

The Merman, My Man by Black Velvet

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Dicken retaliated over my refusal by committing a more sleazy offense. Using his webbed claws, he grabbed my right leg and pressed it underwater with his body. Under the water, the fishtail wrapped around my left leg. The water in the lake was crystal clear. Dicken had placed me in an awkward position under the water, and I could clearly see it. I couldn't help but turn my attention to Dicken's thigh area instead of the rest of his body. His lower body reactions indicated that he was already ecstatic. I wanted to bury and drown myself in the water because I was so ashamed. Dicken, on the other hand, clung to my body with his claws, and I was unable to move at all. With his stunning eyes and a lump in his throat, he stared at me. I could hear him gasping for air, which made me nervous. —Linda, I can't wait...|| he said, now sounding like a man. Damn it! I guess I had nowhere to escape! I could only lean against the rock with my shaky upper body. Dicken had me completely enthralled. Soon after, he began pressing his body against mine and groping around my belt with his webbed claws once more. Then, I heard a piercing scream from the campsite. The loudest voice was that of Jack's —Take a look across the lake; Linda and Jolin are likely on the other side. This area appears to be covered in a dark cloud! — Peter also shouted, —Hurry up! Over there, let's take a look!|| Their voices jolted me awake in an instant. I pushed Dicken's body away and peered like a thief in the direction of the campsite. A few shadows were indeed moving in my direction. In

a panic, I stood up and wanted to run to the shore, but Dicken embraced my body from behind. He lowered his head and rested his chin on my shoulder. My ears were filled with a low, hoarse voice, —You can't leave. Linda, you are mine.||

|| Dicken! Let go of me! When they see you, they'll shoot you!|| I was frightened and tried to free myself from the grip of his claws. However, his arms were as strong as the rock, and I was unable to get him out of my way. With his fishtail, he made my legs tense instead of relaxing them. —I won't let go of you!|| I could feel his hard lower body pointing at my buttocks.

He screamed in my ears. Dicken's sharp teeth moved to my neck, and he bit it as punishment for my escape. I was terrified and groaned in response. Dicken, on the other hand, did not bite me hard. With his sharp teeth, he didn't even pierce my skin. But I knew he'd left a tooth mark on my neck, and the swelling would last a long time.

His punishment had some effect. I dared not to fight any longer. I had no idea what would happen if this beast became enraged at me. He'd most likely gnaw on my neck in an instant.

Peter and the others were slowly approaching, which made me extremely nervous. I didn't want them to see Dicken and me hugging together, let alone I was improperly dressed. And I did not wish to see them shooting at Dicken if they thought Dicken was attacking me.

I could only hold my breath and patiently try to calm Dicken down. I gently caress his webbed claw with my hand —I promise, Dicken. I'll get back to you. I know your cave is right beneath the lake. I have something to deal with now, and I'll get back to you as soon as I finish it, okay? You came to my aid numerous times, and I will never forget your generosity.||

Dicken's webbed claw moved slowly from my waist to my chest, then to my chin. He lifted my chin and forced me to look him in the eyes. —Will you return? Linda?|| His eyes sparkled like sapphires in the dark, and they were nailed to my heart as if to pierce through my lie. Dicken looked at me with sincerity, as if he believed what I said, and I was not allowed to feel bad about it. I couldn't take it any longer and almost changed my mind about what I _d promised earlier.

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—Will you return?—

Dicken smirked slightly and asked again the question that had yet been answered.

I looked Dicken in the eyes and realized I'd unknowingly signed a contract with this dangerous, mysterious creature. The contract stipulated that I would be completely devoted to him.

The environment appeared quiet, and even the air seemed to stop moving for a split second. My companions' yelling was no longer audible to me. Time seemed to be moving backward quickly. All of my Dicken-related memories were playing in my head like a movie, and they came to a halt at a picture of the cold sea. Then, from a distance, I heard a familiar voice. —Little girl, will you return to me? || Dicken asked in English. Dicken had asked a similar question earlier. As if everything was predetermined.

Dicken had asked me the same question when I was a child. But I was only a kid at the time.

Nothing made sense to me, and I had no recollection of it.

More than a decade had passed. I'd completely forgotten about my childhood. However, he

enticed me to approach him as if he had planted a seed in my heart. He was like a well-thought-out mastermind, waiting for me to fall into every trap he set, regardless of the cost.

The moment I met him, it seemed as if my destiny had been written in stone.

—Look! Is that Linda?—

—Oh my god, she is caught by the merman ! Hurry up.||

The voices of Peter and Jack jolted me out of my reverie. I noticed a group of people with

guns running towards Dicken and me. I was tense. I swallowed and exclaimed, —Yes! I'll be

back! —

—Well, Linda, I trust you, || Dicken's hoarse voice pierced my body and reached my heart. For

a brief moment, I felt numb.

My body was then loosened. His muscular fishtail created a massive wave that engulfed me.

Then Dicken vanished into the water in an instant. I turned around and saw him disappear

into the cave beneath the lake instantly.

That could be the entrance to the merman's habitat. I couldn't help but feel scared. Thank

God Dicken didn't drag me into it. After all, I was just a regular person!

—Linda! How are you doing? —Are you hurt?|| As they neared the shore, Peter yelled at me.

I quickly buttoned my shirt and swam to the shore. When they saw me, they reached out

their hands to pick me up. || Linda, you've got a bite on your neck! ||

exclaimed Peter. Show

us where else is injured!||

|| How did this damn merman bring you here!|| Jack clenched his fist.

—I'm fine... I'm not hurt. I'm not sure what happened... —I awoke in the middle of the lake,|| I

said, covering my abdomen in fear. I couldn't tell them the injuries on my stomach that had

been healed because I couldn't explain how it happened.

Fortunately, they didn't press further. With a few of them, Jack put a nice coat on me, carried

a gun, and began patrolling around the lake.

—Linda, Jolin is also gone,|| Peter frowned as he stared out at the lake. I'm guessing she, too, was attacked by the merman. —Jack and I discovered these under the tree where both of you were camping.|| Peter unfolded his palm, and I saw a few shiny red scales.

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The evil red -haired merman immediately came to mind when I saw this. —Did you see anything?|| I yelled in a panicked voice. Is there any sound? Is there any blood on the ground?|| —I'm not sure,|| Peter said in a daze, shaking his head. || I'm not sure because I was in a deep sleep.|| Maybe I heard some noises, but when I awoke, I realized you were both gone. — My heart sank to the bottom. Because Peter and the others were not attacked, I was almost certain that Jolin was not taken away as food. However, I couldn't stop thinking about what the red -haired merman had done to me. He lusted after my body. Jolin had slept with me earlier, and the red -haired merman's target was most likely me. But when he realized I wasn't there, he inadvertently took Jolin away. I remembered the merman's cave scene and thought Jolin might have the same experience as me. My heart was filled with dread. Jolin was taken away as a result of my actions. I became engrossed in my thoughts. —God, please bless...us, || I said, gritting my teeth and clenching my fist. —We need to get Jolin out of there as soon as possible.|| Then I felt a vibration, and it came from Peter. —Hey! Hello! Is it you, Jolin? Speak! —Can you hear me?||

I looked nervously at Peter's pager, which kept beeping, —Save...Save...Save me!!

