relationships of the Search Party. When Add wasn't saying anything, Raven who had been keeping silent all this time opened his mouth.

"It's about something from that universe, so it's not something we should meddle in."

".....I know. But you can't with Big Sis. I won't accept anyone who's weaker than Big Sis."

Just by what authority did he have the right to say something like that.....? Also, saying that he won't accept any man who was weaker than Elsis was not too different from saying he was going let his sister be single forever.

"I also think that's a bit...."

"So, Add. Who's the girl you're concerned about?"

Ciel, the culprit who inflated this issue asked again without hiding how much he was enjoying this. Add who was feeling like he was cornered rolled his eyes for a while looking for a way to answer then stood up quickly.

This calls for a tactical retreat.

"I wasn't thinking right. This conversation doesn't seem too useful so let's stop here."

Gazes of the guys followed him but Add ignored and quickly escaped from the bath. This was running away even thinking subjectively, but he had no choice but to escape in this situation.

Hot springs lounge, it was a place located between men and women's bath.

Add sat down on a chair in the empty lounge then sighed in relief. It felt like he was freed from a pressure.

"Phew, this is giving me a headache. Seriously....."

Add, with his face red from getting out of the hot springs organized his thoughts while drinking a bottle of water. He was retracing the events just now to figure out how this error, this awkward atmosphere came about....

"So the El Search Party that I was in was just Eve, Elsword, me, Rena and Ara...."

Chung did join later too. Anyways, the other El Search Party's relationships had been rather straightforward.

For an easy comparison, you could say Rena was the eldest sister who embraced everyone, the youngest kid was Elsword, Eve was the brainy second sister, Ara was the clumsy third sister, and Add himself....was the rebellious eldest brother who didn't like how things were going in the household.

"....."

Eldest brother? It was funny even though Add was the one who thought it. Add pressed on his forehead then sighed.

Anyways, although this kind of relationship existed..... Add had never thought about love relationship amongst the old group. Making Eve turn to look at him was.....how should he describe it? It was because a cat that he was fond of was not even giving him a single glance and was always playing with some strange red haired kid.

“So that means....”

But circumstances must be different in this universe in this El Search Party. First of all, 9 of them had gathered and even Lu and Ciel joined so their relationships must be a bit different.

No, he won't be able to arrive at the core detail if he merely said relationships.

Let's say male-female relationships.

“.....”

Although the word felt a bit reluctant, Add couldn't deny that it was a correct expression. People with different circumstances and personalities have gathered so it would be stranger if things had progressed per Add's previous knowledge.

Add had to think of this El Search Party as a similar but different group than the El Search Party he had known.....

“No.....”

Add might have been just unaware and maybe there had been a strange atmosphere between males and females in 5-member El Search Party too. Add shook his head from side to side when things became even more complicated the more he thought.

“This is driving me crazy.....”

He had planned to ask the guys first to obtain knowledge and information but it felt like he ended up unnecessarily touching upon something he shouldn't have.

“Not only that, but I have to do it with someone from this universe to go back.....”

If Add tried to kiss this universe's Elsis, Elsword will come to attack him with his sword drawn. Not only that but similar problem could happen with the other girls as well.

“What should I do?”

Figuring out a way to defeat D and stealing Eve's core was already a handful, but did he really have to worry about male-female relationships that he had never been interested in all his life?

Add was letting out heavy sighs when he heard a voice from behind him.

“Mr.Add?”

A familiar voice, Add looked back to see Ara with her eyes wide open.

“Do you have something you’re worried about?”

“Mind your own business.”

Ara didn’t mind Add’s cold reply and sat beside him. Wondering why Ara was acting like this, Add took a brief glance at her but she just had her mouth shut and was looking forward.

She must have been in the hot springs just now because her skin was dyed red.

“Umm.... Would you mind if I asked one question?”

“Don’t ask.”

Ara was hesitant but nodded. She was looking at her own feet with a gloomy air about her.....but it didn’t seem like she was going to get up and leave.

Add frowned then changed his words.

“Just say it if you’re going to act depressed beside me. Although I won’t promise that I’ll answer.”

Ara’s expression turned bright at the approval then she asked.

“Me in your universe..... Was I successful in turning Elder Brother Aren back into human?”

“.....Ran huh.”

Add’s universe and this universe were different yet similar.

It seems the fact that Ara’s older brother became a demon, and that Ara was fighting to turn Ran back into human was the same.

“Why do you want to know that? Whether you turned Ran back or not in my universe doesn’t have anything to do with you.”

“.....That’s true.”

Ara acknowledged quietly then sighed. Her appearance was that of a beauty drenched in sorrow when she was keeping quiet.

Add who was staring at Ara’s face realized he was making observations he hadn’t done before in his life so he turned his gaze away while making fake coughs.

“I said this already but my universe is currently being ruled by D. Ran also works under D so he’s enemy of the El Search Party. If I find a way to defeat D and go back.....then maybe a way to turn my universe’s Ran back into human might open.”

“Really? I’m very glad!”

Ara’s expression turned bright suddenly as she clapped. How her expression changed drastically from a depressed sigh to a smile was reminiscent of a flower blooming. When Add stared at her, Ara got surprised from Add’s gaze and covered her mouth.

After a while, Ara slowly confessed her thoughts.

“Just like Mr.Add said, even if Elder Brother Aren returned to normal in that universe....it doesn’t have anything to do with me. But I’ll still be happy if that happened.”

“Why?”

“Because it means that there’s a possibility that I can turn Elder Brother back to normal.”

Ara spoke while staring at her feet.

“Ms.Aisha explained it to me. Parallel universes are worlds of possibilities, that they are places with all possible events that could happen. If Elder Brother Aren returned to normal in Mr.Add’s universe, wouldn’t that mean that there’s a possibility that it could happen in this universe as well?”

“You’re speaking nonsense.....”

Add cut her off abruptly.

“The theory that parallel universes are portions of possibilities is correct but it encompasses an immensely large range. It’s actually just a wordplay. Even universe where Elsword is a girl or universe where Rena is a man can theoretically exist. According to probabilities anyways.”

“Really? Mr.Elsword is a girl?”

“.....”

When Ara opened her eyes widely in surprise, Add kept quiet from being awestruck. But Ara must have interpreted the silence in a positive way because she made a very curious expression.

“Mr.Elsword would be very cute if he was a girl. How is she like? I want to see her too. Of course, he’s cute right now too.”

“Don’t change the topic in a weird direction. It’s annoying.”

“Ah, sorry. Did I act too excited?”

At Add's words, Ara meekly lowered her gaze and apologized. It felt like looking at a puppy that had been energetically moving around its owner then become saddened after being scolded.

It was difficult to ignore.

"I don't know in detail about relationship between you and Ran in here.....but I can only say something irresponsible like try your best. It might work out if you try. I'm also willing to help you long as it doesn't get in the way of my objectives. "

"Thank you! But Elder Brother Aren is....."

"I'm not saying this emptyly. You did....."

Recalling past events, Ara did help Add out in various ways. In their first battle with Elesis, Ara believed in Add's plan and bravely threw herself into the danger zone.

Come to think of it now, Ara who was in charge of the front line was Add's most trustworthy chess piece. Precious chess piece that followed his order without a question no matter how strange the order was.

He had never thanked her.....but come to think of it now, she was a very important individual.

"You did help me out in various ways after all."

"I did?"

Ara obviously couldn't comprehend but Add didn't explain further. Add was confident that he knew better than anyone about feeling of wanting to get back the person precious to you.

Just like he helped Elsword who was trying to get Elesis back, there was no reason he couldn't help Ara who was trying to get Aren back.

"I have to return soon as possible but tell me if you need help with anything during that time. You don't even have the brains to think after all."

Add's tone ended up becoming like how he treated Ara that he knew. But Ara nodded innocently without complaints.

"Yes, I'll ask right away if I have anything I'm curious about."

"....."

So this Ara was also naive in the end. Her actions were sharper and she had a strangely darker air about her but how she was a well-mannered and innocent girl was still the same.

