

51. The hot wine is sweet and nostalgic.

The hot wine was sweet and had a nostalgic aroma. The wine Angeline had brought as a souvenir before was good, but tasting hot wine like this in the tavern of Orphen was a nostalgic memory.

In reality, it might not taste the same as it did back then, but drinking it in a place that evoked memories made that seem like a trivial matter.

After leaving the guild, Belgriff was led to the tavern. It was the usual tavern that Angeline frequented.

As usual, various people come and go, and I don't stand out from the crowd. So it's easy to feel comfortable. The elf, Marguerite, catches everyone's eye at least once, to everyone's surprise.

Belgriff looked around without a care in the world.

The buzzing and bustling was very nostalgic. When he was on active duty, he always drank in places like this. Although it wasn't his favorite restaurant when he was in active duty, the atmosphere was similar to all of the adventurer's hangouts and so on.

「You see, this is Angie's favorite food! 」

Miriam recommended the roasted duck that was brought in. The skin was grilled to a nice, savory texture and was visibly fatty.

「Sounds good,」

「Ehehe, the roasted bird I had at Tornella was good, though...」

「Oh you mean the shiragi bird? 」

「Oh, yeah, that's it. 」

「That bird had a lot of fat, too. 」

Anessa chuckled.

「Milly, don't get any grease on your hat, do you need a knit hat? 」

「Phew! Phew! That's right! Hey, Mr. Bell! 」

Belgriff laughed and scratched his head in annoyance.

「Don't tease me too much, I didn't know you were doing that 」

Charlotte tilted her head with a strange look on her face.

「The hat? What's going on? 」

「No,, well, a lot of things. 」

Marguerite, who had been engrossed in the meat, looked up.

「What the hell, I'm curious. Tell me about it.」

「I'll tell you another time! Oh, Mr. Bel, before it gets cold! 」

「Thank you. 」

The meat of the duck was so firm that the fat soaked into the duck as he chewed.

Angeline, who loved the shiragi bird, would certainly like this, Belgriff thought.

A couple of men came into the restaurant.

「Hey, look! There's an elf in there! 」

「Wow, that's pretty rare! I've never seen an elf before! 」

「Hey, aren't you having fun? 」

「Come on, little elf girl, we'll buy you a drink and you can join us. 」

「What? Are you sure?! 」

Marguerite beamed with delight. Anessa grabbed her shoulder in dismay.

「Marie, you shouldn't accept these kinds of offers. 」

「Oh, really? In Tornella 」

「This isn't Tornella, Marie. I told you not to follow strangers, didn't I? 」

Belgriff chuckled. Then he spoke to the men who approached him.

「I'm sorry, but this Girl is so naive. Can you give me a break for today?」

The men laughed.

「What, a guardian? Hey old man, what do you think you're doing with that sword? What do you intend to do carrying a sword with an artificial leg? Can't you swing it right? 」

「Hey, it's a bunch of good looking girls. Hey, ladies, we can entertain you better than you can entertain us. Come on over here. 」

「Ora, get out of the way, old man. Get out of the way. 」

「Well, well, well, just relax. We're in a shop. You don't want to get in trouble. 」

Miriam, with a thin smile, folded her hands behind her head and jerked her chair beside Belgriff, calming the men.

「Ah, you've got a fight with the Red Ogre. I don't know what's going to happen to you! 」

「Red? "Red ogre,?" 」

The men looked at Belgriff with a confused, dumbfounded look on their faces. Then one of them began to pale as if he was horrified.

「I, I, I've heard that before! I think it's the father of the "dark-haired warrior maiden" and the master of the sword: 」

「Well, when you say "red hair with a prosthetic leg", well, seriously! You're from Orphen! 」

「Yea, no, I'm not that big of a deal: 」

Anessa laughed mischievously.

