

Chapter 3 Part 1

The next day, Reid woke up as usual.

When he moved his neck, he saw that the clock hands were pointing to 6 o'clock in the early morning.

However, Reid frowned at the unfamiliar sensation he felt.

"Something feels heavy..."

As he tried to get up, he realized the cause of the discomfort.

"Mmm..."

He could hear Elria's small groans next to him.

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He had completely forgotten.

The pillow she had held against her chest before going to bed must not have suited her, so it had been pushed to the edge of the bed, and in its place was Elria hugging his arm.

She must have tossed and turned quite a bit in her sleep, as her neatly arranged one-piece pajama was now disheveled, and the hem was pulled up to reveal her bare white legs.

Moreover, as Reid tried to extract himself from this troubling situation...

"Mmm..."

Elria sleeping next to him, clung to him tightly and wriggled around.

"...Hmph."

Then, seemingly satisfied with her position, she began to breathe calmly again with a peaceful expression.

Her figure is completely defenseless, and Reid can tell she is really sleeping soundly.

However, he could not just leave things as they were.

While there may have been some thoughts upon seeing Elria's vulnerable appearance, as the two of them are in a position of 'engaged', there's a line he should not cross.

"...I'm glad I turned into a grandpa once. That was helpful."

Muttering to himself, Reid shook Elria's body.

"Hey, wake up. It's already morning."

"Mmm...?"

Thanks to the shaking sensation and the voice, Elria's eyes opened slightly.

And then — slowly closed again.

"Don't try to go back to sleep without saying anything."

"Nooo..."

As Reid tried to pull her up forcibly, Elria pressed her face against his arm and shook her head.

Just like Elria herself had said, she seemed to have a terrible case of sleep inertia.

"You should take a bath or something. That should wake you up."

"A bath...?"

Hearing the word 'bath' seemed to have somewhat awakened her, as her eyes opened halfway. But those eyes were still unfocused and hazy.

"It's still early in the morning, so if you want to take a bath, that's fine with me."

"If it's a bath, I'll go..."

"Okay then, go ahead. I'll change and prepare breakfast while you're in there —"

"...Together."

"...Huh?"

"I want to go together."

As she said that, Elria clung to Reid's arm again.

Certainly, she still seemed groggy, and it would be dangerous to let her go alone.

Reluctantly, Reid stood up with a sigh.

"...Alright, I get it. I'll go with you, so don't fall over."

"...Mmm."

While emitting uncertain cries that may or may not have been an affirmation, Elria followed Reid obediently while gripping his shirt.

Along the way, Reid took out the uniform that had been provided and tried not to look as he took underwear from her bag and headed to the bathroom... where he began to fill the bath using magic tools.

In the room, there was a magic circuit that operated via the stored magic power in the magic storage unit, which Elria had filled with her own magic power upon entering the room. Therefore, Reid did not worry about destroying it as long as he did not use his magic power.

"Come on, I've filled the bath, so get in."

"...Why?"

"I'll be troubled if you look at me with a puzzled face there."

Elria stared at Reid while tilting her head greatly. However, seeing her like that, he understood what she said yesterday.

'I become lethargic when I wake up.'

In other words, this was the state of being 'lethargic', and it was probably one of the reasons why Alicia had left him in charge of all matters concerning Elria.

Without noticing Reid's distress, Elria tugged on his shirt.

"...Let's go in together."

"...Wait, that's definitely a no."

"But... you said you understood earlier."

Pouting slightly, Elria glared at him with half-opened eyes.

"I said I got it, but..."

Elria repeatedly tugged on his shirt while puffing out her cheeks.

Perhaps no matter what he said to Elria now, she would not listen. As long as she did not fully wake up, this state would likely continue for some time.

For a while, Reid struggled with himself —

"I'll hold your hand even while we're in the bath, so please let go of my shirt..."

"Mm."

Upon hearing Reid's response as he slumped down, Elria nodded satisfactorily.

Then, when the sound of rustling clothes was heard next to him, Reid turned his face away and wrapped a towel around his eyes.

"Eh...? Why are you covering your face with a towel...?"

"I have a habit of covering my eyes with a towel when I take a bath."

"But then you can't see anything, can you...?"

"Don't underestimate a hero. Even if I can't see, I can still perceive my surroundings."

"Wow, that's amazing..."

With a soft voice, the sound of clapping hands can be heard. It is easy to imagine Elria nonchalantly clapping her hands.

In her current state, Elria would probably be convinced even if he said something random.

"Here, I'm holding your hand so come on in."

"Mm... okay."

As they took a few steps forward, the sound of water splashing was heard.

"It's so warm..."

"Well, that's good then."

"Yeah... I'm happy..."

A soft exhale can be heard from Elria.

"It's so warm... I'm really happy."

"Well, your whole body is submerged in the hot water."

"Mmnn... that's not it."

After answering, Elria squeezed Reid's hand with some strength.

"It's so warm."

As she repeated those words, she continued to squeeze his hand.

Surely, Elria must have had a truly happy smile on her face right now. It is a shame that he cannot see it.

While having such thoughts —

"Yeah."

Reid returned her words with a smile on his face.