**Chapter 72: Get out alive (1)**

The Labyrinth Investigators, sent by the Temple, gaped at the unfamiliar sight.

A sickening stench of blood wafted into their nostrils.

Blood stained the walls and floor of the Labyrinth.

There was a frothing at the mouth, red-eyed and stunned rabbit girl.

The man who had boldly laid her on the ground like a thug, then rose to his feet, a blood-soaked twin axe in his hand.

It was a creepy scene, like a crime scene of an indiscriminate killer.

"⋯Whoa."

His short sigh sent chills down the spines of the Paladins.

They were considered high level powers even in the temple.

It was immediately apparent that the man before them was weaker than them.

But why?

The dozen Paladins all thought the same thing.

That if they fought now, there would be a lot of blood.

There was something about the man in front of them that made them think that.

As the frightened Paladins reached for their swords, Nate Elin stopped them with her right arm behind her.

Then, looking at the man before her, she opened his mouth.

"First of all. I'd like to know what happened to you."

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I explained the events to Nate Elin.

"⋯Of course."

She listened to me with a calm face, then sighed and furrowed her brow.

"You mean to tell me that you entered the Labyrinth to capture an outlaw, that the outlaw stabbed your party in the back with a second-to-eighth floor transition trap, and that you fell on the seventh floor while chasing them and battling them, and stumbled upon us?"

"Yes."

"And you expect me to believe that?"

I expected this reaction.

Honestly, I don't think I would have believed it if I were in Nate Elin's shoes.

I've been involved in more than my fair share of transference traps than I care to admit but believe it or not, I told her exactly what I went through.

"I'm serious, I need you to see this."

I pulled out a montage of Gurmimi and Reichem and showed it to Nate Elin.

"Hut, that guy is⋯!"

The male priest, who had been watching Nate and I interact, looked at the montage of Gurmimi and gasped, as if he had realized something.

Nate Elin looked at him and asked.

"Do you know her?"

"Ah, yes. She's a pretty notorious slave hunter and virginity hunter, half of the rape victims around the Outlaw Zone have been raped by her."

The surrounding Paladins stiffened at that.

"So, a dick hunter?"

"You fucking bitch!"

“We dare not even try it… No, ahem. To do something that goes against the teachings of the Mother Goddess!”

“How dare she commit such filthy acts as if she were breathing? That shameless bitch!! I can’t forgive her!”

A group of virgins who were forced to have spider webs hanging from their lower bodies under the teachings of the Earth Mother.

The Paladins glared at Gurmimi with bloodshot eyes.

Nate Elin's expression was not pretty.

She glanced back and forth between the rabbit's head in the montage and Gurmimi on the ground beneath me, then nodded.

"The montage bears the seal of the Guard, so I'm pretty sure it's for the arrest of an outlaw."

"You believe me?"

"Yes."

Nate Elin folded the montage and handed it back to me.

"If you fell to the seventh floor by yourself, is the rest of the party still on the eighth floor?"

"Yes. But since the battle was just about over, they will probably come straight up. It'll take a day or two at the most."

Actually, it's not easy to survive alone in the labyrinth.

I'm new to the seventh floor, so I don't know any resting spots or areas with fewer monsters.

Not only that, but I have to do everything by myself, including eating, resting, and fighting.

Plus, I have to keep an eye out for outlaws who might wake up at any moment and cause trouble.

Unless you're on the first floor, where there are only goblins.

On the seventh floor, with all its traps and minotaurs, it's nearly impossible for a low level explorer to survive on his own.

But so what?

Regrets are meaningless and the past can't be undone, so I just have to grit my teeth and deal with the situation.

"⋯Hoo."

Nate Elin glanced at me, then sighed and looked at the Paladins behind her.

"We'll be resting around here today."

"What?"

I let out a dumbfounded sound at the out-of-the-blue statement, but it was quickly drowned out by the cheers of the Paladins.

"Rest, rest, rest!"

"Unpack your bags! Let's eat!"

"Quiet! There are monsters coming!"

"We've beaten all the monsters around here anyway, so it's no problem."

"Will the rest of the kids on the fifth floor be okay?"

"Don't worry too much. They're elite, too. Do you really think they're going to get beaten on the fifth floor?"

"Right."

They chattered excitedly, as if glad for the respite, and in one fell swoop, they laid down a bed and started a fire.

Nate Elin, who had dropped her pack and was perched on top of it, gestured roughly to me.

"Don't go hustling and bustling, just settle in. I don't mind an extra person."

I took that to mean we were on the same side for the rest of the day.

There would be no outlaws or reformed explorers to point their swords at the paladins of the temple, so safety would be assured.