「If you're going to pick a fight, you've got to pick a partner, don't you? He's strong, this guy. 」

「No, Anessa, no. 」

「Once you draw your sword, you won't stop until you've killed all your opponents! How many seconds do you have? Hehe 」

「What are you talking about, Milly?」

「Oh, hey! These guys are part of the Black-haired War Maidens! 」

「Oh, shit! He's real! It's the real red ogre! 」

「I'm sorry! 」

「Wait, wait, I'm not like that: 」

The men panicked and fled, not even hearing Belgriff call to them.

The guests, watching the commotion from the side, looked at each other and began to whisper.

「That's the Red Ogre. 」

「He's stronger than the 'dark-haired warrior maiden'. 」

「I heard he had the guildmaster on his knees again today: 」

「And I heard the he made the guildmaster cry: 」

「I don't know what you have done. You're a hell of a father, aren't you? 」

Belgriff shrugged. It seems that something have already been distorted and spread about today.

「I don't want this kind of conspicuousness to be troubling. And you can't just say one thing and say 」

「Ehehe, sorry. But it felt good. 」

「You didn't get into a fight, so why not? Besides, you're actually very strong, Bel. 」

「No, it's not You've got me. 」

I can't imagine what's ahead of me, Belgriff sighed.

Marguerite looked at Belgriff with admiration.

「Bel, you were a celebrity! 」

「No. 」

I feel like I'm getting more attention from the people around me, but it's no use worrying about it now. I regained my composure and returned to my meal.

The whereabouts of my former companions are not known at the moment. I originally didn't expect to see them so easily, but it's a bit of a pity that they seem to have lost their start.

However, it is certain that each of them seemed to have played an active role.

The fact that they have fallen apart has bothered me, but I have no way of knowing why. I can only imagine, but it doesn't seem to be a positive reason, Belgriff thought. If I'm part of it, I'd still like to find them and talk to them.

Lionel said he would gather all the information he could from the guild.

Belgriff was horrified and tried to decline, but Lionel, unusual for him, didn't take a step back. Eventually Belgriff conceded and accepted the assistance. On the condition that it would not interfere with the Guild's business.

「Did this shop exist when you were in service, Bel? 」

At Anessa's suggestion, Belgriff crossed his arms and thought for a moment.

The shops that used to be here were gone, or new shops were being built where they weren't, and the capital seemed to have changed a lot since Belgriff's time. The tavern I used to frequent when I was active in the city was also gone.

I used to walk around town to buy all the tools I could find, so I thought I could remember the roads and such, but it seems that my memories of those days are no longer of much use to me.

Belgriff chuckled.

「I don't know how it was It was twenty-five years ago now, so my memory is a little hazy. The streets have changed a bit, too.」

「Twenty-five years ago, I was here. 」

I heard a voice from behind me, and I turned around, startled. The tavern master was standing there.

「Granted, it was my dad.」

The Master said, and placed a plate of pickled turnips and boiled intestines on the table. Then he stared at Belgriff.

「..... Are you the father of that dark-haired girl? 」

「Yeah. My daughter seems to be well known around here..... 」

The Master sighed.

「..... I don't think you should leave it to your daughter to find a wife, though, I think you should do it yourself. 」

「Huh?? 」

What, a wife?

「Well, that's not my business. 」

Leaving Belgriff, who opened his mouth with an upset expression, the master went behind the counter. Belgriff muttered in disgust.

「..... is that widespread all over Orphen?」

「Ma, how did you know that even the master knows?」

「I wonder what Angie was thinking: "I wonder what she was thinking when she consulted? 」

Miriam and Anessa also looked curious. Marguerite chuckled.

「Angie is such an interesting girl. I'm starting to look forward to meeting her.」

Belgriff sighed.

「There are a lot of people who have to explain: 」

Byaku chuckled.

「You raised her wrong, didn't you? 」

「I wouldn't go so far as to say that... .. 」

Belgriff gave up and sipped the lukewarm hot wine.

He finished his dinner and left the tavern. The winter breeze felt good on his flushed cheeks.