We couldn't hear any other response after that. A great noise followed after. It could be predicted that it was the malfunctioning sound when the pager fell into the water. My heart sank to the bottom of the water like the pager. If so, our only connection with Jolin was broken, and we could only look for her cluelessly.

I suddenly thought that relying on Dicken might be the right choice... I looked at the lake's center and saw a dark shadow that looked like Dicken flashed by. It ran so fast, which made me think I had hallucinations. However, when I looked at it again, there was nothing in the dense fog.

—I saw Jolin's coordinates on the map! —

The call interrupted my thought. I saw Jack approaching with an electronic map in his hand.

—I saw a flash here,— he said, pointing away from Gary. Jolin's radio message! We must go now!

So, under Jack's leadership, we planned the route and embarked on our journey to save Jolin. We took a completely different path than before. If we took the previous road, we'd run into Laura, which would mean another fight. And it would slow down our response time to the rescue. So we finally decided to cross from the center of the island, avoiding Laura, who was sailing along the coast.

The benefit of crossing the island was obvious; it was a shorter distance. However, there were drawbacks on the island as well. On the island, there would be unexpected dangers.

Fortunately, Jack was an experienced biological researcher and natural explorer, which put us at ease.

We proceeded towards the island jungle under Jack's arrangements after determining the path on the electronic map.

There was no daylight on the merman's island, and everything appeared to be shrouded in thick fog. The so-called day was only slightly brighter than the night. It was nine o'clock in the morning, but it felt darker than the night before. Almost no sunlight could be seen.

Many lights shimmered among the bushes, and it looked like a ghost fire from a horror movie.

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We had to be on high alert at all times. While crossing the planned route, we held the gun tightly and observed the surrounding situation.

—Look! There is a magnetic field ahead. The compass keeps vibrating in that direction. —Will there be anything?—

An armed man in front of us abruptly yelled. We all pointed our flashlights in the same direction.

Through the light, I saw a gray outline in the bushes in front of me. It turned out to be the foundation of a building. Despite being damaged and shattered, it still had some traces of man's carving on it.

Someone used to live here!

—Oh my god, there as well. My goodness, there's a lot. We turned around and raised the flashlight to take a look. I quickly discovered many damaged buildings in the surrounding bushes. One of them was even by my side. I knelt down to get a better look.

This is the top of a spherical gray building, only a portion of which is visible from the ground, and it's impossible to tell what it is, but I believe it's a tomb. I gradually removed the vines that covered the top and discovered a plethora of strange words engraved on the stone walls. I had no idea what language they were speaking. A

three-dimensional sculpture resembling an ancient lizard was discovered on the top of the stone wall, which reminded me of many mythical creatures on the prehistoric tombstone.

They were used to protect the living.

All of this evidence pointed to the existence of an ancient civilization on this island. Because

of my excitement, I couldn't help but grip the flashlight tightly.

Peter exclaimed in astonishment, —These must be the relics of the mermen! —

I was convinced that the mermen civilization was more than just a myth.

They were genuine.

This also explained why Dicken had such a high Hand learning ability because they, like

humans, had a long development history. Mermen were not the beasts that had been

described in the past. They had their own civilization and society. And it's possible that

everything was true. The origins of mermen can be traced back to ancient Greek civilization.

—Hahaha, I think I need to take away one part of the relic. It's priceless in our country.

A guy next to Jack exclaimed excitedly. Then he picked up the gun and prepared to break

the relic closest to him, but he was dragged away by Jack immediately, Don't move! There's

something strange about the ground! —

In an instant, I became hypervigilant.

Jack knelt and picked up a large stone. He threw it hard at the ground in front of him. The

next thing we heard was a plop, which sounded like something falling into liquid rather than

a stone hitting the ground. The stone vanished into the ground where it landed.

Everyone took a deep breath.

The ground in front of me was probably more extensive. We were walking through a

swamp, and we had no idea how big it was.

—Rustling...Rustling,—

The sound of fast crawling on the ground came from nowhere. The bushes' leaves rustled.

We immediately went into alert mode and looked around with vigilance. I was surprised to see a triangular black silhouette emerge from the swamp not far away.

Scales were as hard as armor covering its head. It had bloodshot eyes with a gaze locked on us as if we were trespassers.

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—Damn it! What the hell is this! —

One of the men yelled, jolting us out of our stupor. We aimed our guns at the thing that

spontaneously emerged from the swamp, but Jack warned us in whispers, —Don't move! It's

a massive monitor lizard. This creature is extremely sensitive to moving objects. So the faster

we move, the easier it will be for him to catch up with us!||

—We should squat down and slowly return,— said another armed man. We probably invaded

its domain. So it appeared.—

He made a motion to several men behind him after he finished speaking.

The men

immediately squatted down in response to his command.

We squatted after listening to the experienced mercenaries. We kept a close eye on the

monster in case it attacked us unexpectedly. At the same time, we moved our bodies

cautiously to the path we had come to find shelter behind the trees.

But at this moment, I realized the shadow in the swamp got up suddenly, extending its

mouth covered with sharp teeth. The giant monitor lizard then stuck out its tongue in the

air, and it was contaminated with purple venom. Its sharp claws deeply penetrated the soil

as it moved. The giant monitor lizard stretched its body, facing us with its back full of spiky

osteoderm. It sizzled like a boa as the tongue flicked.

My eyes opened wide in horror. If you were to look in an encyclopedia, you wouldn't find this lizard there. Rather, it looked like a huge monitor lizard in the age of dinosaurs, and it could eat young dinosaurs !

How did this creature get here? It was supposed to be extinct! Fortunately, the massive monitor lizard did not attack us right away. It remained there, its scarlet red eyes measuring our tiny bodies. I had no idea how long its poisonous tongue could reach or how adaptable it was. But one thing was certain; our guns would not be able to withstand its assault.

I was sweating profusely as a result of the tension, but I dared not make a move. I could only grip the gun tightly and aim at its eyes. Peter was standing next to me. I could feel him shivering, but we all resisted the urge to scream and flee.

It was only then that the giant monitor lizard's eyes suddenly focused on Peter and my direction as it swarmed around. When it turned its enormous head at us, we were startled.

Suddenly, the lizard squinted its eyes, then opened them wide and stared at me without moving. But it appeared to be able to see through my body, and its gaze was fixed on a distant object.

The strangeness of this ancient creature was undeniable. It acted in no way resembling a predator. Instead, it looked at me as if it was observing. The massive monitor lizard seemed to ponder at something as if it was considering our motivations, where we came from, and whether it was worth killing us.

