**Chapter 250: Elder Lich Subjugation Battle (1)**

15th floor Eden's center is a peaceful and safe area that stands out even in Eden where outlaws and criminals run rampant, though there are no monsters.

Moreover, it's prime real estate with the Adventurers' Union just two blocks away and the Earth Mother Goddess Order's Eden branch on the adjacent line.

I looked up at the two-story building built in a place with security comparable to the noble districts on the surface.

It was just like the inn outside the labyrinth, making me wonder if I was on the surface.

[Cozy Winter Night Inn]

Even with the exact same signboard.

"Could it be here?"

"Yes. The land was more expensive than expected, but it's better to get good land when buying. Hmm. The wood smell is nice since the building is newly built."

"You built a completely new house?"

"Yes. I asked someone skilled in construction magic. The interior layout is slightly different, want to come see? Since the party members worked hard too, take a good rest here today."

The party members, who had been blankly staring at the building from afar, barely managed to nod at Diana's words.

Although adventurers earn more than other professions, building on such secure land would inevitably impact finances even for a high-rank adventurer.

However, Diana's calmly closed eyes showed no sign of such concerns.

"Just how much money did she save before retiring...?"

"Well, she was once among the most renowned adventurers, so perhaps it's natural..."

"Should I try selling Tonton Milk too? Wonder if the taverns here would buy it?"

"Would they?"

"They might?"

"...How did the master travel the labyrinth with people like this...?"

Leaving behind the party members' envious and admiring gazes, Diana showed me around the inn.

Overall, it was similar to the Cozy Winter Night Inn Branch 1 on the surface.

The first floor had tables for a tavern where guests could drink and chat, and a spacious kitchen that fully reflected Diana's love for cooking.

The second floor had lodging rooms like an inn, and my room was in the same location.

However, the interior was improved.

The bed was soft yet perfectly embracing, clearly high-quality at first glance, and the ceiling height and interior were more spacious, giving a refreshing feeling even inside the room.

It was an inn that felt familiar and comfortable on the outside while warmly embracing guests inside, with Diana's careful and meticulous attention evident throughout.

I laid my tired body down in the comfort of this new nest.

Although exploration was quite smooth with Diana and Ellie present, advancing to the 15th floor in three days was a fast enough march to be called forced.

The reason we advanced so quickly was all because of the Elder Lich.

Elder Lich is an undead monster and a monster that uses necromancy and of all places, this Elder Lich appeared in the swamp graveyard.

By the time we reach the 19th floor, more than half of the corpses in the swamp would likely be raised as Elder Lich's subordinates.

Before Elder Lich could increase its undead servants for protection and weapons, we needed to quickly reach the 19th floor and crack its skull.

So we couldn't take a leisurely rest. We had to sleep just one night in a safe place and leave right away tomorrow.

"Master. Wake up!"

Denshi sat on my crotch and gently shook my waist.

Though it felt like I had just closed my eyes briefly, a day had already passed.

I, who had suppressed my sexual desire through the Stigmata of Patience, grabbed Denshi's waist as it was, moved her aside, and got up.

"Were you tired? You were sleeping like you were completely knocked out yesterday."

"I guess I was a bit tired since it's been a while. How are the party members?"

"Everyone's getting their equipment ready and having breakfast. Thanks to Diana, everyone slept well at the inn so they're in good condition. They all said they never expected such luxury in the labyrinth?"

While chatting with Denshi, I gathered my equipment and went down to the inn's first floor.

"The inns around here are going to be screwed?"

"The ones that rip off adventurers? Serves them right. If they have eyes, everyone will flock here. Just look at the facility difference."

"Even though it's Eden's safe zone, I never thought we could shower with warm water in the labyrinth...At this level, isn't it almost like the Union Leader's mansion...?"

Jubeel, Nuer, and the others were chatting while eating sandwiches.

As they said, there couldn't be another inn in Eden with better facilities and better value than this place.

The inn's owner was Diana, and I couldn't help but feel my shoulders rising with pride.

"Did you sleep well, Balkan? We're heading back to the 16th floor soon, right?"

"Yes. I should help with the inn's opening preparations too, I'm sorry."

"No need to apologize for that. You should complete your received request first. If anything, I'm sorry I can't help."

Diana says she can't carelessly hunt labyrinth monsters right now.

She says it's because she might get cursed again if she acts rashly, which might be why Diana didn't hunt a single monster on our way to the 15th floor.

However, as a junior adventurer, I was greatly impressed by her judgment and the way she freely navigated the labyrinth like her own home.

"No, it's fine. I learned something even though it was brief."

"Huhut. Is that so? Ah. Eat breakfast before you go."

"I’m always grateful. I'll eat well."

I filled my empty stomach with a sandwich Diana made, containing fresh vegetables rare in the labyrinth and flavorful jambon.

It was a taste that made me smile with each bite.

While digesting after hastily devouring the sandwich, Diana handed over six pouches.