If you were to compare her to an animal, she'd be more like a dog or something else in the dog family. She trusts people easily and it feels like she'd readily follow you while wagging her tail if you just said couple nice things to her.

“Well, fox is also in the dog family.....”

“What do you mean?”

When Ara tilted her head at what Add said to himself, Add just waved his hand up and down in response. Then Ara's gaze followed the hand's movement and she nodded quietly. This was rather cute so Add unknowingly waved his hand repeatedly then Ara's gaze kept following his hand without saying a word.

“.....”

He had never thought about this before...but isn't Ara way too easy to handle? Add who was staring at Ara with his hand on his cheek tried applying this thought while still half in doubt.

“Hand.”

“?”

“Hand.”

When Add spoke two times in a row, Ara tilted her head while politely holding out both of her hands forwards. She looked like a kid getting her hands examined.

....She really held them out? Add was bewildered but still moved on to the next experiment.

“Try doing a backflip.”

“Okay.”

Without asking why, Ara stood up to kick the ground lightly then spun around in midair once then landed. After performing a magnificent backflip, Ara stared at Add without saying a word.

Like a puppy waiting for her next order.

“.....”

Add wanted to deny the comparison that he made in his head but he was already making the conclusion.Ara was way too nice of a person. No, saying that she was a nice person was a bit different than this.

“What should I do next Mr.Add?”

“Sit.”

Ara immediately sat beside Add again. Add chuckled at Ara's attitude that looked like she was waiting for his next words.

Ara was dog-type. She obediently carries out orders she's given and leaves question about the order for later. Add did know she had this kind of tendency before but.....

Add was thinking when Ara suddenly pushed her face closer to him. Add got surprised from the sudden lack of distance that he lost his balance while trying to back up.

Add was about to fall when Ara hastily grabbed his arm.

"Watch out Mr.Add."

".....T, Thanks."

Add was in an awkward position where he was half fallen on the ground. But Ara didn't let Add up right away and asked carefully.

"Mr.Add, do you have something you're worried about after all?"

"What?"

"Didn't Mr.Add say you'll help me? I also want to help Mr.Add."

"First....."

Add was about to say let go of his arm first but froze from the thought that came up in his mind. Ara's determined gaze, her exquisite facial features.

And her red lips.

"....."

Dog-type, she holds out her hands if you ask for them. She doesn't demand an explanation for orders she's given. Not only that, but according to Eun, she's the easiest candidate to raise the affection points of.

What will happen if he asked her for a kiss?

Add felt a strange reluctance at his own thought but his brain was running logically.

Biologically speaking, something like a kiss was just a simple membrane contact. Others seems to be all worked up over something this insignificant and applying various emotions to the act..... But Add who was an engineer could coldly conclude that it was just a simple membrane contact.

I need a kiss in order to go back, please do it with me. How would Ara react if he said this? She'll obviously be embarrassed....but wouldn't she agree if he spoke his words right?

“.....Mr.Add?”

Add who was deep in thought while looking at Ara's pretty lips came to his senses when Ara called him. But he still didn't know what to say. Should he ask her to let go of his arm? Or.....

Add was thinking while staring straightly at Ara but then turned around from feeling a strange presence.

Cold gaze, Eve had appeared before anyone had realized and was staring coldly at Add and Ara who was holding onto his arm.

Add really didn't know what to say.

Eve approached slowly as Add stayed frozen. Let's hope that her gaze being frostier than usual is just an imagination.

“Don't do something weird in a public lounge, useless person.”

“That's not it Ms.Eve. Mr.Add was about to fall so I caught him.”

Eve tried to push Add down after hearing Ara's explanation. Add staggered but barely managed to not fall and stood up right after.

“You could have just fell down, useless.”

When Add didn't answer and fixed his crumpled clothes, Eve's gaze became even colder.

“You could have just stayed rolling on the floor, useless.”

“What's wrong Ms.Eve?”

Ara asked carefully because the air felt was like Eve was scolding Add.

“I'll explain it to you later so return to your room. I have something to talk about with this man who should have been better off rolling on the floor.”

“.....Can I?”

Ara asked carefully after looking at Add. It seemed Ara could at least read that this situation was serious. Add nodded silently.

“Then.... two of you have a nice talk.”

Ara reluctantly left the lounge. Soon as Ara left, Eve glared at Add while expelling an icy aura. She seemed more even more offended compared to when Add had first arrived in Lanox.

“I won’t forgive you do something indecent to Ara.”

“What?”

Eve spoke sharply with an icy voice.

“Ara opens her heart to anyone and treats them kindly. I won’t forgive anyone who disrespects her good will.”

“....”

Were those words something that Eve should say? When Add was taken aback and stared back crookedly, Eve stretched her arm out as if there was no point in talking anymore. Then Oberon and Ophelia were summoned immediately.

Add laughed emptily at this gesture of resorting to display of force.

“You must be like this because you saw what I did just now. That was just a light experiment. Why are you so upset?”

“My comrade was insulted. I can’t let this slide.”

Well, Eve that Add knew could have acted like this as well. Eves were alike in this and other universes so her showing this kind of reaction was understandable.

“Comrades....? Since when were you so close with Ara?”

“Don’t judge me by your standards.”

Eve was treating Add with a tone as if she was disgusted with just having to talk to Add. It seemed Eve became very upset after seeing Add train(?) Ara.

Was the observation that Eve’s reaction was like ‘how dare you try to mess with our puppy!’ a bit twisted?

“Kukukuk, so.... Seeing me play with Ara a bit upset you that much?”

Add asked while sneering because Eve’s words were unexpected for him. Eve sighed then folded her arms. Then Oberon and Ophelia disappeared through the dimension gate.

She must have realized she got too riled up.

“Ara tends to be fooled easily by others. I especially don’t want her to be involved with a useless person like you that only tries to come up with petty schemes. If you want to speak with Ara from now on, then you’ll have to speak through me.”

“.....”

Why was she being so overprotective? This was a bit surprising but Add continued the conversation to get some more information out of this.

“Are you saying I should speak everything through you if I want to talk with Ara? Isn’t that a bit over the top?”

“This rule will stand until I determine that you won’t insult Ara anymore.”

“.....”

That’s right. Come to think of it, Eve was the second sister and Ara was the youngest sister.

So should he think of this as the second sister being protective of her naïve younger sister and trying to keep an eye on anyone that might harm her?

Add went over the relationship chart in his head then acknowledged Eve’s actions. But he still asked with a thought of what else he could find out.

“Why? What did I do? I just lightly consulted with her. I did play a little joke at the end but this shouldn’t be anything you should get so worked up over.”

Eve must have not expected this question because she hesitated for a bit then spoke slowly.

“....I felt something very indecent from how you treated Ara. Although I’m not exactly sure what it was.”

“.....”

She was right on the mark. To think Nasods could be this sharp.

Add was in shock and admiration at Eve’s superior senses but Eve must have interpreted that as Add being suspicious. Eve made an unpleasant expression.

“Anyways, it will be like I said for a while. I’ll also tell Ara to not talk with you alone. If you do not comply with this, I’ll speak about this to Elesis.”

“.....”

Totally forceful and even with an added threat. But her instinct was right on the mark.

Add was taken aback at this turn of events but was keeping quiet for now. Eve was very furious right now so saying something to retort back will only fuel her anger.

Of course, Eve will never admit that she was being angry right now.

When Add kept silent, Eve must have determined that Add understood and turned around to leave. That was the moment Add was aiming for.

Time to go on the offensive during the moment when she thinks everything is finished.

“Eve.”

Eve who was about to walk away glanced back. Add issued a challenge while Eve still had a confused and loosened expression.

“What do you think a kiss is?”

“.....”

Eve thought for a moment then answered confidently.

“Isn’t that just a membrane contact? Why do you ask?”

“.....Kukukuk, never mind. It’s fine.”