However, Peter shivered more violently in its presence. With trembling hands, he aimed the gun at the lizard. —Peter, calm down,|| I immediately grabbed his wrist and whispered. Avoid shooting and triggering it.||

—Bang! — A gunshot was fired before I could finish my words. Peter and I fell back from the force of the gun. My ears were buzzing, and I felt light-headed. When I managed to regain my consciousness and stand up, I found that the monitor lizard had already stretched out its spikey back, and it looked like a solid umbrella full of sharp daggers. The giant monitor lizard made a roar, and I knew it was ready to attack. In this type of situation, we all cursed the same word and then drew a gun and pointed it at its head. Then we started shooting at the enormous monitor lizard. Bullets were flying till it raised its head high, stuck out its tongue and charged towards us after a few shots. Peter and I fired at the monitor lizard as soon as we saw it, but my terrible shooting didn't seem to help. Peter, who had been standing next to me, was flung off far away by the enormous monitor lizard. Peter's screams rang out, and he was thrown to the ground. He jumped to his feet and ran into the woods, stumbling a few times. Peter's stupid moves terrified me. I rushed up to him and pounced on him. We both collapsed to the ground, and I exclaimed, || Calm down, Peter! Don't flee! If you run like this, you're making yourself an easy target! — Before I could finish my sentence, I heard the sound of something rushing at us. I had a good idea what it was. Peter was already hurt, and I knew I had to protect him because if I didn't, he wouldn't survive. I immediately rolled aside, holding Peter in my arms. The purple tongue, on the other hand, was surprisingly quick and adaptable. It had already arrived in front of me in less than a minute. To protect myself, I could only hold the gun and shield my head. I heard a movement behind me just as I thought I was about to die from the attack. A

strange force drew me back and threw me several inches away from Peter all at once. Before I could react, the colossal monitor lizard rolled up Peter's legs with its tongue and dragged him towards its enormous mouth! Peter was almost swallowed by a mouthful of razor—sharp teeth!

—No!!! — I aimed the gun at the enormous monitor lizard and pulled the trigger. When Jack saw this, he rushed forward and fired a few shots into its mouth. Then, from the woods, a low voice that sounded like a cello emerged. The sound echoed throughout the woods.

—MIYA...MAKA...—

It was Dicken's voice!

The monitor lizard came to a halt in an instant, as if he had heard a mysterious call from heaven. Then it let go of its tongue as if it were a command. Peter, who was terrified to death, was thrown to the ground in an instant. In horror, he rolled aside. The monitor lizard then covered its mouth and hid its razor -sharp teeth. Later, it even closed its scarlet – red eyes before lowering its head to the ground.

This ancient beast abruptly yielded to the voice. It made a respectful and welcoming gesture as if it had seen God.

When I saw this situation, I was completely taken aback. My chin dropped. I couldn't help but look for the tall, black body among the words. But before I could find Dicken, I noticed several armed men staring at me as if they saw a ghost behind me. They all raised their guns and aimed at me at the same time. Or, more specifically, at what's behind me.

Even without turning my head, I could tell who was behind me. I _d already noticed his black fishtail. He slowly extended his fishtail from behind me and curled it around my ankle.

I raised my hand in a stopping gesture, palm facing them. —Everyone, please put...put down the gun,|| I said, clearing my throat and calming myself as much as I could. This is my...||

Dicken stuck his tongue out and licked my ears as I spoke. My voice stuttered, and I had to

force myself to say the next word, —friend.||

A pale but powerful arm wrapped around my waist from behind, so I could stay close to him.

When Jack looked at me, he was in shock. He looked in the mirror and saw a face that was out of this world. His mouth was wide open as if he could put an egg in it.

As I laughed and coughed, —Uh, yeah, that’s true.|| He always seems to be too friendly.

—She...is...my...Linda.—

Dicken lowered his head and rested his chin on my shoulder. He purposefully placed his lips near my neck and scanned everyone in the room, especially Peter, who was still in shock.

With a hoarse voice, he uttered a few Japanese syllables.

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Everyone across from us opened their mouths in surprise. I almost got angry at Dicken and

panicked and said, —Uh... I might have forgotten to inform you. Gary and I spotted this

merman while sailing... After that, we let him go... But I have no idea why he’s here.||

I was concocting a lie. = Damn Dicken! How dare he speak the human language in front of

my classmates, let alone this sentence? = Is he insane? =

Jack reacted in shock while I was still explaining myself. He lifted Peter, looked at Dicken and

me, and shook his head in surprise.

—Oh my god!|| he exclaimed to Dicken, terrified yet surprised. You met a Japanese -speaking

merman... Linda, you’re so fortunate! —

I murmured to myself as I removed the webbed claws from my waist with my hands. Dicken, on the other hand, didn't seem to let go of me. Instead, he drew nearer to me. I couldn't help but feel nervous. What if this beast humiliated me in front of my classmates with more dirty moves if I struggled again? He was a scumbag! Jack's reaction was quick. He obviously did not trust Dicken and was hostile toward him. After all, Jolin had been kidnapped by a merman the day before. They appeared more nervous, and their weapon was gripped more tightly. I had to persuade them and reconcile their differences. I didn't want either of them to be hurt. || Or else...let the merman join us first, || I said calmly to Jack. He might be able to assist us in locating Jolin. After all, this is his domain. And I believe you can see it right now. —The massive monitor lizard surrendered in front of him.|| —Are you certain this merman will assist us?|| His species was the one who attacked Jolin last night. Mermen are an endangered species. We came across them as we approached the island.|| Jack was still frowning and staring at Dicken nervously. Several armed men aimed guns at Dicken. One of them became enraged. He pulled out his gun and pointed it at Dicken. His hands trembled as if he were about to shoot Dickens in the head. I deduced from their reactions that they had fought the mermen when they arrived on the island. They might have lost a few of their comrades. Their encounters should be more acrimonious than Gary's and mine. —Don't be concerned. Will you trust me? I can communicate with him. I think I can persuade him to help us. This merman, despite his wild appearance, is very...gentle.|| I had a hard time coming up with words that I disagreed with. It was then that I put my hand

on Dicken's cheek and squeezed it.

His face had a clear and prominent outline. No, he doesn't look like a dolphin at all. I

squeezed his face and smiled a little.

When I touched Dicken's webbed claw, he looked at me and squinted his eyes. They were all

paying attention to Dicken's face, so they didn't notice how he was moving under the surface.

When I saw him, I blushed right away. I couldn't be rude now. With my heels, I stepped on

his fishtail. I was angry at him.

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Jack and the others were ultimately able to let go of their animosity to Dicken because of

my outstanding eloquence in reconciling. They eventually decided to let Dicken join our

team. Even Dicken's enormous monitor lizard succumbed. As soon as he ordered it back to

the marsh, it crawled back.

The jungle reverted to its original state when we first arrived. We had to slow down and find

shelter in this abandoned building because Peter was still in a coma and needed treatment

for his wounds.

