

Chapter 226 - The Red-Haired Woman from the Gossip

I think I will go take a look at the combat slaves as a little break.
Taking Viine along, I advanced through the courtyard.

"Lubulululu~ Lulalaaa~"

It was the Millennium Plant's singing voice. Held in one hand by Helme, it was dancing and singing.

Helme had a plant artisan examine and give it some plant cure, but somehow...

Is the Millennium Plant still broken? Or is it growing rather than being broken? I don't have a clue, but it looks to me as if its weird singing and dancing is evolving.

With Helme, who cherished the Millennium Plant, in the lead...Rollo, Popobumu, and Balmint, who had been running around the courtyard, moved to a corner.

Is Helme the leader?

Rollo started to dig on the soil, starting some weird game...

Is she going to pee? Watering, huh?

Don't tell me they are going to plant the Millennium Plant, who's acting like a rapper & chanson singer, over there!?

"We're going to plant Millennium-chan as a test here!"

"Nyaa."

"Pubopuboh."

"Gaooo."

"Yo, yo~~ I haven't heard anything of this, yo! Buried, I'm getting buriiiiied~ This as well~ might make my heart race~"

As I thought, they were about to plant it there.

No matter where they plant it, I don't think that the amount of magic fruits that can be harvested from the Millennium Plant will increase much with this...

Popobumu tried to help with the digging by using its feet. However, it cried as it couldn't dig through the soil. It's kind of heartwarming.

I looked away from the spectacle and headed towards the boarding house. A servant was drying the laundry in front of it. I drew near to greet her.

"Is work going well?"

"Y-Yes, I'm fine over here, but..."

The servant hesitated to continue. I wonder what's going on.

"Master! There's a serious matter——" Head Maid Isabel called out to me.

Isabel, who was at the front gate, ran up to me with a grave look.

"What's wrong?"

Her shoulders heaved up and down as she was breathing heavily. My beautiful head maid was fretful.

Still, that's rare, isn't it? Isabel had been drilled in Resonante. For her to be so much out of breath... Did she run here over such a long distance?

As she caught her breath, "Our Mimi has gone missing."

"Eh? What did you say...?"

"I thought that it was weird because she didn't turn up at the appointed meeting time...and she didn't come back on the next day either."

Seriously!?

"Since when? And where?"

"Five days ago at an unknown shopping location. Since our servants frequent various stores, we checked with every main shop at the free market and the shopping district located east of the Third Ring Road just in case, but...her whereabouts are unknown. Even now our vice head maids have split up to search various places."

While we were on the 20th floor, huh...?

I reflexively looked at the servants around us.

You don't say she suffered from bullying? Or did she elope?

"...Do you have some idea on what might be the cause?"

"Not at all. She's a diligent girl, and since she was on good terms with everyone, I can only think of her having been dragged into some kind of incident."

"Eh? Incident, you say...why?"

A kidnapping, no, she was taken captive and carried off?

"I'm terribly sorry."

"No, it's nothing you need to apologize for, Isabel."

Even if we had been here, we couldn't have prevented it.

I don't know who did it, but even my servants are important people I hired. If the servant called Mimi has been killed... Criminal, I will make you fully suffer what you deserve...

"Master, your eyes..."

It looks like my anger naturally surfaced on my face.

"Sorry, they become like this if I'm angry. So, Isabel, it looks like you returned just now?"

"...I did. I have been running to various places. At the moment I confirmed that she hadn't returned to Resonante, I contacted the guards. And I also went directly to the office of White Nine to file a report. When I got there, they seemed to be very busy...and told me that this wasn't the time for such matters with a very threatening attitude..."

Not the time for such matters?

Well, I'm sure there are various other incidents they have to handle.

As for Remrona, it's possible that she's investigating the case of the miss women that's also connected to the Empire. If this report would have reached her...she's as excellent that she might have come to my mansion as part of the investigation.

At that moment the door of the nearby combat slaves' boarding house was opened.

""Master!""

"Milord!"

Hmm? It's my combat slaves.

All of them are looking pale as well...no way, don't tell me...!

I spontaneously checked their numbers...confirming that everyone was present, which gave me a peace of mind.

"You finally came back home! In addition to the matter with the missing servant, we also have something important to report to you!" Mamani said with a ghastly face.

She's a beautiful female beastgirl. Huh? She's not wearing her golden armor. It's not quite visible due to her thick, yellow fur, but her bulging two mounds peek out a bit.

I'm on the verge of calling the Boobs Research Society, but I won't do it now.

"...What happened to your armor?"

"Well, that's...we encountered a monster woman. During the battle with her, I used my trump card. As a result, it got destroyed. I'm very sorry."

The beautiful tiger girl immediately expressed her regret on her face, which had its charm for a moment, too.

