

## Chapter 405: Guess?

When it came to girls like Centaurea—who loved charging straight ahead without hesitation—Steven honestly had trouble dealing with them.

It wasn't that he was some virtuous gentleman or anything. Far from it. Remaining pure? Not even close. Just counting the girls he's close with in this world, he felt like he was running out of fingers.

And that wasn't even mentioning the ones he already had confirmed relationships with—Talulah and Alina. As for Yelena... Steven had a feeling it was only a matter of time.

On top of that, when he thought about the possessiveness he felt toward Gladiia, he knew he wasn't planning on letting her go either.

So adding Centaurea to the mix? That stirred up a long-lost sense of guilt in him.

“Do you really know me? Honestly... I'm probably not as good as you think. I might not even be worth liking as much as you imagine.”

Steven downed the drink in his hand. After wrestling with himself for a moment, he decided to reveal at least a tiny bit of his situation.

“To be frank, there are people who like me... and people I like... and there are a lot of them. I actually think I'm a scumbag.”

He shrugged helplessly. At least he was aware of it.

“It doesn't matter. At least for now, I'm not bothered by that kind of thing.”

But Centaurea's response stunned him.

Shouldn't a former assassin like her be threatening to slice his kidneys out instead?

"Really. You probably don't realize this, but on this land, there are times when thinking too much only makes things more painful. At least for me, I don't mind that the person I like is popular. Doesn't that just prove how exceptional they are?"

Centaurea leaned gently against Steven's shoulder, completely untroubled by what he'd said.

She had known from the very beginning that he wasn't someone ordinary. And a man like that wasn't someone whose heart could be secured so easily.

But because she had already seen too much as an assassin of the Armorless Union—because she had long since ceased being the naive and innocent girl she once was—she understood better than most how cruel and indifferent this land could be. Meeting someone she genuinely liked, someone who made her feel at ease... was something close to a miracle.

Especially since Steven had done so many things for her and had pulled her out of a nightmare that should have clung to her for life.

"...Being praised about something like this... I don't know why, but I don't feel happy at all."

Steven let out a wry laugh, then poured fresh wine into both his own cup and Centaurea's.

“You’re seriously not happy about it? You lured an innocent girl like me into falling for you, stole my heart, and now you want to act all modest on top of that?”

Centaurea lifted her head from Steven’s shoulder, golden eyes sparkling with the intent to put him on trial.

“Of course I’m not being modest. It’s just... I didn’t expect you to be this forward. It’s a bit overwhelming, you know?”

Steven pursed his lips. Sometimes he wondered whether this world had some faint traces of an apocalypse-like desperation. All these girls cherished their emotions far more than any superficial morality, titles, or rules.

Not that he was complaining—far from it. Maybe things were *too* good, which was why he felt so overwhelmed.

“Life is short. I’ve thought it through. If something makes me happier and more comfortable, why should I care what other people think?”

Centaurea spoke with the air of someone who had seen through worldly illusions—but paired with her cute, youthful face, Steven only found it impossibly adorable.

“Anyway... do you like me? I mean, look at me. With beauty like this, you’ve got no reason to reject me, right?”

She straightened up and gestured proudly at herself. Even she had to admit she looked practically flawless—there was no reason he wouldn’t fall for that.

But despite her confidence, a faint trace of worry seeped into her tone. Ever since she arrived at Rhodes Island with him, she'd seen first-hand how frighteningly good his luck with women was. Every girl he met was stunning. None of them lost to her in the slightest.

“That goes without saying. I’m a perfectly normal guy—of course I like beautiful girls. But it’s not just your looks. Your personality... I really like that too.”

Since Centaurea had confessed so boldly, Steven couldn’t keep acting shy like some maiden.

“Then say it again. Look me in the eyes this time.”

A radiant smile bloomed on Centaurea’s face as she seized his cheeks and gently forced his gaze toward her. Only then did she cradle his face in her hands and stare directly into his eyes.

“I like you.”

Steven lowered his gaze, meeting the bright eyes of the white-haired Kuranta girl who shone like an idol. They hadn’t known each other for long, but after being alone for so many years—millenniums, probably more—he found himself forming attachments quickly to the few people that he clicked with. Such as this girl.

His affection for her was real—much smaller than what he felt for Talulah and Alina, but still undeniably there.

“Hehe~ So does this mean I’m the consortium’s future lady boss? You’ll have to hand over your salary to me from now on, right?”

Centaurea suddenly flashed a devilish grin. Releasing his face, she tapped her lips with a finger and asked the question with suspiciously gleeful intent.

“Huh? Don’t tell me that was your plan from the start?”

Steven let out a small laugh—only to be cut off halfway as a pair of soft lips pressed against his.

“You tell me,” she murmured between the kiss.

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Note: Character Illustration is in this Google Drive:

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