Dicken appeared to be very familiar with this relic. He moved freely through these old

buildings as if he were walking around his garden. It only took him a few seconds to locate a

partially visible ring building not far away.

I suspected the structure was a man-made pool, similar to the ancient Roman baths.

Because this floating island would sink to the seafloor at a specific time, the bottom of this

island should be the same as the bottom of the merman's cave, and they were linked to the

sea.

I couldn't help but imagine the structure of this island. The interior of this island should be hollow, with a plethora of holes to allow it to drain quickly. This island was also much lighter in weight when compared to others of the same size. This structure could be the reason that this island appears at a specific time and then sinks to the bottom of the sea.

Were these geographical features man-made or natural? This truly was a miracle. It was as fine as a honeycomb and as refined as a nuclear submarine.

How many more secrets did the merman have?

In my heart, I couldn't help but feel amazed. From a distance, my gazes met Dicken's. He

was lying in the pool, relaxed. The faint light from the woods cast a shadow on him,

heightening his mystery. He squinted and looked at me with his dark blue eyes as if enticing

me to inquire about the mysterious history.

At this point, Jack cut me off in my train of thought. He patted my shoulder and handed me

a skewered grilled fish on a fork. —Linda, I am deeply sorry,|| he said, pointing to Dicken. Your

merman companion does not appear to be hostile to us. We owe him thanks for getting rid

of the colossal monitor lizard. Otherwise, Peter is doomed. Take this grilled fish and express

our gratitude for us.||

|| He's a beast,|| I exclaimed, stunned. He does not consume this. He should go hunting for

himself.||

|| Didn't you used to be his breeder? || Go ahead and feed him again.

Maybe he'll be able to

help us next time.||

I couldn't say anything because Jack's words choked me. It was as if I had been hit by a

stone that I had lifted. —Oh Jack, are you aware you're sending me to the tiger's cave?|| I

replied awkwardly.

||Huh? What exactly do you mean? He seemed to be close to you just now... || Do you not want to be near him?||

Jack frowned suspiciously, and a strange expression appeared on his face. I was the one who had said the merman was gentle, but now I was afraid to approach him. Peter clearly desired to inquire. I took the grilled fish from him and walked slowly towards Dicken, fearful of being discovered.

As I got closer to the pool, I noticed that the stone wall was about sixteen feet high. Dicken is now submerged in the water, and I haven't been able to locate him. I could only walk along the stone wall before I came to a halt and had to descend a stairway.

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I walked down the steps and came to a halt near the water. The pool was clouded with lotus-like plants, making it less clear than the lake. Dicken was nowhere to be found.

I had no choice but to take a seat on the stairwell. —I would like to appreciate your help on

behalf of my companions, || I said, holding the grilled fish above the water like a dolphin

breeder. I'll return if you don't come out right now.||

After I finished speaking, I felt compelled to stand. I wasn't sure if Dicken had hidden on

purpose; he had looked at me earlier, but I couldn't find him now.

But, deep down, I didn't want him to show up as well so that I'd have an excuse to leave

quickly and finish the task Jack had assigned to me.

But I knew it couldn't happen. A webbed claw slowly reached out from among the floating

plants and grabbed my ankle. Then a handsome face emerged from the water, slowly

approaching my legs.

Despite being mentally prepared, seeing Dicken in this light made me subconsciously shrink back. I was shaky on my feet and nearly fell backward. Then a wet webbed claw gripped my waist and propelled me forward. I was then sucked into Dicken's embrace, resting my head on his damp and muscular chest. I raised my head to face him. We were so close that my lips accidentally rubbed against his chin, which was damp with water droplets. And I was once again immersed in his enticing eyes. My breathing became more rapid. Jack's voice, which was not far away, jolted me awake. I pushed Dicken away, raised the grilled fish in my hand, and yelled back at Jack, —I'm here ! Don't be worried. I'm all set to feed him! —

||Feed... || Dicken repeated the word after imitating my pronunciation. He raised his eyebrows and looked at me with suspicion. He appeared to be interested in the word, but he didn't understand what it meant. It was to be expected that he would not comprehend. The mermen hunt on their own. How could he possibly understand what the word meant? I thought feeding Dicken might offend him. How could he put up with this humiliation?

Feeding him was tantamount to using God's name in vain. It was heresy! ||Uh... || I awkwardly dangled the grilled fish in my hand, grabbed his webbed claw, and attempted to insert the fork into his webbed claw. —This is for you, || I finally said patiently. In a humane manner, this is how we eat it. The fish was grilled over an open flame. Do you want to give it a shot?||

Dicken lowered his gaze and looked at the grilled fish in my hand with interest. Then he took a step forward to sniff, and his frown became much more pronounced. I'm not sure if

the barbecue sauce matches Dickens' taste, but it was my favorite. What a treat it would be to have a bite of my favorite dish on the arduous journey ! If Dicken didn't want to eat it, this grilled fish would be mine. I couldn't stop myself from slurping just thinking about the taste. Dicken suddenly grabbed my wrist with his webbed claw and pushed the grilled fish towards him, just as I thought he'd refuse to eat it. He gnawed a piece of the fish with his mouth wide open. He ate everything in one bite, including the fishbone—what an unappealing way to eat. I was afraid he'd swallow the fork. I quickly drew the fork back and extracted half of the fish that had been stuffed into his mouth. —Hey, dude! || I said as I patted his head. That is not how you use a fork! You're going to hurt yourself!||

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Dicken drew his tongue out and licked his greasy lips, exposing his sharp teeth in displeasure. When he saw the remaining grilled fish in my hand, he got a sad expression on his face. I couldn't help but burst out laughing when I saw his expressions. I was laughing so hard that I couldn't hold the fork in my hand.

But Dicken didn't seem to get what was so amusing about it. He shifted his gaze away from the grilled fish and toward me as if observing a parent teasing their child. In the corner of his mouth, an arc formed. I noticed a flash in his eyes as if he was planning an act of revenge on the disobedient child.

I had to stop laughing quickly. I'd almost forgotten he was a heinous beast! Every time I was with him, I stood to lose!
—This is how you hold a fork, Dicken.||

To divert Dicken's attention away from my body, I immediately put on a serious expression. I

grabbed his webbed claw, slid the fork between his curled fingers, and clenched them in a grasping motion.

—Then you must eat like this. Observe my movement.

I lowered my head and reached for the grilled fish. || This is how we eat,||

I said as I took a

small bite of the fish from the side with my teeth and carefully spit out the fishbone from

my mouth. Is it a little difficult?||

I couldn't wait to see Dicken's reaction after speaking.

He nodded as if he was interested in how I ate. Then he raised his other webbed claw and

caressed my lips, wiping away the residues. He stuck out his tongue to lick my lips and

looked at me with satisfaction as if he had tasted the world's most delectable dishes,

followed by an erotic smile.