Belgriff had intended to meet Angeline and ask her for lodging during his stay in Orphen. But Angeline is away on a trip to the Capital city.

It seemed as if she had no idea about the trip , but Anessa and her friends seemed to be keeping the keys to her room.

「They asked me to keep it because they don't know what's in her room. 」

「Hmmm:

I'm sure I wasn't expecting this situation, but it's just fine. I decided to let him sleep and wake up there while I was in Orphen. It would be good if I could also manage the room while Angeline returned.

Accompanied by Anessa and the others, he greeted the lodging housekeeper, explained to him the situation and entered the room.

When he lit the lamp, the room became vaguely brighter.

After confirming that they were safely in the room, Anessa and the others nodded to each other and turned on their heels.

「Well, Bel, see you tomorrow.」

「Have a good night. 」

「Oh, thanks, you two. Marie, you need to listen to what you two have to say. 」

「I know! Good night, Bel! 」

Seeing the three of them off, Belgriff looked around the room again.

The room was small, but there wasn't much stuff in there.

There was a cupboard and food shelf in what seemed to be a cooking table, a dining table and four chairs surrounding it, a chest of drawers that seemed to hold clothes, a small bookcase, a shelf and box for storing adventure-related gear, a sofa, and a small table and chair set with a drawer.

The bed is wide, perhaps for sleeping comfortably, but it's not very ornate for a girl living alone. I'm sure that's typical of Angeline," Belgriff said with a small smile.

Byaku and Charlotte had also moved into Anessa and Miriam's house, so it didn't seem to be used until today. There was a pile of miscellaneous items that seemed to be souvenirs of the homecoming piled up against the wall, but overall it was neatly organized and there was nothing to worry about except for a thin layer of dust due to their absence.

Belgriff nodded reassuringly.

「Good, it looks like it's tidied up. 」

「Your sister is not a person who has so much stuff to begin with, father! 」

Charlotte said while tugging on the hem Belgriff's shirt. Belgriff chuckled and patted Charlotte.

「Looks like it, but is this fine Charlotte? It's better to stay with the girls. 」

「I want to be with you father! 」

Before Belgriff could finish, Charlotte hugged her arms.

Marguerite went to Anessa and Miriam's house.

At first it was a suggestion to split up with the girls and the guys, but Charlotte didn't ask if she wanted to be with Belgriff, so they remained in this room together like this.

Belgriff looked at Byaku as if he was troubled.

「..... What should I do?」

「Don't ask me. 」

Byaku said sardonically and plopped down on the couch.

Belgriff chuckled. He took up the bedsheets and flapped them at the window, shaking the dust off.

「How did the three of you sleep when Angie was here?」

「Byaku is always on the couch! I was in bed with the sister! 」

「Hmmm: 」

Then the order of things would be that I would be sleeping with Charlotte. I don't mind that, but when I glanced at Byaku, he was lying on his back in a strange position with an arm pillow. That's what bothered me.

「..... Byaku, I'll sleep on the couch, you'll sleep with Char in bed. 」

「Huh? 」

Byaku turned his face troublesomely towards Belgriff.

「Why is that none of your business, old man?」

「Don't say that. You shouldn't sleep in weird clothes when you're young, you'll get bent out of shape. 」

「I don't know. There's no way you could possibly fit on the couch. 」

「Oh, that too. 」

Byaku gave a small laugh.

「You'll know it when you see it. You're a fool, old man. 」

「..... Good grief. Then the three of us can sleep together. 」

Belgriff sighed after listening to Charlotte about what was going on, then with several steps to the couch grabbed Byaku up in a huff. Byaku's eyes went wide.

「What the hell are you doing?」

「You're light. Have you been eating a lot of food? 」

「Oh, shut up! Let go! 」

「Okay. 」

Belgriff threw Byaku onto the bed. With a bang, Byaku plopped down on top of the comforter. Charlotte, holding the comforter, wrapped him up.

