**Chapter 199: 16th Floor (6)**

"Help me...Help me..."

A desperate voice echoed from beneath the full plate armor woman's helmet.

A sorrowful voice that seemed to contain all the world's sadness and pain.

A voice crushed before an overwhelming power.

A voice filled with endless curses and lamentations that exploration failures often cry out in their final moments, always heard somewhere in the labyrinth.

In moments of crisis, when the party is destroyed by powerful enemies, the voice of those who survive alone in despair grabbed my ankle, the kind of voice commonly uttered by such survivors.

Just as I was about to take a step toward her, as if entranced.

"Grrrr! Grrrrrrr!"

The pack of Bone Jaguars that had been thrusting their hips on top of the man until just moments ago growled at me.

"Grrrrrrrr!"

"Kieeek! Kiek!!"

Not just the monster seeds waiting their turn, but all the monsters raping the man in other cages collectively roared as if threatening me.

Not for the male they had exploited until they were sick of breeding, used and violated to their satisfaction.

For a fresher, superior existence.

To take the seed of one who could give them far more superior offspring, and to crush them underneath themselves.

-Clang! Clang!

The monsters sank their teeth into the iron cages that confined them, drooling profusely.

"..."

Something was strange.

Monsters with reproductive organs instinctively try to take males, but they don't act this extremely unless in heat.

But these monsters seemed to have all their nerves focused solely on mating. As if it was their very reason for existence.

-Clang! Kang!

The Bone Jaguar pack was the first to break their cage.

The monster seeds born from Bone Jaguars and humans rushed forward with reinforced bone teeth, shattering the sturdy iron cage to pieces, trying to take the fresh male.

Two Bone Jaguars, moving much faster than normal ones, approached in a pincer attack, splitting to the left and right.

"Grrrrrr!"

The Bone Jaguar that approached from the left was already right in front of me.

It had been quite a while since I'd imbued magical power into the artifact hand axe in my left hand.

Aiming the axe at the creature's head, I chanted briefly.

"Enlarge."

-Kuuuuung!

"Grerererek!"

The Bone Jaguar that took a direct hit from the instantly enlarged artifact axe was split by the blade.

The sharp axe blade split the Bone Jaguar's head in two.

-Kuung!

When the axe finally hit the chamber wall raising dust, the Bone Jaguar was dead, split in half.

My right hand wasn't idle either.

The teeth of the Bone Jaguar that rushed from the right were blocked by Bunny's axe blade.

-Crunch!

"Gr, ek?"

The axe blade, reforged with relic alloy and gluttony's soul stone, wasn't even scratched by the Bone Jaguar's bone teeth.

Rather, when the Bone Jaguar realized its bone teeth were starting to break, casting a suspicious glance, the axe had already left its mouth and was heading for its neck.

"Guh-"

-Shriek!

The Bone Jaguar that couldn't even finish its cry was struck down to the floor.

Cracks formed in the stone floor tiles, which began to soak up dark red blood.

"Grrrrrrrrr!"

When I pulled the blood-soaked large axe from its neck, the last remaining Bone Jaguar rushed in.

If the superior monster seed had fallen, this one that had been focused on mating until just now stood no chance.

-Shriek!

After butchering three Bone Jaguars in an instant, I looked toward the other cages.

"Kieek..."

"Grorok..."

Perhaps their strong survival instinct had suppressed their mating urge.

The monsters that had been staring at me with instinct-filled eyes just moments ago now desperately turned their heads away and resumed raping the men trapped in the cages.

As I was about to pass through the torn cage, my eyes went to the man who had been in the Bone Jaguar's cage.

The empty eyes characteristic of men violated by monsters. Though it was too late to save him, there were many strange things around him.

There was a dog bowl placed by his head.

Inside the dog bowl were hard, dry bread crumbs.

Perhaps because of that? Though I didn't know how long the man had been here, he wasn't so emaciated that his bones showed.

The same was true for the men in other cages.

My brows furrowed, separate from seeing the naked man.

'This is the worst.'

The setup was like livestock farming rather than treating humans.

Despite being confined in cages, their legs were bound in shackles, and numbers were written on their right shoulders as if labeling merchandise.

I've seen people treated like this before.

Slaves.

Fusilini and Aldente, who had been captured by the back alley turf clan, had almost been marked with slave numbers in similar cages.

Perhaps there was some strange connection between whoever created this bizarre place and the back alley turf clan.

"As expected."

Idelbert, who was looking around the desk near the cage, muttered quietly while looking at the papers on it.

"Bad feelings never seem to miss the mark."

At those words, I turned my attention to the papers she was looking at.

There were messy writings scrawled in handwriting that showed no care for neatness. But that didn't hinder me.

The language of this world was immediately translated and revealed its meaning to me.

[Eternal Sleep Body Experiment Record #1145]

[The breeding between Bone Jaguar, Wyvern and males has failed. Another failure today. Is the approach of breeding monsters and humans to create superior bodies wrong? Perhaps it is.

The sperm of ordinary men couldn't overcome the monsters' dirty magical power and mana-filled genes. No matter what, monsters are born. Then what answer should I seek?

Should I capture men with stronger genes? But now I'm not satisfied unless the man is considerably strong. There's no progress in today's experiment. But I will continue experimenting.