Add shrugged as if it was nothing then Eve walked away. Add withdrew his smile after Eve disappeared from his view.

“To think our point of views would align in this.....”

Well, Add was a Nasod engineer and Eve was a Nasod. Two of their thoughts and point of views were similar. Of course, Eve had the tendency to distance herself from Add.... But you couldn’t deny that two of them had similar point of views.

“I’ll first organize all the information.”

Let’s head back.

Add saw someone unfamiliar as he was returning to his lodge. Red hair, but it didn’t belong to Elsword or Elesis.

The one who was holding a spear and looking far out towards the volcano was Ignia.

“If I’m correct she was... priestess of fire.”

Add never heard about Ignia in his universe so he had no information on her. But he did know from experience that Ignia was very powerful. Ignia must have sensed someone was nearby so she turned around. Then she waved her hand towards Add.

“Ooh. Nice to see you!”

Ignia gave a weird greeting then approached quickly and cut to the chase.

“You, is it true that you came over from a different universe? Elesis said so.”

“What do you want?”

Elesis must have determined that this wasn't an information that had to be hidden. Well, a lax group like the El Search party couldn't possibly understand the concept of controlling and hiding information.

Although Eun was a very special case.

“Ah, not much.... I'm Priestess of Fire, Ignia. Did I have to explain that? I have something I want to ask you.... you saw me in your universe too right?”

“No, this is my first time seeing you.”

Ignia asked brightly but her expression turned stiff when she heard the answer. She asked again reluctantly.

“Could it be..... that I died on that side?”

That was a miss. Add spoke while frowning.

“This is the first time I heard about a priestess. I've never heard about a priestess or have been to a village called Lanox where I came from.”

“So I wasn't even there?”

“It's not like all conditions are same between parallel universes. It's not a big deal if you didn't exist on our side.”

At Add's answer, Ignia let out a huge sigh then crouched down then sighed again. She looked totally let down so Add just passed by her.

.....But he couldn't walk forward. Ignia who was crouching down had grabbed Add's sleeve.

“Wait, here I am being really depressed and you're going to ignore me and go on your way?”

“I don't know the information you want.”

Despite being a girl with the power to incinerate hundreds of demons.....tone of her voice was light. So she wasn't asking how herself from another universe was doing out of curiosity like Ara?

At Add's answer, Ignia made a very displeased face then forcefully dragged Add down.

She was unexpectedly strong so Add ended up being dragged down and hitting his bottom on the floor. Add got annoyed at how he was sitting on the floor....but Ignia protested as she glared at Add.

“If someone is having a hard time like this then it’s a common courtesy to stay beside and protect their side! How dare you try to ignore me.”

“.....”

It seemed she was talking about something but Add couldn’t understand. Add even forgot being angry and made a blank expression from the words that he was trying to translate in his head.

But Ignia restlessly spewed out words at Add.

“Do you even know how much I looked forward to meeting you ever since I heard you came from a different universe? Do you think I arrived a day earlier for no reason? It was to meet you! But I got scared to confirm things from you so it took an entire day until I settled my mind. So how dare you try to end this with just couple words? Also, didn’t I appear and help you guys? Of course, I would have eradicated all the demons anyways but I think I’m in a position where I deserve some thanks from you. So me, who helped you is really depressed right now but rather than worry about me and asking what’s wrong, you try to ignore me instead? Just what’s wrong with you? You’re not popular, right? Do you not know about a girl’s heart?”

“.....”

I can’t understand what you’re saying in the first place. While thinking this, Add listened to the rain of complaints coming at him with a blank expression then barely managed to catch some words that he could understand.

“.....Yes, you appearing and cleaning up all the demons was very good. Thanks.”

“Are you trying to end this by just saying that? Then what about my heart that was beating so much before I met you? Do you think you can get away by just saying you don’t know anything?”

Add got startled unlike himself when Ignia glared at him with sizzling gaze.

“.....I, I’m sorry.”

“Do you think it will all end with just an apology? Maybe they let you get away with that in your universe but it’s different here.”

Just what do you want from me then? Add couldn’t understand why Ignia was so angry at him so he just kept his mouth shut. It didn’t look like this girl will let him go....and he didn’t have enough strength to escape from her grasp so having her let all her emotions out felt like the correct response.

When Add kept silent, Ignia who was fuming with anger looked like she calmed down and steadied her breath.

Ignia got up by stabbing her spear on the ground and leaning on it. She sighed as she brushed her bang to the side then held out her hand towards Add.

“Sorry, I said too much because I got too worked up.”

“.....”

It might not be over. When Add silently grabbed her hand and stood up, Ignia leered at him.

“But you’re also at fault. Do you realize how shocked I was when I heard that I don’t exist in your universe? Shouldn’t you say something like that more carefully?”

“Is that really something you should be so shocked about?”

“What?”

Ignia stared at Add in disbelief as if trying to say ‘how can such a person exist? Is he even a human?’. She looked quite appalled so Add traced back on what he said to check if he really did say something wrong.

Ignia withdrew her appalled gaze then spoke. Her tone was calm unlike before.

“.....Ah, yes. If you came here from the other side, then you wouldn’t know how things are going in here. Things aren’t going too well in this universe.”

“I heard about it roughly. Elves are about to go extinct, there’s a dragon as our enemy and Velder Kingdom was destroyed.”

“Yes....but it seems you didn’t hear that all other priestesses except me are dead.”

The word priestesses felt fresh for Add. No, it seems he did hear it somewhere..... Add was rummaging over his memories when Ignia spoke depressingly.

“All other priestesses were killed by the demons. Even those two kids that I promised to protect.....”

Ignia’s eyes were filled to the brim with tears as she spoke. She wiped her eyes then bit her lower lips as she tried to collect her emotion.

“I know that those kids won’t come back. But I had a thought that if an alternate universe existed, maybe they might be living happily in there.....I thought that would be really nice.....”

“.....They must have been important to you.”

Ignia gave a small nod.

“Of course, I know that confirming something like this doesn’t have any meaning. I couldn’t protect them in the end. Still... I ended up thinking how nice it would be if there was a universe where those kids were safe.”

“.....”

Add also knew what she meant. That’s right, Add jumped over time for the possibility of protecting someone precious to him, possibility of getting back someone precious to him.

But time travel wasn’t something that others could use.

You can’t ever meet people that have been lost or dead again. That’s the cruel rule of the world.

Add didn’t say anything as he looked at Ignia sorrowfully lower her gaze.

Add chose the path of jumping over time but telling others to do the same was impossible. If there was still a possibility of protecting the ones important to them, and possibility that it could be achieved, then Add can encourage them and even lend his help.

He could help Ara with turning Ran back.

But Ignia had already lost people that were important to her. What words from him could possibly hold any meaning for her?

As Add was thinking, a single line of thought flashed by in his head. His mouth spoke faster than his head could organize this thought.

“Legend of the water priestess.”

“.....What?”

“Legend of the water priestess, story....about a priestess who fell in love with a demon.”

Add became shocked at this information that he just remembered. This was a story he heard from Chung back in Hamel. Add hadn’t been interested in it back then but its significance changes now that he’s face to face with Ignia, the priestess of fire.

“It’s a legend that has been passed down in my universe. I thought that it was just a simple legend.....”

“There’s a priestess?”

Ignia’s mood changed then she asked while pushing her face closer to Add almost as if she was going to grab him by the collar. But Add responded level-headedly.

“It’s a legend from hundreds of years ago. But from your reaction, priestess of water did seem to exist.”

“.....Yes, Hamel’s Sasha.”

There was no proof that the water priestess from the legend and this universe’s water priestess were same individuals. But there was a high chance that they were.

“I didn’t mention in detail about what’s happening in my universe to others. Keep what I’m about to say from now on only a secret between us.”

“.....”

Ignia looked at Add with eyes filled with anticipation as she nodded. Well, she didn’t look that trustworthy to keep a secret but it wouldn’t be a big deal for Add if this detail was leaked.

“I think the time has been distorted in my universe.”