Monster, she says? Trump card? Did she transform since she's a tiger beastman?

"...I don't really care about the armor. So, what about the monster woman?"

"She absorbed adventurers on the labyrinth's fifth floor, and devoured their corpses. She transformed her own dark-skinned body from having blond hair to having silver hair. And she used summoned creatures she called magic bonefish."

What's up with that?

"That silver-haired monster woman attacked us...and it developed into a battle. We managed to retreat, but the monster woman is still alive. Therefore, it's possible that the monster woman chased

after us and abducted a servant of this mansion, using some kind of method..."

Unintentionally, I looked in Viine's direction who waited for further instructions in the style of a secretary. She shook her head, signaling that she had no clue.

"She ate adventurers who were active in the wasteland area of the fifth floor...she must be strong. Taking a guess, she is an apostle affiliated to an evil god or a god of the spirit world. If there's a possibility that such a fellow kidnapped a servant with some kind of method, aiming for you guys..."

Even if it's a different faction from the one Pax belonged to...it sounds like they'll be a formidable enemy.

"...The monster we fought was that kind of an opponent."

"Milord, the monster woman was fairly powerful. Her sudden surge of mana and its strange movements were abnormal. That's why, please train us! I'm requesting mock battles." Bia wedged herself into my discussion with Mamani while saying so rapidly.

"Mock battles, huh? Right now isn't the time for that. Mamani, tell me a bit more about that monster."

Mamani nodded and bitterly spoke up, "...Okay. Our guess is that she at first betrayed the adventurers she worked with, killing them by using bone needles. Moreover, she sucked something white out of adventurers into her mouth. We wondered whether those bone needles were her main weapons, but...the truth seems to be different. Once she transformed, her weapons apparently changed as well. She used flexible, black nails as the main weapon and her silver hair as a sub weapon. She had bonefish called <Magic Bonefish> attack us as ranged weapons. The attack using my trump card appeared to work to some degree, but her wound regeneration is fast, allowing me to guess that she's tough in a different manner. In contrast, it's possible to deal with her body's speed as it's extremely slow. Her way of talking was weird, too."

Her analytic power is marvelous. Mamani is plenty suited to be a leader. It makes me harbor the odd wish to try obeying her.

Anyway, a monster woman who can freely switch between ranged and close combat attacks, huh? And yet she can transform herself...and her slow movements as a weak point, eh?

"...I see."

...Mamani and the other slaves except for Bia looked pale. It appears it has been a fierce fight. If there's such a monster on the fifth floor, I immediately doubt about sending them out on a magic stone collection.

"..."

"Since she's capable of transforming, all unknown adventurers look suspicious."

Kuna had transformed as well, but...she's an unknown enemy. If the servant Mimi was eaten by that monster woman...I suppose it's possible that she will come here sooner or later.

Even if her mana moves unnaturally as well, I think it will be possible to analyze her body's structure to some degree with Magic Observation or the Kaleidoscope.

"...You will need to suspend the magic stone collection for a while. You're forbidden to go outside by yourself until I get rid of that monster woman. And, if that monster woman can steal the memories and abilities of the people she ate, it's possible that she will take Mimi's shape and casually invade this mansion. To target you guys."

"Eh? Y-Yes..." Mamani answered with a worried tone, and bowed her head.

"Mine magic eyes worked when confronting that monster woman. Hence I conclude that it's quite possible to cope with that monster woman with this team." Bia stout-heartedly replied.

As if saying that it will be alright, her eyes became sharp with her snake tongue extending as she talked, but I don't want them to die.

"I will obey your order." Souther said seriously.

Seemingly remembering the hard fight, it looked as though her dog ears had become smaller. Her tinyness and the fluffy fur didn't change, but...that cute, boyish girl looked in Rollo's direction who was at the trees.

Does she want to join the zoo? Oh, she wants to actually flirt?

"...Okay. I agree with the suspension. That monster easily knocked down advanced magic...she's scary."

I'm sure because Fuu encountered yet another monster class, right after the bug thing. She might have a level of bad luck that exceeds Rebecca's.

"Bia, you guys survived. You can say that this much is expected. But, the opponent is strong. It's possible that she only toyed around with you. Because of that, I will leave several of my <Head Servant Leader> in this mansion. You guys, get read so that you can fight at any time, too."

""Yes!""

"Affirmative."

The combat slaves saluted with military-styled poses, and returned to their boarding house.

"Isabel, have the servants refrain from going out as well. The vice head maids are to stay on standby here, too."

"As you wish, master."

"Ah, please lead me to the place where the missing Mimi had been sleeping."

"Mimi's sleeping place? Very well. This way, please."

Isabel started to walk across the courtyard, leaving the front of the combat slaves' boarding house.

While watching her back, Viine and I followed.

