

### Chapter 3 Part 3



As the end of the school day arrived, the students were released from the different space they had been in.

"— Whew... my body feels so relaxed now..."

Millis let out a sigh as she sank into the large bath.

Elria also breathed out softly in agreement.

"Yeah... it feels so good to be in a large bath."

"I know, right!? The bath in our room is convenient, but I used to soak in a hot spring near the mountain every day, so it was a bit unsatisfying for me."

said Millis as she and Elria soaked in the dorm's large communal bath, relieving their fatigue from training.

"Um... thank you for inviting me to the bath."

"No, no, I should be thanking you for carrying me all the way here..."

Millis replied, smiling, and bowing her head slightly.

Since most of the students could not move, those who were still conscious in the classroom had to carry them to the dorm. Ideally, they could have used teleportation magic to move directly to the dorm, but such magic required the use of sixth tier magic or higher. Hence, they had to use lower tier magic to bind and carry everyone instead.

Nevertheless, Elria was genuinely happy to have been invited to bathe together. Being naturally shy and uncomfortable with other people's gaze, going to a large communal bath alone was a great hurdle for her.

"Still... Elria-sama and Reid-san are amazing. You two could handle such a reckless task and are still energetic..."

"If it's something like that, Reid and I are used to it, so it's nothing."

Compared to the battlefield, where they sometimes had to move for three days and three nights without sleeping and often could not even get enough rest, their current fatigue was nothing significant. Rather than the physical body, one could say that the mental side is more fatigued.

"Anyway, Elria-sama was really close to winning. Even though the match was interrupted before it could be settled, you can use magic from the tenth tier. That's practically a win, isn't it!?"

"Mm... thank you."

Thinking that Elria was feeling down, Millis clenched her fist to encourage her.

In reality, Elria was not really concerned about the mock battle with Alma. Instead, she was more concerned about the two of them.

Why did Alma know the catchphrase that Reid used to say?

Why is she raising the military flag of Altein, which should have perished?

Reid should be heading towards Alma's location to hear about these things, but Elria could not calm down as her heart was filled with unease.

Lost in thought, she noticed that Millis was staring at her.

"...What's the matter?"

"Well... I just thought that... you're so cute, and your hair is silky and beautiful, your skin is also transparently white and smooth, and your breasts are quite something... Isn't this cheating?"

"Mm, I don't think my breasts are that big..."

Elria sank deeper into the bath as Millis pointed out.

"Speaking of size... I think Millis's are bigger."

"No, no, it's not about size. It's about shape! Elria-sama has a perfect shape, not just your breasts but your buttocks, thighs, back, and stomach! You look so smooth and soft that all of humanity will undoubtedly cheer for you as the most beautiful! Don't you agree!?"

"Your voice...! Keep it down because your voice is too loud...!!"

Due to Millis's voice echoing inside the bath, other students also turned their attention to them.

After calming down Millis's excitement, Elria let out a small sigh so as not to be heard.

"By the way, Elria-sama, what do you do on your days off?"

".....On my days off?"

"Yes. You are allowed to leave the academy on your days off, and I was wondering what kind of elegant activities that someone from the Caldwen family would do."

"On my days off, I read or take naps."

"You live a more relaxed, slow life than a country bumpkin like me, huh...!?"

"Also, sometimes I compare different types of tea."

"Oh! That sounds great! In my region, tea is more like dandelion tea, so I would love to learn about other teas!!"

"I don't hate dandelion tea either."

"Have you ever had it? It tastes like dirt and roots, doesn't it!?"

"But it's really good for your health. I like it."

"I understand! It's kind of subtle, but it's addictive, right?"

In response to Elria's words, Millis gave a friendly smile.

While Elria generally has difficulty with socialization, she did not dislike people like Millis who approached and talked to her or provided topics of conversation, such as chatting in the communal bath.

It might be more accurate to say that choosing a topic of conversation to match the other person is more difficult than the conversation itself. So, while she can talk at length about magic-related topics, she tends to stumble over her words when it comes to other topics.

In that sense, Millis is someone Elria could get along with very well.

She is a really good person, changing the topic and bringing up cheerful conversations like earlier to show her concern for Elria.

That is why Elria also decided to bring up another topic.

"By the way... there's something I want to ask Millis."

"Yes, what is it?"

"I want to give someone a gift, but... I don't know what to get."

"Oh, is it a present for Reid-san?"

"I-I didn't say it was for Reid...!"

"Well, anyone can tell just by looking that you really love Reid-san. You're emitting that kind of aura."

"I-I'm not emitting anything like that..."

"...Ah, so you're unaware of it yourself."

Observing Elria's reaction, Millis had a distant look in her eyes.

Elria was conscious of Reid, but she had not yet conveyed her feelings to him, so she had been trying not to blush too much. However, judging from Millis's reaction, it seems that everyone around them had already figured it out.

"The other side seems to be aware of it, but it's kind of a weird situation where you're both a little off, or rather, as a result of it, you two seem to be getting along well and ultimately want each other to be happy. It's kind of mysterious, isn't it...?"