“What does that mean?”

“I don’t know in detail either. But there’s someone called D trying to rule over time and space and time is being distorted in that process. Things that shouldn’t be happening are happening.”

Add from present and future existing at the same time was something that should normally be impossible.

‘Eun also spoke about this as if D was cheating, breaking the rules.’

Add recalled the wooden lattice board that Eun showed him, a stone on top of another stone then nodded strongly. D was existing in a form that shouldn’t be possible and was bending the world to his will.

And the order of time has been distorted in that process.

“So because of D’s work, water priestess might have changed into a person from hundreds of years ago and is being passed down as legend.”

“Then.....”

“If I defeat D, then the priestesses might return to present.”

No, it will certainly happen. D who rules over time was trying to obtain space that Aisha had been controlling to become the king of time and space..... But what will happen if Add defeats D?

There will be a vacancy for the throne. Not just any throne but the throne of king of time, a position of enormous power.

Then who should take up that empty position? Shouldn’t it obviously be the winner?

Add gripped his fist tightly at this thought surging up from within him.

“If I..... defeat D. Then everything will be solved.”

He'll become the king of time after D. He'll obtain the power to go back to the past freely..... then he'll get back the person that was precious to him.

Defeating D was same as achieving his goal. These two shouldn't be thought separately.

Add became assured that he had to defeat D not because of others, not because Eun said Add was the only one who could defeat D.....but to achieve his ultimate goal.

There was no detailed explanation but Ignia seemed like she understood.

“I see, so in that universe.....there's still a chance that Gloria and Darkmoon can be happy?”

“Well, if I go back and achieve my goal.... Then I could consider it.”

He could consider doing it as a favor for Ignia to commemorate his goal becoming clearer. Ignia bowed when Add spoke slowly.

“Yes, I'll be counting on you. Although it will be impossible in this universe.... But please protect them so those kids can be happy on that side.”

“.....I'll do that.”

“Thanks.....”

Gloria, Darkmoon. They were names that Add haven't heard before but he could sense that they had been very dear to Ignia.

When Add accepted readily, Ignia made an expression as if she was relieved then leaned her spear on her shoulder.

“I won't be able to help directly with what's going on in your universe but tell me if there's anything I can do to help you. I'll do my best.”

“Kukukuk. That's.....”

Add was about to say he'll tell her later when he thinks of something but paused.

The condition Eun spoke about was to kiss with someone from the El Search Party, but did Ignia count as El Search Party?

“....What I'm about to say is an absolute secret. I'll cancel what we talked about before if you tell this to anyone.”

“Don't worry. I'm good at keeping secrets. So what can I help you with?”

Ignia replied with an extremely willing expression. She would have rolled up her sleeves if the design of her clothes allowed her to.

Add explained the situation slowly while wishing this didn't sound weird.

"For me to go back to my universe..... I need to kiss one of the girls from the El Search Party."

"What?"

"Don't doubt me. I'm not joking."

Add ignored Ignia's confused reaction then continued speaking.

Well, it sounded as if he could also do it with a guy but omitting that....

"I don't want to do it either. But there's no other way. But I.....haven't done that kind of thing before. I don't even know where to begin."

".....Uh, so are you asking me to do it with you?"

Add shook his head from side to side when Ignia got startled.

"With El Search Party from my universe. So, I have to do it with someone except Lu and you."

"Hmm....."

Ignia didn't seem convinced because she scratched her head. It would be weird if she easily believed that a way for Add to return to his original universe was a kiss. It was as if story about science fiction had suddenly turned into a story about magic and fairy tales.

Ignia repeatedly tapped the ground with the tail of her spear as she asked.

"Let's say I believe you, so how can I help?"

"This isn't something many people should know about. That will only make things more complicated and troublesome since there should be some established....personal relationships between the Search Party members as well. So I want to figure this out quietly as possible."

"Ah, of course. There's probably something like that."

That's right. He needed an informant.

Eun was still untrustworthy and was from same the universe as Add. She wouldn't be much help. So he tried to get the help of the Search Party's males but that failed. What remained was a help from the 3rd party.

Someone who knew the situation well, and someone who would support him fully without any trickery.

“So find out who’s the target that I can kiss most easily..... Find out what girls are thinking.”

“This is a really strange story..... so you’re basically asking me to gather the Search Party’s girls in one place then ask them which guy is on their mind the most?”

“.....I didn’t tell you to do that.”

Ah, why was my ears turning red just from hearing that? Add hoped Ignia wouldn’t notice his state as he rubbed his ears.

“But that should be the fastest way. Isn’t it basically gathering all the girls then having a chat about love relationships?”

Rather than Add asking the girls, Ignia who was a girl asking instead should yield more honest answers.

Ignia frowned.

“You aren’t messing with me right? I won’t let you off if that’s the case. I’ll burn you to crisp.”

“I’m not doing this because I want to.”

“.....Really?”

Ignia stared at Add for a while then nodded as if she accepted Add’s circumstance.

“Alright, then so that Gloria and Darkmoon in your universe can live happily..... I have to find out who is the girl that has the most chance of kissing with you. I may not look it but I’m still a priestess...and yet I’ll have to become some sort of love diviner for this.”

“There’s not much time so hurry.”

“Alright, alright.”

Ignia made an expression as if it couldn’t be helped then turned around.

“I’ll check it out right away tonight. But don’t get your hopes up too much.”

“You better come through.”

At Add’s words, Ignia sighed then walked away while sulking.

“Just my luck. Love divination all of a sudden.....”

Ignia was openly expressing her complaints but she will certainly try her best. Although by improvisation, Add acquired a cooperator on the girls’ side.

Even though Add had lived so far without interest in love relationships, he at least knew that this sort of topic became more honest when only people of same genders were gathered. Ignia was a magnificent cooperator in this situation.

“Alright, should I go and wait for the result?”

Let’s finish repairing the Dynamos while waiting for Ignia’s information. Add headed back to his lodge.

Moon rose high in the sky.

All of the El Search Party’s girls gathered inside the hot springs open-air bath where the golden moon was clearly visible.

“.....So why did you call us out this late?”

Aisha who was rubbing her shoulders muttered as if she had some kind of complaint. Ara modestly sat beside Aisha then replied.

“Ms.Priestess called us out here.”

“Alright, is everyone here?”

Ignia sat on top of a stone with her legs crossed then spoke cheerfully. Eve who had been bathing shoulder deep inside the water objected.

“Lu isn’t here.”

“We don’t have to wake up a sleeping kid. And...”

Ignia shook her head after recalling Add’s words. Lu didn’t count so she didn’t have to care about her.

‘...I don’t get why I have to be a love consultant.’

Ignia muttered internally while looking at the faces of bathing Search Party members one by one.

Aisha had a reluctant expression, Rena had a stiff face, Eve unexpectedly looked like she was enjoying the hot springs, Ara was politely waiting for Ignia to speak and Elesis was playing around by rubbing her chin on top of Rena’s shoulder.

‘So it just has to be one of these five? Ah, I can’t figure this out at all.....’

Still, as someone who called them out here she shouldn’t remain silent for too long. Ignia muttered internally then spoke whatever that came to her mind.

“Since this is our last night in the hot springs. I called all of you out here to have a chat with just us girls. The reason why we’re doing this at night is because guys might try to peep on us.”

“Peep on us?”

Aisha looked around while openly expressing hostility. It looked like she was going to attack immediately if she just saw a guy’s hair.

“Would there really be someone who’ll do such a thing?”

“There’s nothing bad with being cautious, Ara.”

When Ara made a surprised face as if that was impossible, Eve warned Ara saying she shouldn’t let her guard down too much.

Rena narrowed her eyes as if she didn’t like what she heard.

“Raven will control everybody on the guys’ side so that shouldn’t happen.”

“Well, if they show up thinking strange things, then I’ll send them off flying in a strange direction.”

Ignia sang inside her mind when Elesis grinned as if she needed a chance to warm up. Everyone was worked up over what Ignia had said without much thought.