My pupils dilated as I stared at him. My face instantly turned bright red. I wanted to flee

right away, but his webbed claw caught my feet as I lifted them.

Then he looked lustfully at my moving feet. I dared not to move in his presence. My body stiffened.

I couldn't get away, and I couldn't struggle. I was very familiar with him. What a beast!

Struggling could only make him more ecstatic. And I had no doubt that he'd directly press

on me and r*pe me in front of my classmates!

Thinking about this, I could only pretend that I had no intention of fleeing. So I sat down

and leaned forward to take a few more bites of the grilled fish he was holding in his webbed

claw. Dicken did feel a little better now. He let go of my legs, lowered his head, imitated my

movements, and began eating.

He held the fork in the manner I had shown him earlier. Then he looked at me and

monitored how I ate. With his thin lips, he bit a small piece of fish;

however, he didn't chew and swallowed it whole down his long throat. I couldn't help but be taken aback by this scene. Dicken's eating manners were as charming as the French gentleman's if he didn't stick his tongue out or lick his lips all the time. Licking his lips gave him the appearance of an old pervert looking for a date at the banquet.

‘Uh, date...’

My nerves were jabbed when I said the word subconsciously. I couldn't sit still because I wanted to run away again. It was awkward because Dicken and I were secretly eating grilled fish by the pool, under the moonlight in the woods, at this very moment, it appeared that we were on a date.

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What a romantic scene...

More and more, I was reminded of the time when Dickens and I had our intimate encounter.

I couldn't stop sweating from embarrassment, but Dicken's face seemed to draw my gaze.

Because our eyes were glued together, it was difficult to separate ourselves from each other.

I even had a hunch that he was going to kiss me at any moment.

Once Dicken loosened the fork in his webbed claw, he reached for my back and sank his

teeth into my flesh. My back was shoved against him, and then his fishtail was used to prop

him up. He had risen to the surface of the water.

My ears perked up right away. I already knew what he was going to do next. We were about

to embark on a more intimate date.

I had no choice but to lean aside in order to keep Dicken at bay. My thoughts were

consumed with ways to distract him. I reached into my pocket and found a metal object,

which I immediately retrieved.

It was Jack's compass. The needle was thumping like my heart, but the arrow was always pointing in the direction of Dicken. I put the compass between Dicken and myself, but it didn't stop Dicken from moving. I immediately came up with a solution: || Dicken, look!

—What is this?||

Dicken was taken aback by my questions. He moved his gaze to the compass in response to my motion. Then he shook the compass between his thumb and index finger.

The compass seemed to have piqued his interest. I was instantly relieved and couldn't help

but smile. But, of course, I would not let it show on my face.

I pointed to the compass with my finger and said, || This is a compass.|| —Do you know why

this thing keeps pointing at you?||

He imitated me by extending his finger and pointing to the compass. But his nails were too

sharp. The glass cracked slightly as soon as he touched it, leaving a small gap in the surface.

He shook his head, indicating he had no idea.

In my distress, I touched the compass and thought, _ This is Jack's precious compass.' He'll beat me up.'

But all I could do was raise my head and sigh, || Because you have a magnetic field in you, it

will attract the compass and change the needle's direction.||

—Attract...

—Magnetic Field...||

Dicken focused his attention on two words in my sentence and repeated them several times.

He sounded perplexed. Clearly, these two words were too difficult for him. But he was eager

to learn, just like any other student. He repeated the word, word by word as if digesting the

meaning of the words in his mind.

When he was saying the words, he kept his gaze fixed on me. I gradually began to suspect

that he was not learning these two words. He was instead attempting to express himself with these two words. My heart rate increased as a result of this sensation. I quickly shifted my gaze away from his mesmerizing eyes, fearing that I would lose control.

He drew his webbed claw up and placed it on the compass. The needle then began to vibrate more vigorously as if it were about to jump out of the compass dial.

—Look, this is attraction,|| I explained after taking a deep breath.

Because you seem to attract...||

Dicken abruptly grabbed my wrist, causing my voice to become stuck in my throat. I was taken aback and nearly threw the compass into the water. Dicken, fortunately, was quick and caught it before it fell. He took the compass and gently pressed the small button on the compass. When I saw the scene, I felt his fingertips on my heart as if they were stirring it. I

was out of breath and could only look at him quietly, like a fool. My mouth was sealed shut, preventing me from saying anything else that would divert his attention.

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I didn't know what Dicken intended to do or what he was thinking. I could only let him bury

his face into my chest as his claws gripped firmly onto my waist. He closed his eyes and took

in my scent deeply. He seemed to be basking in my scent as if it was a drug he was addicted to.

My senses sharpened, and my body trembled from the intimacy. He had also started to emit

his unique fragrance that I couldn't help but smell.

For some reason, Dicken had become more excited than before. I was afraid that he would

do more than just smell me, so I tried to get out of the pool. But my attempt was futile because Dicken already had me in the palm of his hands. I grabbed the fork that had fallen next to me and aimed its prongs at Dicken's neck as I warned, —If you dare to do anything here, you...will end up in the same way as that grilled fish! —

—Seduce...— Dicken remained buried in my chest as he released a low whine that startled me. Then, he lifted his head to look at me as he said, —I...seduce you...My Linda...—

His wet lips had already reached my ear, exhaling a humid breath against my sensitive skin.

—Deeply... seduce...—

His words were like a spell that had entranced my body and had rendered me incapable of thinking straight. I had no clue how Dicken could tell what I was thinking just by smelling me. Even though I found what he said absurd, it felt like a secret I was keeping had been exposed.

I couldn't utter a word. It was as if I had just lost my voice. He might have been right. I was like a magnet attracted to this beast's magnetic field. Just like right now, whenever Dicken's lips touched my skin, my body would quiver in response, even to his smallest teases.

And it wasn't just my body. Even my heart was starting to yearn for his advances despite my classmates being but a short distance away. This sinful pleasure reminded me of what I had done the last time Dicken went missing. Back then, I couldn't hold back from pleasuring myself under the blanket. What was more shameful was that he had found out about it, and it seemed I still couldn't break the habit.

I must be crazy! Completely mad ! Don't tell me I've actually fallen in love with him?!

I've never liked Gary, Peter, or any other ordinary man. But now I'm falling for someone who is a whole different species? No! I must be delusional! Dicken must have bewitched me!' As I had these conflicting thoughts, Dicken had already pushed me down onto the steps. When he was about to enclose my lips with his, my arms jerked forward to push him away. I then frantically climbed the steps. I tripped and fell. I glanced at him and saw that Dicken did not rush to capture me as he did before. He just narrowed his eyes and stared at me quietly. He looked like an older person watching a child making the most basic mistakes, with ambiguous eyes. Based on the smirk on Dicken's face, it was apparent that he was in a good mood. He must have been thinking that my antics were funny. ||F*ck! You prick! You scumbag of a beast ! || Embarrassed, I scolded Dicken and rushed back to the campsite. I didn't even bother to acknowledge Jack, who checked on me and cleaned away the mud that was smeared on my face from the fall.