"A-Anyway, let's focus on the gift for now."

Elria lightly tapped Millis's cheek to bring her back to the topic at hand.

"I want to give something as a congratulatory gift for getting admitted into the academy."

"Hmm... to be honest, I haven't known you two for very long, so I don't have much advice to offer. How about giving something that Reid-san likes...?"

"Actually, I've never given anyone a gift before..."

"I see. In that case, why don't you give him something that you think he'd like?"

Elria thought about what Reid might like.

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".....Whetstone and oil?"

"Oh, I can picture Reid-san being genuinely happy with that."

"I'm pretty confident about this choice."

"Well, it's just my impression as a fellow countryman, but taking care of tools and such can be quite enjoyable, so Reid-san would probably be happy with it as well..."

While Elria mentioned it as something used for maintaining weapons and armor, Millis, who did not know anything about their past, would probably have such an impression.

"But if you're going to give it as a commemoration rather than just gratitude, I think something more tangible would be better than consumables, don't you think?"

"...Is that so?"

"Yes. It's easier to remember as a memory that way."

"I see."

While listening to Millis's words, Elria nodded.

And now, she tried to think of something tangible that Reid would be happy with.

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".....I can't think of anything."

"Don't give up yet. It's too early to look so hopeless!!"

Encouraged, but she still could not think of anything.

Although it was a short time since she started spending time with Reid, they had been together for over fifty years, yet she could not come up with anything, which was a bit shocking.

Moreover, considering her previous life as well, she had lived for nearly two hundred years, and it made her hate herself for not being able to think of a decent gift for the person she loves.

"This sadness runs deep..."

"Oh no! Elria-sama, don't sink into despair! It won't solve anything!!"

Seeing Elria sinking deeper and deeper, Millis quickly pulled her out of the bath.

Watching Elria's state, Millis let out a deep sigh.

"Well, Reid-san is kind of detached and has a sort of carefree attitude, making it difficult to grasp him... so when it comes to giving gifts, it might be tough after all."

".....Yeah."

"Maybe you should think back to when Reid-san looked happy? You might come up with something related to that."

"When Reid looked happy..."

Elria desperately tried to recall a moment when Reid looked happy.

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Ah, there it was.

"Reid looked really happy when he's fighting."

"...Eh? Like a battle maniac?"

"No, when Reid fights, he smiles and looks like he's really enjoying himself."

Elria was mesmerized by his radiant smile, which conveyed a sense of genuine enjoyment from the bottom of his heart. It was the smile she had always loved.

"So, I thought I'd give Reid something that would make him smile like that."

As soon as Elria said that with a smile on her face —

"— You're so cuteeeeeeee!!!"

Millis screamed as she dove right into Elria.

"What is this!? If you show me such a maiden-like smile, I'll also be in love with Elria-sama because you're just too cute!!!"

"U-Uh... i-it's ticklish...!"

Millis voraciously stroked Elria's head and nuzzled her cheek.

Finally, Millis was seemingly satisfied and raised her eyebrow while clenching her fist.

"All right, I have decided! I want to support you with everything I have, so please don't hesitate to tell me if there's anything I can do to help!"

"...Really?"

"Of course! I'll be on your side whether through fire or water!!!"

"...Is that okay?"

"Yes! As long as it's within my capabilities, please don't hesitate to ask me anything!!!"

Millis is a very straightforward child.

However, just hearing her say that makes Elria feel happy.

"Well then, shall we get out now? We talked a lot and stayed in the hot bath for a long time. It won't be good if we get sick from staying here too long."

"Okay."

After a short exchange, they left the bath and headed for the changing room.

And while they were getting dressed —

"Speaking of which, I have been curious about something..."

"Mm...? What is it?"





As Elria wiped away the water and put on her underwear, Millis seemed to want to say something while glancing at her. She looked slightly red in the face. Then, Millis whispered into her ear.

"...You like that kind of underwear?"

".....Underwear?"

"Well... I just thought you were wearing unexpectedly daring underwear."

Upon hearing this, Elria looked at her own underwear again. It was black with floral lace in places. However, Elria tilted her head curiously.

"...Was there something strange about it?"

"Oh, no, it looks good on you, but it's a bit lewd for the usually quiet Elria-sama, and even as a girl, I can't help but get a little excited...!"

"Mm... I don't really care much about it, but my mother told me to wear appropriate underwear as a child of Caldwen before entering the academy, so she bought me new ones."

"Wow... Your mother is really looking ahead..."

Hearing that comment, Elria tilted her head again, and Millis put her hand on her shoulder.

"Elria-sama, let's go buy some everyday underwear on our next day off."

"...But I also have other underwear?"

"Let's save those for special occasions. Someday, when you think the time for a showdown has come, please wear that underwear and face the challenge head-on."

"O-Okay... I understand...?"

Elria could only nod in confusion at Millis's unusually serious expression.