She had casted the line without any bait but they bit.

When everyone spoke their minds, Ignia measured her timing then spoke appropriately.

“Come to think of it, guys in the El Search Party seems quite nice. They are good and fighting and handsome.”

Aisha denied as if she was saying drop the nonsense.

“Ah, take Elsword out of there. He’s such a kid.”

“That’s not true, Mr.Elsword is more thoughtful than he looks.”

“Only ones deserving of that praise is Big Brother Raven or Big Brother Ciel. Although Chung is cute he’s still young....”

But Ara disagreed with Aisha’s evaluation.

“But Mr.Chung tries his best very earnestly.”

“If you considered their mental ages, Raven would be highest.”

“Even Ms.Eve? Aren’t all of you treating Mr.Elsword and Mr.Chung too much like kids?”

“Well he’s my dependable brother.... But it’s still hard to take my eyes off him.”

When even Elesis joined in, Ara became sullen and shut her mouth. It looked like she didn't agree with everyone else but was keeping silent to avoid conflict.

Ignia spoke mischievously on purpose to prod.

"Ooh? It looks like Ara likes Elsword."

".....Huh? Eh? Eeeh?"

"What?!"

Startled voice from before was Ara's but who's scream was that after? Ignia and the other girls looked towards where the loud voice came from.

Aisha who suddenly became the focus of attention replied as her face turned red.

"W, why are you all looking at me strangely like that? I didn't say anything yet."

"Although... I do think that Mr.Elsword is cute...."

"What? He's cute?"

At Ara's words, Aisha forgot the circumstances and leered at Ara. It was as if she forgot being startled and now she couldn't admit such description existing in this world.

"Just what about him is cute? Even this time he almost read the map wrong and we almost got into trouble. We were glad I was keeping an eye on him. Otherwise we wouldn't have reached the Temple of Fire in time. He's such a handful troublemaker. Just who does he take after?"

"Hmm, yea. I wonder who he takes after."

Aisha who was muttering froze from the voice that came from behind her. Soft arms were hugging Aisha's neck from behind her.

"B, Big Sister Elesis?"

"What's wrong? I'm not being angry. It's true that Elsword is still lacking. I'm thankful that Aisha is always taking care of him."

Aisha pouted from what Elesis said while hugging her from behind.

"I wouldn't have to if he was at least half like you Big Sister Elesis."

"Oh? You flatter me Aisha."

"Kyah!?"

Aisha got surprised and twisted around when Elesis smiled and kissed her on the cheek.

“W, what are you doing?”

“I’m praising you instead of Big Sister Rena.”

“.....Why are you mentioning me there?”

Rena who had been keeping silent spoke up as if she couldn’t accept what was being said. Then Elesis who was hugging Aisha stole a glance at Rena as if she was very saddened.

“It’s because Big Sister Rena doesn’t give us goodnight kisses recently.”

“.....You’re all at an age where you don’t need them.”

“But you gave them before. Are you abandoning us now that we’ve grown up? As I thought, Big Sister Rena only likes little girls.”

“Don’t say something strange when the kids are listening!”

Rena got startled and raised her voice when Elesis faked a sad voice. She knew that Elesis was just messing around but she couldn’t ignore this.

But Elesis was already in full throttle and didn’t stop.

“Sniff, I see. So since I’m taller and have bigger breasts now I’m not Big Sister Rena’s type anymore? You’re only going to adore Lu from now on? Just you wait, I’ll become younger too somehow and become Big Sister’s type! If that time comes, it won’t be any use even if you beg and cry to let you touch me because I’m so cute!”

“Like I said, don’t say something strange when the kids are listening! Just when did I ever do those things!!?”

Everyone looked curiously when Rena who usually stayed cool denied so aggressively with a reddened face.

Ara asked with a surprised expression.

“So Ms.Rena will give you a goodnight kiss if you become younger?”

“Yes, how about Ara Big Sister Rena? Her body is mature but her face still looks young!”

“.....Let me go first before you talk about something like this. Big Sister Elesis.”

Aisha who was still being hugged by Elesis sighed.

Ignia’s couldn’t dare to intrude in this mess. Things seemed to be going as she intended....but then the topic flew off to a totally strange direction after Elesis joined in.

Elesis let Aisha go then she made Ara stand up, grabbed her by the shoulder then pushed her towards Rena.

“Here, Big Sister Rena! It’s Ara! Ara who looks young, is cute and strong! Adore her instead of me! I’ll be watching while bitterly shedding tears from here.”

“.....”

Rena’s face turned red as she put her hand on her forehead then sighed. She couldn’t keep up with Elesis.

“I’ll really get angry if you keep saying things that kids will misunderstand, Elly.”

Elesis shrugged then took a step back once she was called by her nickname.

“If Big Sister Rena won’t give you one, then let me give you one instead Ara.”

“Ah, yes.... thank you.”

Ara nodded with a dazed expression when Elesis lightly kissed her cheek then let her go.

Aisha who was watching from a distance sighed.

“Just what kind of mess is this.....”

“Ah, did you get jealous because I was cheating on you Aisha? Don’t worry my dear Aisha, even though I kissed with Ara, I’ll always come running for you no matter what.”

“I don’t know what you mean but please take out the word ‘cheating’ first.”

Aisha muttered as Elesis laughed merrily.

When it seemed like the situation had settled down a bit, Ignia made some fake coughs then turned back to the original topic.

“Then.... what about guys other than Elsword?”

“What do you mean?”

Eve who didn’t join in on the ruckus from before because she was enjoying the hot springs opened her eyes then asked.

Ignia didn’t want to say it herself so she just shrugged.

“Well.... you all know what I’m talking about.”

“Hmm?”



“If Big Sister Rena won’t give you one, then let me give you one instead Ara.”

Ignia felt somehow troubled at how Elesis was staring at her piercingly so she hastily continued her words.

“Although I may not look it, I’m a Priestess. I can at least do something like read people’s love compatibility.”

“Compatibility?”

Aisha seemed strangely interested. Ara also opened her eyes widely.

“Compatibility? Do you know how to do divination Ms.Priestess?”

“Well, I’m a priestess after all.....”

There was no rule that priestesses couldn’t lie after all. When Ignia answered appropriately, Elesis withdrew her gaze from Ignia then sat down.

Ignia became sweaty not because heat from the hot springs, but because she became nervous. Ignia started to become cautious towards Elesis.

‘....Why did she stare at me like that?’

Ignia could tell right away that Elesis held a strong position not only amongst girls of the group but in the entire El Search Party. Even possessing playfulness and sociability, she was technically the leader of the El Search Party.

And she was bit difficult to handle right now.

Was it because she had to follow Add’s request and prod for girls’ reaction even though she didn’t want to? Ignia felt guilty for some reason as she examined the girls’ reaction.

Rena spoke dazedly.

“Love compatibility....”

“You all must be interested.”

When Ignia grinned, Aisha folded her arms then looked away.

“Love compatibility? What use would that be? There’s no handsome guys here anyways.”

“But I’m bit interested in divination. Can you read my compatibility?”

In contrast to Aisha, Ara seemed quite interested.

Ignia had been throwing anything that she could think of trying to bring about a situation where they talked about guys of the Search Party. But she got a bit startled at Ara's overly interested reaction.

"A, alright. I'll take a look at yours after."

"What happens if you have good compatibility?"

"Well, it means you two will get together well, Eve. Although I didn't think priestesses could look into such things."

Ignia felt somehow guilty from what Elesis said so she replied however she could.

"It's just a hobby that I learned because I was bored. Don't expect too much."

"Then should I ask for my readings too? Although I think I'll get the best compatibility with Elsword."

Aisha responded sharply to Elesis' words.

"Do you believe that too Big Sister? It's just a baseless myth."

"I don't think that's something a magician should say." Eve replied to Aisha's words.

"It's just for fun. Why don't you get yours read too Aisha? Maybe you'll get a good compatibility with Elsword."

Aisha's face turned red.