「I got you!」

「Fuck you! What the hell are you doing?! 」

Belgriff gave Byaku a peck on the forehead as he struggled to get his head out of the futon.

「I can't help but notice that you have a habit of swearing. 'Swear words are a bad habit.' 」

「I don't give a fuck! 」

Belgriff laughed mischievously and patted Byaku's head with a crunch.

「I mean, shut up and sleep over here tonight. 」

○

A figure stood in front of the bars of the dungeon. He was thin, with a rounded back. He was wearing a black robe and a hood.

「Hey hey "canopy crusher"! 」

A wrinkled voice said. Qasim, who had been lying in his cell, raised his body in a troublesome manner.

「One after the other, you're too loud」

「Shut up! You've been lingering in here for some time now! Get the hell out of here and get the key! 」

Qasim chuckled.

「I don't care. I told you I'm done with you guys. 」

「You're kidding me! I tell you, I'm not strong enough! If you stop dawdling, you'll get ahead of the Schwartzes:! 」

「I don't care. 」

Kasim lay down on his back again. The man in the black robe bit his lip, but eventually gave a lurid smile.

「Are you sure it's okay? Deny the foundation of your own existence. Wasn't there something to do that kept you from being dragged to death? What's the reason that keeps you alive if you deny them the work they should be doing? Are you going to deny what you've done? Are you going to tell me that being an agent of the nobility here was the meaning of your life? 」

Kasim turned over in a cumbersome manner.

「What a waste of, huh? That's certainly true, isn't it?」

「Oh, yes! Existences can only be worthwhile when it accomplishes something. It was you yourself who said that! 」

But Kasim muttered without even looking at the man in the black robe. Obviously, it wasn't directed at the man.

「I don't even know if he's alive. 」

「.....? What? 」

「I wonder if she'll forgive me. I thought about it and tried to figure it out. I've done a lot of research. I fought a lot. But still: 」

「What what are you talking about?」

Kasim looked at the black robes.

「I'm tired, too,」

Just then, he heard the clatter of armor coming from the stairs. The man hurriedly wrapped his robe around himself.

「Anyway, get the hell out of there! I'm not going to let you get away with this! 」

The man in the black robes sank into the shadows at his feet. Kasim sighed.

A group of armored soldiers came in to replace him. The man in black armor, who was the captain of the group, gave them a dubious look.

「..... who was there?」

「I was talking to the shadow on the wall. Is that bad? 」

Kasim said, looking aloof. The man in armour narrowed his eyes for a moment, but then he opened his mouth.

「Your Highness has called you here. Answer. I will not allow you to refuse this time.」

「Yeah? What does an exhausted guy like me have to do with your son? 」

「Shut up. Get the fuck out of here. 」

The man in armor instructed the soldiers to open the barred door. One of the soldiers looked at him in surprise.

「Ta, captain this guy, his shackles」

「..... This is not the kind of person you can keep in a room like this. This guy's got his own way of doing things. 」

The man in the armor gave him a mocking look. Kasim chuckled.

「Way to go, well, whatever. 」

The man in armor urged with his chin, and two soldiers stood with Kasim on either side of him, and then dragged him straight to the stairs. The man in armor chuckled.

「..... If you lose sight of the meaning of life, you're no better than a walker than a hero. Well, I'll take advantage of that at best. 」

The soldiers left and a cold silence enveloped the dungeon.

○

Morning light streamed into the room through the thin curtains.

Angeline fidgeted in her bed and eventually sat up. Her long hair waved habitually, and the hem of her nightgown was in disarray.

I got into my bed, but I couldn't relax for some reason, and while I was tossing and turning, the night had passed. Still, my memory is vague, so I must have slept a little bit.

I came to the Grand Duke's mansion, got fed up with the encounter with Villar, dressed up in this and that, talked to Lieselotte, and then she took me to meet an unknown man named Kasim.