...It should be possible to track Mimi with <Blood Chain Search> as long as there's something related to blood among Mimi's daily life items. Or, if I have Rollo sniff the strong, remaining blood smell in the horse lion form, she should be able to trace Mimi just like she did when we headed to Rebecca's rescue in the past.

Considering it like that, her sense of smell as a divine beast might be stronger than my <Inhalation of Odor Technique>. However, before relying on Rollo, I'm going to try my new skill this time.

"...Isabel, Mimi was a mature woman, wasn't she?" I asked from behind, just in case.

"...Yes. She's in the second half of her teens. I think all of them are virgins, though."

Isabel-san turned around with a puzzled expression.

Virgins, huh? Wonderful. That's the blood I want...

No, that's not it. What am I going to do if I cause the vampire sickness? It looks like the blood has totally risen to my head. I'm going to renew my thinking.

...If she has matured, menstruation supplies soaked with blood such as leather panties or cloths should remain.

"...I see. Don't mind it. Please lead on." I jerked with my chin, urging Isabel to continue guiding us.

She nodded and started to walk again.

I have to call my <Head Servant Leaders>, too.

『No need to reply. Everyone, hurry up and gather at the courtyard.』

I let my chosen bloodkin know through a blood message while walking.

At the moment we reached the courtyard's center, "Isabel, wait here a moment."

"Okay."

"...Master, it might also be related with the case of the missing women the great knights had chased before getting involved with the Empire." Viine wisely commented.

It looks like she made her conjectures. She had adopted a pose of thinking while placing a finger on her chin like a detective's assistant.

"Yeah, we can't exclude any possibility..."

A bizarre, devilish homicide of a madman, an imperial spy, and illegal slave trader, a bandit group, a thieves band, the remnants of a dark guild, a hostile dark guild, a magic drug dealer, some fishermen, an apostle of the bug evil god like Pax, the mysterious fellow who left the city opposing that evil bug god while infected by a bug, the vampires living in the 【Blood Court of the Great Tomb】, an alien who wandered through the unknown space, the transferee Manabu who might be an evil god apostle, the evil believers who had been worshipping Totogudius that I apparently defeated in 【Demonic Steel City Holkerbaum】, the monster woman who came chasing after Mamani and the others, the shady group led by Collector who worshiped Queen of Twilight Lebra, someone connected to other spirit world gods, adventurer dropouts, or a noble related to 【Owl's

Fangs】 resenting me, I guess.

Since there are infinite possibilities that are more complicated and mysterious...than modern society in a way, I can't imagine what kind of perpetrator it might be.

As I kept speculating about such things, my bloodkin assembled.

"Shuuya, what's up?"

"Nn, everyone, gathered."

Eva and Rebecca were erotic in their light dresses.

"I have to sort the documents..."

"I wonder whether it's related to the dark guild."

"Milord, if it's an assassination mission, I shall take care of it."

I quickly give my surprised bloodkin a rundown of the events.

"A monster woman who came chasing after Mamani, and a missing servant..."

"Nn, incident. I will postpone the sweets production. I will cooperate in taking down the monster."

"Of course we will postpone the treasure appraisal as well. Let's arrest the culprit. Oh, so it's very likely that the monster will come to this mansion, eh?"

Rebecca and Eva said while nodding with serious looks.

"If it's countermeasure against the monster woman, it'll be alright as long as we standby here, but the problem is the servants. I have been getting along with them..."

"Yep, I also got help from them when moving here. Since they also told me about delicious confectioneries, I want to help them. Oh, is it possibly related to the missing people case over at the free market?"

Yui and Rebecca manifested their respective powers in their eyes to symbolize their wills.

"...We still don't know."

"Did you inform 【Remains of the Moon】?" Kaldo asked Isabel.

"Yes. The person permanently staying here. I received a direct answer from Benett-san, but it looks like they have no clue yet."

"I see. At any rate, we are lacking information, in contrast to the matter with the monster woman. Even for 【Remains of the Moon】 discovering someone who was kidnapped in a place distant from here...just as the five days without any news show, it's very difficult. I think it will take some time."

I believe Kaldo's conjectures to be correct. 【Remains of the Moon】 has other work to deal with,

too.

——At that moment, I felt a magic source. From the front gate.

Is it the monster that came after Mamani and the other slaves?

Asking myself, I stared towards the person at the front gate with killing intent, but...it wasn't the monster woman. It was a woman mounting a four-footed animal with a mane and hemp palm-like mane which I've never seen before.

She examined this mansion while allowing her crimson hair to flutter in the wind. There were freckles on the cheeks of the mounted woman. She was a beauty with slightly narrowed eyes. Going by her conduct, I could guess that she had a top-notch style.

The red glove made out of serow leather only equipped on her left hand was...