"Why are you keep putting me together with that idiot?"

"Just like what you said, Elsword is still lacking. So until Elsword grows up, I want Aisha to stay beside and look after him."

"...That's something you should be doing Big Sister."

Elesis shook her head from side to side.

"But you did great in going to Temple of Fire and bringing the Fire Priestess."

"Although Big Brother Raven and Big Brother Ciel took care of almost everything..."

"So I want to entrust Elsword to you until he becomes like them."

".....What if I said I don't want to?"

When Aisha replied with a tone as if she half gave up, Elesis looked back towards Rena.

"Big Sister Rena, Aisha won't listen to me. Give me a kiss so I feel better."

“.....I told you not to say something that kids with misunderstand! And when did I ever do something like that?”

“When I just entered the Red Knights and met you for the first time? You gave me one saying I was cute.”

“Just how long ago was that?! That was just as a joke!”

Then Elesis covered up her body with her arms then looked away as if she was embarrassed.

“I’d like Big Sister to keep playing more jokes on me.....”

“....I’m going to be angry.”

It was clear that Elesis was just messing around, but Rena couldn’t help but to react because many people were watching.

Actually, Rena and Elesis had been together as comrades the longest in the El Search Party....so they knew each other’s weaknesses well. But because how their personalities were right now, Elesis was using Rena’s past and weaknesses efficiently while Rena was avoiding joking around.

Thus, Rena was overwhelmingly disadvantageous and she couldn’t get seriously furious from something minor like this. Two of them had been together for long and wanted to be together from now on as well.

Ignia who was watching the two’s squabble carefully opened her mouth.

“You keep talking about kisses.....”

“It was just a kiss on the cheek, Ms.Priestess! And I only did it because she couldn’t sleep from being scared!”

Rena protested with a loud voice as if she was falsely accused. It was as if she was saying how could someone like a priestess say such indecent words.

“Yes, anyways since stories about kisses keep coming up.....”

The story kept going off in a weird direction but Ignia’s objective tonight was collecting information. Ignia spoke carefully while hoping she wouldn’t sound odd.

“Anyone ever done it with a guy?”

“.....”

Everyone suddenly became silent. It felt like a cold wind blew by even though they were in warm hot springs.

“.....You mean on the mouth?”

“Are you talking about that pointless membrane contact?”

Ara acted embarrassed but Eve concluded biologically. And Elesis spoke regrettably while looking at Rena.

“It would have been great if Big Sister Rena was a guy.....”

Rena must have decided to ignore Elesis because she kept silent, Aisha’s face had turned bright red and she wasn’t saying anything. It seemed like Ignia finally got the control of this chaotic conversation so she sang internally while pressing for a response.

“No one is saying anything. So none of you have done it?”

“My first kiss was with Big Sister Rena during a sweet night.....”

“I’ll really get angry if you steer the topic in that direction again, Elly.”

Elesis turned around to glance at the other girls when Rena spoke sharply to her. Everyone had their own thoughts while keeping silent.

Elesis clenched her fists then nodded.

“It can’t be helped. I’ll go do it with Elsword right now.”

“What are you going to do?! No, why are you doing it!?”

Aisha got surprised and got up to stop Elesis. Elesis smiled mischievously at Aisha as if she had been waiting for her to react like this.

“Why can’t I do it? Then who should?”

“Eh? T, that’s.....”

“Is there a reason why I can’t? Is there someone already reserved for Elsword?”

Aisha’s face turned bright red at Elesis’ question as she remained silent. Ara must have imagined something as well because she asked as her face became red.

“Uh..... Is that something you must do?”

“It an pointless act, Ara.”

“It’s not pointless, Eve.”

Rena unexpectedly joined in on the conversation.

“It’s something you do when you want to convey your feelings to someone who’s important to you. I think Eve would understand too if you try it one day.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Someone important....”

Unlike Eve who responded sharply, Ara closed her mouth tightly as if she was thinking about something. Seeing this, Eve spoke as if she was reluctant to ask.

“Why are humans so interested in this ‘kiss’? Add asked me about it before too.”

“Mr.Add asked Ms.Eve about a kiss?”

Eve nodded when Ara got surprised and asked.

“He asked what I thought about kisses so I answered it’s just a membrane contact. He understood right away for someone who’s useless.”

“.....Hmm, it will be difficult to explain it in a way that Eve can understand. I think you’ll understand when you try it yourself one day.”

When even Elesis joined in, Eve looked reluctant but nodded.

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

“It’s good if you do it a lot once you have someone who’s important to you. Isn’t that right, Ms.Priestess?”

“.....Y, yes. I think so too.”

Ignia nodded in response when Elesis asked while staring carefully at her. Actually, Ignia who grew up as a priestess had never done such a thing before. But the opinion Rena and Elesis presented was reasonable.

Anyways, Ignia managed to turn the topic towards kiss... but it seemed difficult to ask what they thought about Add. She had originally planned to bring up each guy one by one until they got to Add, but the conversation went off in a wrong direction soon as Elsword’s name came up.

‘.....Do I have to be satisfied with just this?’

Although the result so far hadn’t been satisfactory, it would be troublesome if she tried to dig deeper than this and got caught. Even Ignia could sense that the fact that she was asked by Add to do this shouldn’t be found out.

Also how Elesis was looking at her was strangely bothersome. When Ignia didn’t speak anymore, Elesis muttered regrettably.

“But the reason why Big Sister Rena doesn’t give me kisses anymore.....is because I’m not important to her anymore right? But I’m always looking at Big Sister Rena.....”

“Didn’t you say you were always looking at me before.....?”

When Aisha spoke up from being confused, Elesis made a very regrettable expression.

“My heart is looking at Aisha.... But my body cannot forget Big Sister Rena’s passionate kiss. How Big Sister comforted me who was shivering from fear and worry with her hot and tenacious.....”

“Elesisssss!!”

Rena finally exploded.

Late night.

Add was repairing the Dynamos when he realized it was almost the appointed time and raised his head. Add was rubbing his eyes when Eun sleeping on the bed came into his view. She wasn’t in her small fox form and was instead in Ara’s form. Her 4 white tails were lying about on the bed.

‘4?’

Didn’t Eun originally have 9 tails? Come to think of it, there were 5 tails when he was using them as pillows yesterday and now she had 4.

“It shouldn’t matter.....”

Add exited the room and headed downstairs. He examined the condition of his Dynamos floating around him. Number of Dynamos that could be used now were 5, he just needed to repair one more.

He would like to pull an all-nighter to finish the repairs... But the El Search Party was heading out for the final showdown with demons early tomorrow.

“Although, it doesn’t look like I’ll have to fight much.”

Every individual in this El Search Party had enormous combat capabilities. Almost to the point where even D would struggle against them.

Of course, due to law of the universes it will be difficult for them to face each other.....

“After time travel, it’s now universe travel.... How ridiculous.”

Add looked back at his life and chuckled while walking along the hallway.

He was researching time travel then arrived at a distant future, Eve who held the key to him going back to the past was being destroyed by demons and finally one who was commanding those demons was his future self.

Now he escaped into another universe to avoid getting killed and to search for a way to get rid of his future self.

What a ridiculous life. Although Add didn't usually dwell in self-pity, just recalling his life made him sigh.

Add stopped at the stairway landing heading downstairs then leaned on the wall and closed his eyes. She didn't arrive even though it was little over the promised time.

Just when Add was thinking about going to see her, footsteps were heard and red haired girl appeared.

Ignia who somehow looked exhausted walked up the stairs while shaking her head then spoke after noticing Add.

"You're rather early."

"And you're late. Try to be on time, time is..."

Precious? It seemed quite empty when Add was the one saying it.

When Add stopped in middle of his words, Ignia walked up the stairs and complained.

"It's not like I was late because I was putting on makeups, I was listening to your request."

"So, the information?"

"That's..."

Add asked Ignia to find information on what El Search Party's girls thought about him.

To figure out who would be easiest to kiss.