In my sleepy head, they all seem like they were in a dream.

「If it was a dream, I at least wanted to see my dad. 」

Angeline murmured and huffed and buried her face into the pillow. I'm sure you'll be able to find out what's going on in the world," he said.

「Muu fluffy. 」

The bed in the Bordeaux family's mansion was soft, but it was soft enough to be comfortable for Angeline. The one here was super-soft. Too soft to be comfortable.

The bed in Orphen's house is hard, and when it comes to houses in Tornella, it's a blanket on straw. I'm used to that, so I found it hard to sleep on a bed that was too soft.

I wonder if the aristocrats who are used to this soft bed can't sleep on a hard bed. The body's ability to adapt is a frightening thing, Angeline thought.

She was just lounging around in her bed, not sleeping twice, when there was a knock at the door.

「Good morning, Lady Angeline. Are you awake? 」

Angeline sluggishly raised herself up and got off the bed.

「I'm up.」

As I answered, the maids came in. There was no sign of Guilmeña. What would she be doing, Angeline thought. Maybe she's still in the mansion, gathering a lot of information.

Seeing Angeline's blurred appearance, the maids chuckled amusedly.

「Hmph, have you had a good rest?」

「..... Honestly, not so much. 」

「Oh my, may I bring you breakfast?」

「Yes, please. 」

「So why don't you get changed in the meantime? 」

「I'll have to brush your hair, too. 」

「Come on, come on, Miss Angeline. 」

「Yes 」

As Angeline moved to the front of the figurehead, she was surrounded by maids who made her comb her hair and change her nightgown.

She doesn't know what to do, so she does as she is told to do, but she still can't get used to this kind of thing. It's not so much a bad feeling as it is an embarrassing one.

After I finished dressing, it was time for breakfast.

The breakfast was light, but I still had a noble feeling.

The bread was not hard and baked, but soft and fluffy white bread. It was accompanied by a half-boiled egg, hot vegetables, seared slices of smoked meat, and a thick soup that seemed to be from a pumpkin.

Having eaten it all without hesitation, Angeline asked the maid as she sipped her after-dinner tea.

「Am I dressing up again today?」

「Yes, but we've decided on the general direction yesterday, so today we're going to go over it further. Angeline, you have such beautiful skin and hair. It's worth the effort to dress her up. Between you and me, I think you'll look as good as the noblemen. 」

「Yeah, so? 」

Angeline squirmed and her cheeks flushed. It's a little embarrassing to be called that. She was used to being praised as an adventurer, but it was itchy to be praised as a girl like this.

It's not so much because I had a great time with my maid yesterday, but when I'm feeling calm like this, the embarrassment seemed to be even worse.

I changed clothes again like yesterday, this and that. It seems that they are going to go with a calm color, not a brighter one.

It's kind of interesting to see your appearance change, but it's still tiring to take off and put on your clothes. It's a different kind of fatigue than fighting a magical beast.

The maids, who were satisfied with their dresses and decorated Angeline brilliantly, went out to prepare for lunch, happily.

I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I'm not the only one.

「Aristocrats do this every day, I wonder if they do this 」

I mumbled.

「Not really, though.」

「What? 」

Suddenly, Angeline turned her head to the side, startled by a voice. Guilmeña, dressed in her maid's outfit, was standing beside the couch, scowling. Angeline sighed.

「Don't scare me」

「You must be really tired to be oblivious to my presence, huh? 」

「Yeah, I'm sure you have the stamina, but why? 」

「It's because of a higher power. Those of us of a lower rank get tired of being subjected to that power. 」

「I feel like I can't just say, "..... you're kidding, 」

「You're going to have to learn to let it slide, huh? 」

Guilmeña laughed and brewed a cup of tea and placed it in front of Angeline.

