

### Chapter 3 Part 3



With that, Elria and Reid were kicked out of the workshop.

And so— they were standing absentmindedly in the tourist area.

"Reid."

"What is it, Elria?"

"I think we should sort out our current situation to resolve it."

"That makes sense. Constructive thinking is important."

"First of all, we were asked to go buy tea from Millis."

Elria showed a note that Millis handed over to her. There were several well-known brands of tea listed on it.

"We both know the brands of tea, so there's no problem in purchasing them."

"Right. I also know where the store is because I've seen it while walking around the royal capital."

"But clearly, we'll have extra time even if we purchase them."

Even if they visited the store Reid mentioned and factored in uncertainties, it would not take more than 30 minutes to purchase the tea leaves and return to the workshop.

"The current time is 1300 hours, but Millis said we shouldn't return until the evening, specifically not before 1700 hours."

"Why are you using the old military time reading from a thousand years ago?"

"I just felt like it."

Because Millis was very forceful, it reminded Elria of receiving a mission from a superior officer in her previous life. It was that intense. However, there were some unclear points about this mission.

"Millis gave us the instruction to 'spend the time doing something date-like'. So, I decided that we should clarify the conditions first."

"That's true. We have to clearly define what 'date-like' actions are."

"Yes. Have you ever been on a date, Reid?"

"I have no experience at all."

"Me neither."

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"What should we do?"

"What should we do indeed."

Both ended up staring up at the sky, not knowing what to do. Of course, they had some knowledge about 'going on a date'.

It was something that a couple in love would go out and spend time doing. But that was about all they knew.

"Ahh... I do remember my subordinates talking about various things, but since I had nothing to do with it, I just ignored it..."

"I felt the same way..."

After all, they were famous as the 'Hero' and 'Sage' a thousand years ago.

They were busy every day because of that, often going to battlefields. On their days off, Elria's memories mostly involved researching magic alone.

As for Elria, back then, she had feelings for Reid, which meant she absolutely had no thoughts of falling in love with other Elves or humans.

"Also, Millis called it a 'shopping date'. The fact that she specified it probably means it's different from a regular date."

"Well, if we think about it, it likely just means going shopping while on a date... Is there anything in particular you want to buy?"

"Nothing in particular."

"Same here, I've already prepared everything I need, so I don't need to buy anything."

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"We... can't complete this mission...!!"

"It's not even a 'mission' to begin with."

As Reid was grinning wryly, he seemed to remember something.

"By the way, when I was in the village and went to the town's market district, my little sister would say, *'It's fun just to look even if we don't buy anything'*, and she would gaze at various things and beg for food from the stalls."

"...You have a little sister, Reid?"

"Yeah. She's three years younger than me, about the same age as Elria. I also have an older brother who's three years older. Both of them had a higher aptitude for magic power than me, so they left the village to attend a different magic academy."

"Mm... In that case, we might meet them during the comprehensive exam."

"Oh, that's true. They have been too busy to return to the village according to their letters, so they probably don't know that I have entered the magic academy. It would be a surprise if we ran into each other during the exam."

Imagining the surprised faces of his siblings, Reid broke into a happy smile.

Seeing Reid's reaction, Elria couldn't help but smile as well. Reid nodded, looking seemingly satisfied.

"Well, anyway, how about we just walk around and look at things? We could treat it as a late lunch, grab some food to eat while walking, and maybe pick up some snacks for Wiesel and the others."

"Mm... I've never walked around while eating, so I'm looking forward to it."

"Then it's settled. I don't know if it will feel like a date, but we can just walk around and observe other happy couples for reference."

"Okay, that fulfills Millis's instructions—"

Just as Elria was about to nod, she noticed a man and a woman walking by.

From the way they were talking, they seemed to be in a romantic relationship.

And—while walking side by side, their hands were affectionately intertwined.

Seeing this, Elria looked at her own hand, which was lightly grasping Reid's sleeve.

After hesitating for a moment, Elria nodded greatly and—

"———Mm."

——closed her eyes tightly, and held out her hand to Reid.

".....What's the matter?"

"H-Hand, hand, I want to h-hold——hold hands!!"

"Calm down, you're breaking your language function."

Seeing Elria's red ears, Reid lightly patted her on the head to calm her down.

"Holding hands at this point isn't a big deal. I've hugged you while you were lethargic, dressed you, and even bathed you while I was blindfolded."

"T-That's a separate issue...!"

Indeed, for Elria, it was a separate issue. She did not remember doing those things with Reid because she was in a lethargic state at those times.

And although Reid had led her by the hand before, it was safe to say that this was the first time she had held his hand of her own accord.

"T-That's why... please!"

"...Well, if you're okay with it, then I don't mind."

As soon as Reid took the offered hand——

Something seemed to 'pop' inside Elria.

"———T-Timeout!"

"Y-Yeah, I thought you were gonna faint."

Releasing Reid's hand, Elria took deep breaths to calm herself down. Not only was her face hot, her heart was also pounding like a drum.

"That was a high-level battle...!"

"Holding my hand was a battle?"

"I felt something close to that...!"

She was even more drained than she would have been after a battle.

Being aware of holding hands made her so embarrassed that she could not even think about walking hand-in-hand.

Seeing Elria's condition, Reid pondered while stroking his chin.

"But you're okay with grabbing my sleeve, huh?"

"Y-Yes... because it's not direct contact..."

"Then, can you bring out that magical beast from before?"

".....Shehri?"

"Yeah. Let's give it a walk while we're at it."

"O-Okay..."

Urged by Reid, Elria focused a little and cast her spell.

Then— at her feet, a miniaturized Shehri appeared and let out a small bark.

It was equipped with a collar and leash, ready for a walk.

"Err... I've summoned Shehri, but...?"

"Alright, then how about this?"

Reid stretched out his hand to grip the leash that Elria was holding.

Seeing this, Elria somewhat understood Reid's intention.

Both of them were holding onto one leash. Though their hands were not directly touching, it seemed as if they were connected.

"This is almost the same as holding hands, isn't it?" Reid said, smiling at Elria.

"There's no need for us to do the same thing as others. If you're nervous, you won't be able to enjoy yourself. In that case, it's best to adjust to what makes you comfortable," Reid said calmly, still smiling.

Reid had always taken care of her. He respected Elria's wish to 'hold hands' and came up with this method so that she wouldn't feel nervous. He had always been attuned to Elria's pace, never forcing her to face people she was shy around, and allowing her to hide behind him or hold onto his sleeve if that made her comfortable.

That was precisely why Elria also felt that she could try harder.

"If it seems too much, just let me know. It's also fine if you feel more at ease acting as you usually do."

"Mm... for now, I think it's fine."

Feeling slightly nervous, Elria clenched her fists lightly to encourage herself and then took a step forward.

Reid had given her this opportunity. So, from that point on, to be able to walk beside the person she loved, she resolved to try a little harder.