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Even though my face was clean of mud, my feelings remained muddled. Jack caught up and still wanted to speak to me, but he abandoned that thought when he saw my furious expression. He was familiar with my temper. I would lash out like a cat when I got angry. He knew not to provoke me when I was in a bad mood. Otherwise, he would get more than just yelling. This allowed me to be alone. Not only were my thoughts in turmoil, but my body was also starting to become restless. My body became feverishly hot like Dicken had burned the areas on my skin where he had

touched. I hate to admit it, but his affections enamored my body. If I hadn't pushed Dicken away when he kissed me earlier, I would not have had the will to leave and would have remained in his embrace, unwillingly allowing him to ravage me and accommodate him.

= Damn it! This is too shameful! =
I immersed my face into cold water, and my body temperature gradually went down. Even so, the cold water couldn't pacify the restlessness in my heart. It wasn't long before I became conscious of the empty feeling in the spot between my legs. I had no idea why my sexual urges were this strong. My libido had never been this strong before. It was like Dicken had got me a fallen hook, line, and sinker. I thought of the pool and wondered if Dicken was still there. Perhaps he left, or he had hidden underwater. This made me sigh with relief. I leaned against a tree and slid down into a sitting position. I then gulped and clamped both my legs shut. I started to squirm and gained pleasure from the friction of my jeans, causing my body to shiver. Eventually, my breathing quickened, and I had to hold myself back from moaning. I was worried that Jack and the rest would notice what I was doing. But this didn't stop me. Instead, my back broke out in a sweat, and the pleasure intensified from the thrill of being caught. The sense of shame and immorality tormented me. I would've rather died than let any of them find out what I was doing. The person who was most likely to see me doing this would be Dicken. As I realized this, I inadvertently looked around. Just then, I noticed a part of eerie, glowing eyes among the dark shrubbery not too far away.
= Those are Dicken's eyes ! He's spying on me again ! Just as I expected !
= I wanted to stand

up immediately and walk back to Jack and the others. But those eyes seemed to have sent a bolt of electricity my way and had rendered me weak, causing me to lay on the ground.

Petrified, I looked in Dicken's direction and saw that he was in the swamp swimming toward me. His figure became clearer and clearer, and I was eventually able to see what he was doing, making my blood boil.

His chest rose and fell in tandem with the movement of his hands, and his long hair offered partial concealment to his actions. As I watched the scene before me, the words 'sexy' popped into my mind.

'I've really gone mad now!'

I jolted aside to avoid him, but the intense fragrance he was emitting invaded my nostrils.

Even my legs lacked the strength to stand up.

As I pleased myself in front of Dicken, he also did the same. In fact, he was shamelessly

showing me what he was doing. It was seduction in its most shameless form. I couldn't deny

that his attempts at seducing me were successful. My body became increasingly restless as I

craved for more, and the friction in my jeans was no longer enough to satisfy my desires. I

impatiently stuffed my hand into my jeans while my eyes were locked on Dicken.

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Dicken narrowed his eyes and observed what I was doing while gulping continuously. The

movement of his hand hastened in pace like he was following my rhythm.

I suddenly realized that we were like passionate lovers committing a taboo. It was like I

couldn't help but be caught in the allure of playing a sinful game. Even though I was a

model student who never even had a boyfriend...

= But why is my game opponent not a normal adult man but a cruel and lecherous merman?’

= And why couldn’t I control myself from being a part of this interspecies relationship?’

I was conflicted, but Dicken’s muscular build attracted my gaze, and my hips couldn’t help but move according to his rhythm. Waves of shameful pleasure began crashing into me.

= How did things turn out like this?’

While I was immersed in the sinful pleasure I had indulged in, I could hear Jack and Peter’s conversation from behind me. As I realized that Peter had woken up, his voice was like a bucket of cold water poured over me. I shivered, and the realization snapped me back to reality.

I quickly looked behind me to see if they saw me. It looked like they didn’t notice the sinful game we were playing here, so I sighed a breath of relief, but I didn’t dare do anything else.

If they had seen something happening here, they would’ve realized that the merman, who I was taking care of, and I were engaging in a tantalizing sex game. I didn’t dare to face the aftermath of that.

Flustered, I planted my head into my knees and didn’t dare look at Dicken. Then, I popped open the cap of a water bottle and chugged on it before pouring the remaining water onto my crotch.

The stimulation of the cold water caused my horniness to subside. I took a deep breath and stood up without looking at Dicken. After that, I sprinted toward Jack and Peter in fear that Dicken would catch me impulsively.

—Linda, why are you drenched? Did you pee in your pants?— Jack saw the state I was in and broke out in boisterous laughter.

The now-awake Peter also couldn’t hold in his laughter. I glared at them angrily while

extracting a pair of clean pants from my backpack and rushed to the shrubbery to change into them. At the same time, I remained alert, keeping an eye out in case Dicken popped out of nowhere. Right when I had fastened my pants, I heard the sound of leaves rustling. I glanced around, anticipating Dicken to emerge. But what I saw was something that reflected light, something that looked like a metallic weapon. Before I could react, a cold, solid object was pressed against my skull.

—Long time no see, my little genius, — said the cold voice of a woman from behind me.

Then, Jack started shouting, —Don't move. Let her go. We have guns too! —

I turned around stiffly and saw an entire troop of people reveal themselves from the shade of the trees. The leader amongst them was at the forefront, and the rim of her hat hid her face partially while her eyes glared into mine.

I shivered as Laura pushed me with the barrel of her gun fixed in my direction. The woman whom I didn't want to see for the rest of my life was inching close to me, step after step.

I glared back at her and my eyes beneath my helmet reflected nothing but coldness and disdain through the light of the fire.

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—Linda, you're alive! — Gary peeled off his helmet, revealing a pair of bloodshot eyes. He looked like he could collapse any second.

The moment he saw me, he rushed to me with open arms and held my cheeks, like those arms weren't the ones that had pushed me off the boat.

—Get lost, you fake bastard! — I felt disgusted by the hands that were on my face.

I pushed him aside in a fury. Unbothered by the gun pointed at me, I rushed up and punched him in the face. Gary was unprepared, so he toppled onto the ground.

I pounced onto Gary and gave him several more blows with my fists. But he didn't even bother to evade my punches. It was as if he didn't feel a thing and just withstood my attacks. Then, he suddenly flipped over and pinned me down, swiftly dragged me up, and pressed his gun against my temple.

—Linda, I'm very sorry for what happened before. But if you're compliant and listen to my troop and I, I can assure you that you won't be in harm's way from now on, — he whispered into my ear. But even though the tone of his voice was gentle, it couldn't mask its hoarseness.