Everything is for the one and only sweet dream.]

"...What is this...?"

My mind went blank the moment I saw the words written on that paper.

Am I reading this correctly? Forced breeding between men and monsters? My head became dizzy.

"Master. This is..."

"Yes. It seems to be experimental records written by a Sloth worshipper."

So that means, as expected.

"It seems this place is both a hideout and laboratory for a Sloth worshipper."

The worry became reality. Idelbert, with a hardened expression, waved her hand.

-Swoosh.

At that, the desk near the cage and the experimental records and samples on it were all sucked into her personal subspace.

"We'll need to investigate this thoroughly after we get to the surface. For now..."

"Ugh, uh..."

A voice we had momentarily forgotten cut between us two.

"We should hear that one's story first."

"Yes."

Putting aside the troublesome matters for now, we headed toward the full plate armor woman who collapsed in front of the boss room door.

"Hey."

"......"

When I grabbed her shoulder and shook it, her head swayed lifelessly.

"Master."

"Right. Here's the potion."

At my words, Idelbert took out a recovery potion from her personal subspace. Though she hadn't given a recovery potion to Grumpy, the situation was quite different now.

After respectfully receiving the potion, I removed the woman's helmet to reveal red short hair.

Though bloodied, it was quite a pretty face. Perhaps she was even nobility.

I opened the woman's mouth with my hand and carefully fed her the recovery potion. Before long, the woman opened her eyes with a cough.

"Cough, kaheck!"

"Are you feeling more conscious now?"

"Y-yes, thank...kaheck. Thank you..."

After drinking the potion and opening her eyes, she kept bowing her head repeatedly.

Previously there had been signs of wariness, but now she just kept bowing her head and repeating words of thanks.

"What exactly happened here?"

"...urp, uweeeeek!"

At the brief question, the woman started convulsing.

The woman quickly turned her head and, as if recalling terrible memories, began vomiting everything in her stomach onto the floor.

"Hick, huu...! Uuuuugh...!! Sorry, I'm sorry... I'm sorry..."

The red-haired woman collapsed over her own vomit and began sobbing with suppressed moans.

The other party members I had encountered before were nowhere to be seen. Of the four, only she collapsed here.

Seeing her repeatedly apologizing to someone who wasn't here, I could roughly guess what had happened.

Total party wipe. A common occurrence in the labyrinth.

But I didn't have the luxury to leisurely contemplate someone else's pain.

This mysterious relic warehouse, no.

The Sloth worshipper's laboratory was quite unpleasant after all.

"What happened?"

"...J-just. We just thought it was a relic warehouse. Just... an ordinary..."

When I asked again as if interrogating, the woman began to speak.

"Angelisia...our party's mage said she knew about relic warehouses well. She said finding a relic warehouse in a place like this was incredible luck, and after entering the warehouse, she even blocked the entrance again. Because if anyone found out, there would surely be conflict..."

What would have been the greatest luck in normal circumstances turned to despair in an instant.

"We certainly could have turned back. The strange unease I felt while walking down the corridor grew stronger when we saw those cages and monsters. But, the boss room was right ahead, right? We could get relics, right? The rest of the party members all agreed, so..."

As they progressed through the relic warehouse, the sense of unease grew stronger, but the greed for relics grew even more intense.

If relics from the upper floors (floor 1-10) traded for high prices, what about relics from the middle floors?

Even the most rational person would find it hard to resist the temptation of countless riches, let alone if they were explorers.

It could be said that entering the boss room of the relic warehouse was a predetermined outcome.

"We shouldn't have...What's beyond there isn't an ordinary boss... uuurp..."

The red-haired full plate armor woman retched again. She collapsed onto the spot after spitting out even her stomach acid.

The recovery potion could only heal physical injuries, not restore basic stamina.

I turned my gaze from the collapsed woman to the boss room door.

If they were using even the relic warehouse as their laboratory, would they have left the boss room ordinary?

There must be something in there too.

[Sniff sniff. Here it is. There's a smell coming through the door crack! It's been a while since I've smelled something this stagnant. It smells much more delicious than those succubi who stole your women's bodies back then.]

Bunny giggled in my head.

More delicious than the two mid-rank succubi who had followed the Lust worshipper.

[Is it strong? Is it weak?]

[Hmm. It's nothing to me, but for you as you are now...]

Bunny stretched her words in contemplation, but couldn't answer quickly.

I waited for her words while quietly staring at the boss room door before me.

"...Huh?"

My thoughts stopped midway, and a blank voice came out.

That door seemed to be very slightly open...

Only then did the strange sense of unease fall into place.

The fact that the full plate woman before me knew about the inside of the boss room meant she had already gone in and come out once.

Through the slightly open boss room door crack, something came out.

-Thup.

My eyes turned to that thing that appeared through the boss room door crack and grabbed the full plate armor woman's ankle.

It was a hand.

A bizarre hand that evenly mixed the reptilian fingers of a wyvern, the bone claws of a Bone Jaguar, human skin, and black demonic energy...

Like a chimera.

-Whoosh!!!

That hand instantly dragged the full plate armor woman into the boss room.

-Kiiiiiiiiiing!

My body was already swinging an axe wrapped in dazzling radiance.