'Come to think of it, she even told me not to die because Serif is worried.'

Perhaps that was why she decided to take me in.

"Thank you."

As I bowed my head in rare favor, Nate Elin turned away from me and waved her hand once more.

"If you're so grateful, you'd better be nice to Serif."

Did this woman have nothing but Serif in her head?

"Yes. I'll be very nice."

"⋯That's it."

Well. I'm easy to understand.

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"You. You're messing with the wrong person."

I thought I heard the sound of teeth grinding somewhere, and then Gurmimi beneath me was looking up at me with a venomous glare.

I didn't feel much of a threat, despite the murderous tone of her voice and expression.

Since she couldn't be killed, the wound on her thigh was stopped from bleeding, but the muscles in her limbs were delicately torn to prevent her from struggling.

'I had been trained and massaged by Idelbert, and I knew where and how to squeeze to keep the body from giving out.’

Thanks to making full use of that realization, Gurmimi was left with nothing but a grin on her face and no ability to move a finger.

"Yeah, you shouldn't have touched me, you asshole."

Pfft!

"Kahak!"

I slammed my fist into the crown of her head as she struggled to look up from the floor.

"I'm the fucking leader of the Great Blues Clan! Being punched by a mere man when I can’t move!"

Gurmimi, who had been beaten without being able to fight back, seemed to have realized her situation again, so she stopped threatening me and started lamenting her situation.

"Hey, let me ask you something."

"Ha. Whatever you say, I won't answer."

Gurmimi shut up as I reached for the time-tested means of communication.

The red rabbit's eyes stared up at the axe blade resting on the bridge of her nose.

"⋯What, what do you want to know?"

As it turns out, axes are great conversationalists. It has the power to make even the most spoiled, unredeemable scum want to talk.

“Do you know a girl named Cachile…no, Denshi? She’s about as tall as my butt. She dresses like a total slut. She must have been a slave to your clan.”

“Slave? ⋯Oh. Now that I think about it, I think I heard that Vesta gave a slave with that name to a junior wizard she loved⋯”

"Haven't you seen that bitch in the Outlaw District lately?"

"I don't know. I ain't interested in female slaves."

This asshole is a consistent asshole. Her eyes showed that she really didn't know and didn't care.

‘I was hoping she’d know something about her, since they're from the same clan, albeit in different ranks and locations.’

The search for the snitch was unsuccessful.

Now that it was clear that the motive for the crime was to fuck and enslave a man with the Hobgoblin staff, there was only one question left.

"Talian. Or should I call her Reichem? What the fuck is she doing?"

A mage with an unusual illusion spell and a figure carrying the hobgoblin staff.

Judging by the status window, she was clearly named Reichem but Gurmimi had always called her Talian.

Maybe she wanted to hide her name? I don't know.

"⋯Damn, I didn't even realize that, so there's no point in using a pseudonym."

Gurmimi sighed deeply and hung her head in defeat.

And from her mouth, the truth of the matter was revealed.

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Reichem betrayed her tutor for an absurd reason.

Professor Arpo had postponed her graduation for ten years.

‘That asshole thinks I'm some kind of research slave.’

As the days passed, her hair fell out and she had female pattern baldness.

Tears streamed down her face. She lived with evil but even that was no longer enough.

“My, my son was mauled by a monster while exploring and became an idiot! I heard that the Hobgoblin staff contains the power to magically embody male corruption pheromones. If you open it, you might find a way to save my son!”

In the midst of her hellish research slavery, a golden opportunity presented itself.

After a decade of being treated like a slave, Professor Arpo had developed a great deal of trust, and he was open about his weaknesses.

His assistant, Reichem, did as the professor asked and succeeded in arranging a favor and gaining access to the Hobgoblin's staff.

In the carriage on the way to the Professor with the Hobgoblin's Staff, Reichem pondered.

‘If I take this with me, will the professor live happily ever after with his son, who has been restored by miraculous odds?’

As she thought this, a great hatred rose in her heart.

‘My life is ruined, but he gets to live happily ever after?’

There was an outlaw faction that she had been in contact with for some time.

Vesta of the Blues Clan, a criminal who had come to her home because she was coveting her illusion magic.

Vesta offered a great deal of money and a large number of male slaves in exchange for her services. It was a much better future than rotting away under Professor Arpo.

BANG!

Reichem used illusion magic to lure the coachman into a back alley, where he crashed the carriage into a wall.

Reichem, the research slave, died while the illusionist and outlaw of Clan Blues, Talian, was born.

Balkan sighed deeply as he watched Reichem shoved into the backpack of Joy Hog's party approaching in the distance.

"Grad students are dangerous, after all."