I cackled coldly and said, —You don't need to apologize to me. I know you need to be loyal to those specific people. I only gave you a beating as a way of bidding farewell to my former professor. Now, I have nothing to do with you. See the bigger picture, and don't threaten me!

Jack and his men were in a standoff with Laura and her troop. I then looked toward the shade a distance away and saw Dicken lurking at the place we were before. I could tell that he was waiting for an opportunity. Even so, I didn't know whether Laura and her lackeys had noticed his presence.

Laura scoffed and added, ||Sorry, but I have a different opinion. I'm not here to subdue you.

I just need you. Because of you, the most effective member of my troop has now become useless.||

Then, she leaned closer to my ear and whispered, || Moreover, you're such an attractive bait.

I had noticed the black merman following our ship a long time ago. It seems like he can't get you out of his mind ! ||

Laura's words were like a stab into my heart. I gritted my teeth shamefully and replied, ||Shut up, you cruel woman... ||

Before I could finish my sentence, she suddenly wrapped her long, slender fingers around my neck. I saw Gary panic, and his face became pale. ||Colonel Laura! You promised me! ||

||Make a move now! Annihilate all of them ! || Laura commanded mercilessly.

Gary looked at me and hesitated. Then with a submachine gun on each arm, he started shooting madly in the direction of Jack and the others. Before long, the surroundings were clouded in smoke. I tried to look in Jack's direction and began shouting for them. ||Jack! Peter! ||

However, my voice was immediately overpowered by the sound of gunfire. Jack and the others had also started to retaliate , and eventually, the entire area was shrouded in smoke and gunfire.

Suddenly, I heard Jack roar, followed by Peter's yelp. I realized that Laura already had another group of men surrounding this place beforehand.

||No ! Jack! Peter ! ||

In my dismay, I watched as bullets rained on blurred figures in the smoke. I struggled profusely, but Laura was still holding on tightly to my neck. Her body may have looked delicate , but she was actually very strong. I could only kick around with my legs and knee her abdomen. _This woman is a heartless witch ! How could she have my friends killed in front of me?!'

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I began suffocating as Laura was choking me. Then, suddenly, my inner strength was evoked, and I was able to push back against her hold on my neck. I was surprised that my surge in anger was the factor that enabled me to escape her grip. The second her fingers left my neck, I swiftly snatched her gun and used its buttstock to knock her out.

After escaping Laura, I felt lost and confused. My surroundings were dark, and there was smoke everywhere mixed with the sounds of gunfire. I couldn't discern where Jack and the rest were or even Dicken's whereabouts. For the sake of protecting myself, I went to a nearby tree and crouched down to avoid being hit by any stray bullets. Then, I shouted as loud as I could, —Jack, Peter, where are you?— There was no response other than the continuous sound of gunfire. I felt like my heart had a rope tied around it, preventing it from beating. I had even forgotten to breathe. I couldn't let myself believe that Jack and Peter had died, but the possibility was enough to make me frantic and look around anxiously. Suddenly, I saw a dark shadow among the smoke. But before I could tell who it was, I felt like something had drilled a hole into my chest. A stream of fresh blood burst out of my body, and I lost the ability to move.

A cold, mocking laugh reached my ears from somewhere next to me as my body toppled backward. Everything in my vision was now in slow-motion. I could even notice the exact moment a leaf fell to the ground, as well as the red liquid gushing out of my chest and into the air. = This must be my blood. It looks like I'm about to die soon.' = Why didn't you just shoot Laura in the head? Now I'm about to die by her hand.|| = What a joke you are, Linda.' I felt like I had lost all of my senses, and at that point, I couldn't even feel pain. All I could

sense was that the dark sky seemed heavier and heavier, like it was about to crush the earth. But at the same time, my body felt light, like it was floating amidst the darkness, or rather, drifting as waves rocked my body. I couldn't open my eyes, but I could sense a ray of light. That was where my hope lied. So, I tried my hardest to chase the light, but somehow I couldn't catch up to it, and it felt like I was sinking. Eventually, I fell into a white room. I saw several doctors in white coats surrounding me and the faces of various people, including Peter's, Jack's, and Jolin's. I wanted to shout their names, but a pair of hands in white rubber gloves was squeezing my throat. After that, an intense light shone onto my eyes as my eyelids were peeled open. It was Laura. She looked at me with a cunning expression on her face and said with satisfaction, || What a beautiful body. It looks like your physique is the most suitable. You really are the perfect bait.|| I was terrified and wanted to evade her touch, but I suddenly realized I was covered in blood. In fact, I was lying in a pool of blood. Peter and the others were all floating in the pool of blood. Their familiar faces were in front of me as their eyes shed tears of blood. —Ah...Ah! — I hugged my head and screamed in horror. I suddenly broke free from the nightmare, and the scenes in it faded to black. Gradually, I started to see some light through the bottom of my eyelids.

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As if I had been holding my breath underwater, I started to hyperventilate and breathe in gulps of fresh air. I tried to force my eyelids open, but I was startled as I felt something covering my eyes.

I raised my hand to feel the thing that was on my face. It was something cold, and it had five fingers. To be exact, it was a webbed claw.

It was Dicken!

I shot up into a sitting position, but the extreme pain from my chest made it difficult to support myself. Hence I fell backward. Luckily, a claw caught my back, and the claw on my face slowly retreated.

I squinted my eyes as they adjusted to the light, and Dicken's figure became clearer. I could

smell the strong fragrance Dicken had emitted, but surprisingly, it actually made me feel secure at a time like this. My fearful palpitating heart started to slow down. I then suddenly

recalled the events before I passed out, grabbed Dicken's arm, and asked in a hoarse voice,

—Are Jack and Peter okay? They're the two guys who were with me...—

Dicken looked at me silently before slowly shaking his head and replying, —I don't know...—

I suddenly felt the sharp pain in my chest again, causing me to cough profusely. Scenes

from the nightmare had been buried in the back of my mind as I gradually forgot its

contents. However, the stark image of Jack and the others floating in a pool of blood

remained in my mind. Even though I knew it was just a nightmare, that scene somehow felt so real, like it had just happened in real life.

I then remembered that no one responded to my calls for them in the flurry of gunfire and smoke. It seemed increasingly apparent that they had already been harmed.

Just the thought of my friends possibly dying a horrible death caused my chest to ache inadvertently.