"What's this?"

"It's jerky I made this time. Since food spoils more easily due to the environment as you go towards the 19th floor, I made it to preserve as long as possible, so eat a little whenever you're bored or tired."

"You made this for all the party members too?"

"It's just a matter of making a bit more. Since they're party members you care about, I should take good care of them too, huut—"

I tightly hugged Diana who only chose pretty words to say.

For a moment, the females around held their breath, but I didn't mind.

"Ba, Balkan...? Ugh... eve, everyone is watching..."

"Let them watch."

"......"

After hesitating briefly at those words, Diana carefully wrapped her hands around my waist.

So we continued our sticky, melting slug embrace for about ten minutes in front of everyone, before finally separating, unable to hide our reluctance.

"...Ahem. Well. Shall we get going now?"

"Huut. Ye, yes, we should probably go soon..."

"Waaah... daddy dada..."

"...stepmother..."

"...master..."

It was because we couldn't overcome the gazes around us.

Still, the "I'll be back" hug helped relieve the tension.

After distributing the jerky Diana made to the party members, I asked Diana before departing for the 16th floor.

"What are you going to do now?"

"Hmm? Now I'll clean up the remaining spots in the inn...need to stock up on ingredients...and then..."

Diana, who had been leisurely listing her tasks, opened her eyes slightly and spoke calmly.

"I should go see Idelbert."

-Saaah...

Cold magical energy flowed from around Diana.

My spine chilled at the cold response that seemed to contain killing intent.

Since learning that I had wrapped Idelbert's black cat tail around my hand and had mating with squishing sounds in her rear, Diana occasionally made such expressions.

Diana, who instantly erased the cold expression from her face and gathered up the magical energy she had inadvertently released...

As if nothing had happened, closed her eyes and smiled gently.

"By any chance, would you like to come along, Balkan?"

At Diana's question, Serif's letter in my possession came to mind, but I shook my head.

The letter could be delivered later.

Not only did I have things to do now, but more importantly...

My instinct was strongly insisting that now was not the time to go together.

"...I'll stop by after I return."

"Mmm. Good thinking. Be careful this time too."

What on earth was she planning to do, for Diana to say it was good thinking?

After tightly hugging Diana who was waving with a gentle smile, our party headed back to the 16th floor portal.

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Handing over the jewel to the demon of sloth sleeping in the grand fountain was also postponed to next time.

If you put your feet in the grand fountain, you experience something similar to fainting or falling into a deep sleep.

You might regain consciousness quickly, but you could also faint for over half a day like last time, so it was right to go after finishing everything that needed to be done.

Since we decided to do Ellie's magic sample collection, which takes quite a long time, when returning, we immediately crossed the 16th floor portal.

Fortunately, we didn't fall from the sky like when I came with Idelbert.

However,

"Kieeeeek!!!"

Before the hot and humid tropical climate of the 16th floor could envelop our bodies, fierce winds poured down along with a sharp cry.

"One wyvern ahead! Size between adult and hatchling!!!"

Before it even entered my recognition range, Denshi with sensitive ears was the first to alert us of the danger.

The experienced party members prepared for battle without showing any signs of panic.

"Damn. Such shitty luck!"

"Wyvern...looks like we'll need to buy time until Nuer can use binding magic!"

"Already fired one stock shot! But it's too fast to hit!"

Jubeel, Rubia, and Nuer frowned while clicking their tongues.

A wyvern freely soaring through that vast sky at high speeds was uniquely troublesome even among 16th floor monsters.

Still, I stepped forward, satisfied seeing the party members engaging in battle within 2 seconds of transfer.

As the party leader, I couldn't just stand still.

"I'll cut off one wing."

"What? How?"

"I've done it before."

I drew my giant axe and prepared for battle.

While planting my feet deep in the damp soft ground, waiting for the right moment to charge in, the wyvern that met my eyes started trembling its huge body while flying in the air.

"Ki, kieeek..."

The cry that had filled the sky until just now subdued like a frightened girl.

My eyes turned to the wyvern's mouth that suddenly let out a fear-filled cry.

As if it had been completely smashed and was recovering, its teeth and fangs were only half-grown.

Seeing that appearance reminded me of one wyvern.

'This is the wyvern I beat the crap out of back then.'

It was that wyvern I had coincidentally encountered when falling into the 16th floor's air.

'You managed to survive well.'

Well, as a wyvern, a subspecies of dragon, it had intelligence exceeding that of clever monkeys.

That meant it had enough memory to remember the being that had rampaged in its mouth and completely smashed its teeth last time.

And that I hadn't killed it and mercifully let it live.

It would naturally remember that I had the ability to chase and kill it right now too.

"Kieeek..."

Landing on the ground after stopping its wing beats, it bowed its head to me as if begging to spare its life.

"......"

"......"

I nodded to the party members looking at me with dumbfounded faces.

"Looks like we got ourselves a flying carriage."