"We should refrain from asking the girls directly from now on. Don't expect too much."

"I wasn't joking..."

"No, this is because we might get found out."

Add who was about to lecture Ignia stopped. Ignia spoke as if something was hanging on her mind.

"Elesis was giving me a weird look. It looked like you were going to get found out if I asked more specifically. That would be bad for you right?"

"...That girl is really a bother."

She was too strong as an enemy and really a bother as an ally. Add nodded after acknowledging Ignia's troubles.

“I got it. Just tell me whenever you get any more useful information. It’s probably better not to raise Elesis’ suspicion.”

“Okay. So what I got from today was....”

Ignia paused for a moment then spoke.

“Most of them seems to be interested in Elsword.”

“.....”

So you’re popular even in this universe? Add’s frowned from his mood turning fowl.

“I don’t care about that idiot. I need an information about me.”

“I’m sorry but I couldn’t find out that much. Elesis kept making the conversation go astray whenever I tried to go in detail. Although she probably didn’t realize I was doing it because you asked....”

Girls of the El Search Party are mostly attracted to Elsword, Hahahaha!

...What use did this information have for him? As Add’s made a very agitated expression from the information that was better if he didn’t hear, Ignia raised and wagged her index finger adorably.

It was strangely cute.

“Don’t get so frustrated like that and think positively. You can cross out girls that like Elsword from the list instead.”

“So, who are those?”

“Aisha and Ara....? Maybe not her. Anyways, I think we should give up on Aisha.”

“I know that too.”

Wasn’t this something that already came from Eun’s affection point(?) parameter? Raising affection point of that very prideful and arrogant Aisha wouldn’t be easy.

“And.... it seems Elesis and Rena had kissed each other before.”

“.....”

What kind of crazy talk was this? Ignia explained herself when Add looked on with an empty expression.

“She was acting as if she was joking...but although Elesis expresses physical affection freely towards other girls.... It didn’t look like she knew a lot about guys. She did get embarrassed when I asked if she had ever kissed with a guy.”

Even though Ignia had been cautious of Elesis, she did manage to examine her reactions. Elesis had continuously steered the mood by teasing or playing with other girls but she couldn't answer properly at the question asking her if she had ever kissed with a guy.

Saying she'll go kiss with Elsword....was also probably something she said to steer the mood.

"I don't intend to put Elesis in list of candidates...."

"What? Did you already make up your mind? I'm not going to be fussy or arrogant because I'm a priestess or anything.... But if you're going to make me do something for you, shouldn't you explain what you want more in detail?"

"No, that's not what I mean...."

Kiss with Elesis? He couldn't imagine it no matter what. When Add kept quiet, Ignia narrowed her eyes then asked.

"Wait, could you possibly...."

"Don't say it."

"Have not kissed with a girl before?"

I told you not to say it. Please.

Add glared at the wall as if nothing was wrong then replied while hoping he sounded cool as possible.

"Stuff like that isn't important."

"It's very important."

Ignia was waving her arms then stopped. It seemed intended to lightly smack Add's head with the spear she usually carried around but she was barehanded right now.

Ignia put one hand on her waist then looked straightly at Add.

No, she was glaring at him.

"What is this? You asked me to look into girls' hearts but you've never done it either? Is this a joke?"

".....Because there were more important things."

Saying that someone important to him gave him one before as a sign to grow up well would sound pitiful.

Ignia became furious when Add tried to evade the topic.

“Are you joking? You said you must go back so that situation in your universe can be solved right? So are you going to do things this half-heartedly?”

“I’ll deal with it when the time comes by myself.”

“That’s funny coming from a guy who never kissed with a girl. Have you even held hands with a girl?”

“Hey, I at least did that much. Not only girl’s hands but.....”

Add got furious for a moment and tried to retort but stopped after realizing what he was saying. It was such a low-class conversation.

Ignia scoffed.

“Since you said it so boldly that you needed a kiss to back.... I thought you were some kind of infamous womanizer in that universe.....”

“....I’m not doing this because I want to. And I wouldn’t have asked you if I was knowledgeable about this kind of thing.”

Ignia must have accepted because she nodded then sighed.

“So you’re saying... you can only go back if you kiss a girl from the El Search Party except Lu and me, but you’re a complete brattish kid who’ve never kissed a girl?”

“.....Who’s a brattish kid?”

“This stupid guy right in front of me.”

Ignia spoke sharply as if to say don’t try to refute her then muttered again.

“.....I thought your way of speaking was strange from the start. So I can assume that you don’t know anything about a girl’s heart?”

“.....”

Why? Do you need to know that to time travel?

But Ignia who couldn’t possibly know about time travel was groaning as if she was struggling to think of a solution. This was Add’s problem but it looked like she was worried about it as if it was her own problem.

Ignia spoke with a tone as if she made up her mind.

“Fine, let’s narrow down the candidates. Aisha is omitted. Do you have any particular requests?”

“Not really.”

“How can a guy lack so much backbone? Speak more clearly, like who you want to kiss, or who you’re attracted to, stuff like that. Didn’t you say you travelled with the El Search Party on your side as well?”

“I’m an engineer.....”

Ignia looked at Add as if she discovered most useless mechanical part in the world.

“Ah, is that so Mr.Engineer? So you were struggling with mechanical parts all your life that you don’t know anything about girls and haven’t even held a girl’s wrist, is that it? And you’ve never thought even once about girls?”

“...Even if the El Search Party in this and other universes have same names and faces, they aren’t completely same people. It’s questionable if they should be treated as same.”

Add expressed a logical opinion but Ignia laughed it off.

“What you said is morally correct but let’s push it aside for now and speak about something immoral. If it comes to worst, we’ll have to tell this directly to the El Search Party’s girls and ask for their cooperation.”

“What?”

“What do you mean what? If you reveal that you need a kiss from a girl to go back, wouldn’t they help you out of pity?”

“.....”

Just listening to it felt very repulsive. Wasn’t it too stupid and pitiful?

It was basically begging on one’s knees. Feeling like a beggar, Add shook his head furiously.

“I don’t.... want that.”

“I don’t want to go down that route too much either. It’s such a low class and non-delicate way. But we have to consider this option as well since you’re saying you’re Mr.Engineer who never held a girl’s wrist. Got it?”

“.....I did hold hands with a girl before.”

Although he didn’t want to say it because it sounded sad.

At Add’s final protest, Ignia scoffed coldly then she suddenly held Add’s hand.

“There, it’s second time now right?”

“.....”

Add couldn't say anything in protest. Although he was offended because it felt like he was being looked down upon, he could feel that unlike Eun, Ignia was being sincere. It was true that Add had been only interested in Nasod research and time travel that he had never taken interest in girls.

Ignia was much more logical and better assistant than Eun. When Add acknowledged, Ignia let go of Add's hand then started counting with her fingers.

"So, what should we do then..... So summing it up again, you have to choose who to kiss from Rena, Eve, Elesis and Ara? I took out Aisha since it felt like she'd be difficult."

"Well, probably....."

Add agreed to Ignia's seamless continuation of the main topic. Although he didn't like Ignia's tone and her descriptions of him, he couldn't deny that she was speaking reasonably.

"Alright, let's think together about who to choose from now on. When do you have to do this by? Is there a time limit?"

"....."

Add couldn't say that it was until he stole Eve's core so he replied appropriately.

"Before we destroy Scar and other demons, or right after."

Repairs on Dynamos will finish by then and even if it wasn't, El Search Party will be weakened from battle against demons. It was the perfect time to act.

"Alright. Got it. Leave the big picture to me. I'll try to craft a situation where you can control what's going on."

".....I'll be counting on you."

Although Add didn't know what Ignia was thinking, he didn't have any reason to refuse her when she was saying she'll help. It was just that he didn't expect she'd help this actively.

After Add's answer, Ignia walked towards Add. Add instinctively backed out when Ignia suddenly closed in and they were at a distance where their chests were almost about to touch. But Ignia didn't stop even when Add backed out.