「Well, take a breather, it's lunchtime.」

「..... What should we do this afternoon? Etiquette training? 」

「Yes. And then we'll have to learn the celebration to the Lord God. It's a ceremony. 」

「Hmmm, celebrations eh! There is such a thing! 」

「No, no. Well, it's just the way you bow and walk. 」

「Don't scare me, and the way you walk?」

「I mean, I can't just stroll down the aisle to the Grand Duke's door in my elegant dress, can I? I'm going to go quietly and gracefully. 」

「..... That's not my pattern, though. 」

「Yeah, I know. Well, they'll cut you some slack if you make a mistake. Angie is just an adventurer. 」

「Then you'd rather be dressed like that: 」

「Don't talk to me, just tell that to that little master, Virar. 」

Guilmeña bowed coyly. Angeline loosened the edges of her mouth.

Then it was lunch, and Angeline tucked into another different menu of fluffy omelettes, steamed potatoes, seared chicken thighs, and steamed river fish sprinkled with spices.

Angeline was impressed and wondered how they were able to put so many different items together.

She didn't need to spend money on this stuff, but since it tasted so good, it would be nice to have the same menu.

「It's delicious, but it feels like such a waste of money. Even the mansion doesn't have to be this big 」

「It's all about power, you know? 」

「Power? 」

Angeline nodded her head as she sipped her after-dinner tea. Guilmeña nodded.

「You can have this many items, or you can prepare such a luxurious one," she said. Of course financial power is directly related to power. You will find that even Angie's body became wobbly when she entered the mansion. The luxuriousness of this mansion can be kind of intimidating, hmmm. 」

「..... sure. 」

And moreover, this is the grand duke's house. It's probably a mansion that can intimidate most noblemen, so Angeline too was intimidated.

「It might be more troublesome than a poorly ranked demonic beast of high rank. 」

「I'm used to it. It's a matter of the heart. 」

Guilmeña chuckled. Then she glanced at Angeline from top to bottom.

「I'm sure you'll find that the dress is quite nice, though. The hair style is also good, and it looks much prettier. 」

「Yeah, so? 」

Angeline shyly pinched the hem of her skirt. It was a soft dress in a soothing shade of greenish-blue tones. The decorations are modest, but it's gorgeous enough with accents in key places that it's not overly luxurious. Angeline's shoulders are a bit uncomfortable because they are showing, but it can't be helped.

Her hair is partially braided and gathered in the top half, while being arranged in such a way to take advantage of its length.

It's a good idea to make sure that you have a good idea of who you are.

「I'm kind of embarrassed would my father compliment me if he saw me?」

「Yes. I think Angie's father would have a field day with it. He'd be so moved that he'd probably cry. 」

「Yeah, I don't know: 」

「Maybe a nobleman will ask you to marry him. What will you do then? Hmmm. 」

「No. No, no, no. 」

Angeline puffed out her cheeks. She felt stifled by the idea of marrying into the aristocracy.

Anyway, politeness is nice, but I need to change my mindset a bit. Angeline said, and decided to walk around the mansion a bit and take a look.

Guilmeña chuckled.

「And if something goes wrong, I'll have to remember the shape of the mansion. 」

「Not really, but, speaking of which, do you have any additional information?」

「The Grand Duke himself is nothing of the sort. I hear he's a gloomy but intelligent man. But be careful of the Grand Duke's brothers. The eldest son may not be stupid, but you can't be too careful. The second son is a fool, so I don't know what he will do. The third son, a half-brother, is a mystery. 」

「..... Where's Lise? 」

「That young lady is in no danger of anything. Well, you might want to be a little careful with your father, hmmm. 」

「I see. 」

Angeline was relieved. Lieselotte was still that innocent. She wasn't worried, but if there was an undercurrent of innocence to that innocence, she wouldn't believe anything.

Angeline stretched and turned her shoulders.

「Well, let's go with the aggressive inspection. 」

「I'll go with you, miss. Hmmm. 」

「..... This is kind of fun. 」

They chuckled and walked out of the room.