—They're not dead! They're not !. We even swore an oath a few days ago... Whatever I saw in

the dream must be the opposite of what was really happening! Yes, it has to be! —

I buried my face within the palms of my hand, covering my eyes that were overflowing with tears as I tried to comfort myself. Dicken had placed a webbed claw on my back and eased my body onto his firm chest. He then started to stroke my back like he was consoling a child. I could hear his strong and steady heartbeat against his chest. It had a soothing effect that I couldn't explain, and Dicken's actions eased my suffering. I couldn't help but cling on to him like he was the last person I could depend on. Buried in his embrace, I gritted my teeth and tried my best to hold the tears back. But they didn't stop flowing down onto Dicken's chest. Dicken held my arm and squeezed it lightly. Even though his face looked gloomy, his eyes were gentle. He suddenly lowered his head and placed his lips on my eyelids before licking away my tears. I wanted to evade his touches, but his claw was gently holding me in place. He was licking my cheek tenderly and removing my tears drop after drop. This was his way of comforting me. But his method of comforting me felt a bit embarrassing , so I pushed him away and wiped my tears with the back of my hands. Dicken stopped his movements. He had a puzzled look on his face as his brows furrowed, and his deep blue eyes followed me. It looked like he was trying to determine what my mood was. Either that or he was dissatisfied with me being so heartless and denying his comfort. Noticing this, I felt less bold. If it weren't for Dicken, I would have been dead a long time ago. And the truth was, I felt at peace the moment I saw him. However, I still didn't want to admit that I had gotten used to relying on him.

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I didn't dare to look Dicken in the eyes. So, I simply gulped and mumbled a few words. —I'm

going to look for Jack and the others.—

I broke free from his embrace and wanted to stand up. But at that moment, the pain in my chest flared up again, causing me to hiss.

I drew a deep breath, and Dicken grabbed both my hands. I looked at him and saw that he had pursed his lips. He then leaned forward and covered my lips with his.

He kissed hard. So hard that it didn't even count as a kiss. He was sucking so hard on my lips and tongue like he wanted to swallow them. His sharp teeth scraped my mouth as if to

warn me. I had no space to move my tongue as he twirled his tongue with mine. My tongue

could only follow his lead as I could not withstand his assault. Our saliva began to drip from where our lips met.

His claw then slid down my back to my hips as he started to unfasten my pants. He pushed his tail forward and forcefully squeezed it between my legs to part them. All of this while his stiff shaft poked against my crotch.

I was overcome with anger and pushed my knee against him to stop his actions. Sadly, I

didn't even have the energy to struggle after sustaining a wound.

Therefore, the only thing I

could do was bite his lip. I couldn't allow myself to stop even after tasting the metallic blood

in my mouth, so I bit him several more times, hoping that he was aware of my protest.

The claw that had reached into my pants stopped, so I stopped provoking him and allowed

him to have free rein over invading my mouth as he twirled my tongue with his. After a

while, he stopped and gave me a once over. He narrowed his eyes and looked at me calmly like he was punishing me for being disobedient earlier. I had to admit that he was successful. I was meek and tame like a sheep as I lay beneath him, not daring to move. The struggle had caused my chest to hurt again.

Dicken cast his gaze onto my chest and lightly pressed the area around my wound, hinting at me to take a look at it.

Obviously, I knew that I had been shot and that it was Laura who pulled the trigger. I was lucky that the crazy woman didn't shoot my heart, giving Dicken a chance to revive me.

I touched the area near the wound where Dicken had just touched and felt a scab that had formed on the bullet wound. There was also a translucent membrane over it. It was apparent that Dicken had tried to heal me. However, the firepower of the guns was so strong that the wound couldn't heal as quickly as regular injuries. I hazarded a guess that the bullet had also hit a bone, or else I wouldn't have felt such intense pain from just moving a little.

“Damn it !” I had hoped that it would heal straight away so that I could fight back against Dicken's advances. Now, I didn't even have the energy to leave this cave. When this thought came to mind, I looked around. The cave seemed to be situated on top of a cliff that wasn't too high up. As I looked through the opening on my right, I could see the ocean sparkling from the moonlight in the distance. It was truly a sight to behold.

The place we were in seemed like the only breezy spot with adequate illumination on the island. After all, Dicken was the alpha among the merpeople, so the cave wasn't too shabby.

“Why not spend some time recovering here before setting out to look for Jack and the rest?”

As I thought about them, my chest started to ache again. I shoved the image I saw in my nightmare to the back of my mind and chose to believe that they were still alive. Perhaps we were just separated...

'Wait, but does this mean I will have to spend a few days alone with Dicken in this cave?'

I looked at Dicken with complicated feelings and found him staring at me as well. It was as if he knew what I was thinking.

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Dicken's long tail curled itself around my calf, and he placed his arm under my neck. He pushed me into him like he wanted to prevent me from moving too much like I was before.

But being in this intimate position made me feel awkward and uneasy because I didn't

know when Dicken's rut would happen again. I was in the cave alone with him, and he had the freedom to do whatever he wanted with me.

Without a better plan in mind, I quickly shut my eyes and pretended to be asleep.

Dicken seemed to have no intentions of doing anything to me. His breathing was steady, and his chest was rising and falling in a steady rhythm. His breaths were like a sea breeze

blowing onto my hair, while his long and sturdy claws were around my shoulder. We looked like an intimate couple.

This merman was honestly so simple-minded. I gave in to the temptation to peek at him

and saw that his eyes were closed. Several water beads were resting on his lashes while the

bridge of his nose was high and chiseled. He didn't look that different from a marble

sculpture. Dicken could've been really asleep, so I didn't dare move too much otherwise, I

might wake him. I was afraid to take this chance to run away because I would definitely fail to escape. I was sure that Dicken would wake up if I had freed my leg from his tail, and I didn't dare to incur his wrath at a time like this. So, I could only shut my eyes again, take in a deep breath, and force myself to relax. But Dicken's unique fragrance had permeated throughout the cave, making me unable to fall asleep. Instead, my heart started to beat faster, and my body started to sweat. Although I was just lying down quietly, my body was restless. Therefore, I just lay there for a while. Not long after, my stomach started to grumble.

—Damn it...—

I awkwardly cursed as I realized that I hadn't eaten anything in a long time.

Dicken woke up from the noise I had made and opened his eyes to look at me. I awkwardly

rubbed my stomach and said, —Um...I'm hungry.—

Dicken placed a claw onto my stomach and pressed down onto it out of curiosity. I could

only watch him with pitiful eyes as I was famished, and the only way I could get any food

was through him. Luckily, Dicken seemed to understand me as well as my request. He gave

me a once-over and smiled.

After that, he lifted a claw to my chin then pulled my face forward so that I was closer to

him. I was confused about what he wanted as he leaned his pointy ear toward my lips like

he was hinting at something.

My mind was blown when I realized what he meant. He was asking for a kiss. Rather, he

wanted me to lick him as I had before when I treated him as a reward for finding me food.

In this situation, I felt like I was a dolphin that was being trained, and he was the trainer.

Both our positions were completely swapped. I had to comply with his conditions

obediently. Otherwise, I wouldn't get any food. 'This must be a joke!' My body stiffened as I didn't want to comply, but right at that moment, my stomach grumbled even louder than before. The intense hunger prompted me to abandon my pride. Although dissatisfied, I scooted closer to him and licked his ear just once. But to my annoyance, Dicken was greedy for more as he leaned his ear closer to me. He glanced at me through the corner of his eyes and widened his smile.

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