"What are you doing?"

"....."

Ignia approached without answering Add's question so Add had to back out to prevent making contact with her. But this place was a stairway landing, it wasn't such a wide place so Add's back hit the wall.

There was no way to run. Ignia thankfully stopped her steps at a risky distance where they were almost touching.

It felt like something was about to happen so Add became alert.... Then Ignia spoke with a pointy voice.

“You’re really a wimp.....”

“What?”

He’s been through all sorts of dangers and obstacles and this is the evaluation he gets? Add became furious but Ignia ignored him and stood on her tiptoe.

Not just her chest but her face was getting closer. Add had to stop being angry and close his mouth.

Ignia spoke after bringing her face closer.

“You’re trying to escape when a girl is coming closer to you. What else are you but a wimp?”

“....What are you thinking?”

If what Eun did was a tease, Add could feel that Ignia was serious.

Add could tell because just like how he was forcing himself to hide his uneasiness from two of them standing so close together, Ignia’s face also looked uneasy as well.

“.....Let’s say I help you and the perfect chance comes. Are you confident that you can do it at that time?”

“.....”

To describe it simply, Ignia was asking if Add could finish the meal properly if she cooked it for him. Add was about to reply of course but his words stopped when he stared at Ignia’s eyes looking up at him at a close distance.

Ignia’s face was bright red as well.

“When the chance comes.... Can you do it without hesitating?”

“.....”

If you compared this to proving theory using experiments..... Scientific experiments are done by changing the variables continuously in order to prove a theory.

The reason Add could say he can control Dynamos as if they were his hands and feet was because he went through enormous effort to reach this state of mastery. He wasn’t proficient at it from the start.

The point was that.... No one was ever good at something from the start. One needed a lot of effort and experience in order to be good at something.

But never mind kissing, Add hadn't even been interested in girls before.

Ignia was pointing this fact out. When the time comes, can he actually do the act properly?

".....So what are you getting at?"

When Add asked coldly on purpose, Ignia lowered her gaze slightly.

"I told you. I'll help you in any way I can."

"....."

So, did this mean he should kiss Ignia to gain experience so that he didn't make mistakes later? Add did assume this was the case but actually hearing it made his mind go numb. He understood that Ignia was correct but felt an indescribable reluctance at the same time.

".....You kept talking about how I haven't done it before, but did you?"

".....Do you think a priestess would have done such a thing?"

Ignia's face turned red as she criticised. She was completely different from when she was scolding and blaming Add before.

It was no doubt that this situation where she was so close to Add was very embarrassing...and difficult to withstand for her as well.

When Add didn't say anything, Ignia kept quiet as well.

It was a moment where both couldn't decide what to do next and was wondering if they should close the distance or not. Awkward moment where they were looking at each other's eyes then looking away continued....then it seemed Ignia finally made up her mind as she pushed her face closer.

And Add moved as well.

".....I'll handle it okay even without doing this."

Add spoke clearly after grabbing Ignia's shoulders. After getting stopped, Ignia looked at Add with a blank expression for a moment then made a bitter smile as she took a step back.

"You're really naive aren't you?"

".....Why do I have to be called that?"



“Shouldn’t you accept right away if a pretty girl like me asks for a kiss? You won’t say that I’m not pretty right? I’ll roast you if say it.”

“I’ll look forward to the big picture you’ll come up with. Try your best. I’ll act according to that.”

When Add turned his head away to avoid her gaze, Ignia made mysterious expression then backed out while putting both of her hands behind her back.

“Alright, fine. Continuing to ask after being refused isn’t classy as well. Like I said, tell me if there’s anything I can do to help. I’ll cooperate with anything I can.”

“...Just go back for now. They’ll get suspicious if you’re away for too long.”

“Refusing Fire Priestess’ first kiss. I don’t care if you get cursed.”

“.....”

When Add didn’t answer, Ignia plodded down the stairs. When her footsteps couldn’t be heard anymore, Add sighed as he closed his eyes.

“Phew.....”

He did stop Ignia because.... that feeling of reluctance. But he rightfully deserved to be called a wimp.

That petty membrane contact, wouldn’t it be better to experience it few times to get used to it? Add knew as an engineer how important previous experiences were.

And that he might hesitate or make mistakes if the time came.

“I’m.... really foolish.”

Add sneered at himself then looked up at the moon through the window. The moon was shining brightly regardless of how bleak Add’s mind was.

Kiss with someone from the El Search Party is needed to go back.

Eun and Ignia will cooperate with Add from behind the scenes and set up the stage for him. With their help, even Add who was unknowledgeable about girls will be able to grasp a chance somehow.

But..... Add wasn’t confident if he could actually go through with the kiss when the chance came.

He didn’t know what this reluctance in his heart was....

“So is boy’s night stroll over now?”

“....”

Add didn't look back to respond. Voice's owner approached silently, stood beside Add then opened the window widely.

Night breeze came in through the window. Add opened his mouth first when fox standing beside him didn't say anything.

“Why are you quiet?”

“Boy must have his own thoughts as well. He didn't refuse for no reason.”

It was a reasonable reaction from her for once. Eun spoke serenely as she looked up at the moon.

“Things will go well since Fire Priestess is going to help. I'll also lend my hand.”

“Just don't get in the way.”

“Why would I after coming this far? Can't you trust my sincerity now? Foxes only lends their tails to someone they accepted from their heart.”

Well she wouldn't have anything else to tease him with anyways. Add agreed wordlessly then Eun made a bitter smile.

“Looks like I trapped boy within my tails.”

Eun's eyes as she looked up at the moon was soaked with sorrow.

“Looking at another universe's moon is rather enjoyable. It's especially special since I'm looking at it together with one that's together with me till the end of time.”

Eun spoke while still staring up at the moon.

“Do you know? Phantom Foxes gather power from basking in moonlight. First dozens, hundreds of days merely gives more vitality. Then after thousand days of receiving moonlight, you obtain wisdom, then after ten thousand days, you realize how to breathe with heaven and earth.”

“You become like that just from receiving moonlight?”

“Of course, you must first know how to breathe in moonlight. Anyways, you gather moon's essence inside your body in this manner. That's the source of my power. It's basically something equivalent to the girl's core.”

“Hmm...”

This unexpected story was rather interesting but Eun didn't speak anymore. Add didn't ask further and just strengthened his resolve for what will come after.



“Looks like I trapped boy within my tails.”

After tonight they will face off against the demons. He will achieve his goal during that battle and go back to his universe.

Final battle with D was waiting for him there.

“.....I'll destroy D no matter what.”

“Yes, I'll cheer boy on hoping he'll achieve his goal.”

“Don't speak as if you're not involved. Isn't getting rid of D your goal as well?”

Eun only made a mysterious smile and didn't answer. Add didn't mind and grasped his fist lightly.

“During the road toward final battle against demons, we must obtain a way to go back and a way to defeat D tomorrow. Cooperate with me.”

“.....Yes, if boy believes that hurting the girl is the only way.”

Eun's response was as if she was lamenting and somehow mocking Add, but Add pretended he haven't heard. He wasn't going to hesitate after coming this far.

“But I ask you, at least keep these words embedded in your heart. Boy, just don't become a devil.”

“Devil? What are you saying? This isn't the time to care about ways and means. To defeat a devil, there's no choice but to become a monster worse than a devil.”

When Add spoke sharply, Eun only made a bitter smile as if she had nothing to say in response. When Eun didn't say anything and looked up solely at the moon, Add also looked up at the night sky as well.

That's right. He couldn't hesitate. He will become even worse monster than a devil so he can kill the devil.

For the sake of someone precious to him.

For the sake of people that believed in him and treated him preciously.

Because Add was resolving himself, he didn't realize what kind of eyes Eun was staring at him with.

Fox staring at Add's resolute face twitched her lips. Fox swallowed the words she was originally going to say then spoke to herself inside her mind.

“The end is slowly approaching.....”

Time to close the curtains on a stage where two of them moved about together.