

## **Chapter 206 - Even Though It Should Have Been a Simple Magic Stone Collection...**

A/N: Point of view of the combat slaves.



‘Master and his friends have gone into the labyrinth. We were given a day off, but the order to "collect magic stones" is still in effect. We have to try harder’, the tiger beastgirl Mamani thought to herself.

She wore a face guard, a neck ring, and a chainmail shining in a faint golden color. The feathers of several arrows stored in a quiver were visible beyond the top of her shoulder. A long bow hanging at a string, which was connected to a backpack, kept appearing and disappearing from sight. The bundle of arrows on her back was something her master Shuuya gave to Mamani. Precious arrows blessed by Saju, one of the spirits of darkness.

She didn't intend to use those arrows much. 'As long as I have this Ashram, I can kill most of the monsters appearing on the fifth floor with one blow...not to mention that I'm in a party', Mamani checked the daggers at her belt while judging so.

She also confirmed the number of bottles she had put into her potion bag.

Looking like a golden warrior, Mamani lifted up the ‘large disk weapon’ (Ashram) with its black chain, which she could use with one hand, while staring at it cherishingly. After all it was a precious weapon she had received as a present from her master.

"——Well then, are you guys ready?" Mamani affirmed while gazing at the other combat slaves with her tiger-like, sharp eyes.

When the slaves were acting independently, she served as the leader. That was owed to her being a cornerstone of their ability to search for enemies with her <Olfaction>, a superior method to detect something by smell. As Mamani was hurling out instructions after finding enemies, she had naturally become someone similar to a leader.

That might be even more understandable if one was aware of her past. She had the experience of having commanded a platoon of the famous Espada Mercenary Band, which had repeatedly repelled Gluton Empire's units on the battlefield of Hardigger Hill in the eastern Fujique Confederation.

The very first reaction to Mamani's words was, "Of course! My preparations are perfect," coming from the tiny dog beastgirl Souther.

She whirled around on the spot as if dancing, making her dog ears float.

She was wearing her blue outfit, called Prolonglus. On her back she had a small knapsack, and her swords Ispal & Seldoyne equipped.

Her tiny build and the fluffy fur were very cute, but she was a swordswoman, who had learned the Flying Sword Style, and a powerful fighter who had defeated Extreme-ranked Flying Sword masters in outdoor sword bouts. And on top of that, she possessed the precious experience of having visited the eighth floor as an adventurer.

Souther had such strong sides to her, but recently she had been thinking, ‘Rollo-sama is scary. Isn't she going to steal my virginity for real? Even the other day, she sniffed my chest and butt...' She was a boyish girl who became bashful, harboring such feelings while blushing.

"I have finished my preparations as well." The one generating that rough, female voice was the snakewoman Bia. She talked quickly while at the same time extending and slithering her snake tongue.

The surface of her burly torso was covered by a scaly skin that looked just like that of a dragon. Given that she wore a thigh guard on her soft, snake belly-like abdomen and a half plate armor on top of her torso, a feeling of a heavy weight was prominent when looking at her. She was carrying a knapsack and a pipe with javelins on her back. A black shamshir (Shadow Strike) sheathed in its deep purple scabbard was dangling at her waist, and she was holding a square shield in her right hand.

It was a getup one could call the model of vanguard as Armed Knight Leader, a combat occupation characteristic of the snakepeople possessing thick snake bellies.

"I'm also fine. Let's go——," said the long-ear (Elf) Fuu with a smile.

Brushing up her golden, beautiful hair with one hand, she adorably raised her other, slender hand. The tiger tattoo on her cheek was charming. She wore a silver-threaded dress, swelling conspicuously thanks to her big breasts. Because a string tied to the small knapsack on her back passed between her breasts, their size was emphasized all the more. If Shuuya were to see them, he would definitely invoke his Boob Research Society & Committee while considering them "outrageous."

The short wand Bastoral's Cheek with its ocher magic stone was visible at her waist.

With Mamani in the lead, the high-class combat slaves left the courtyard of Shuuya's estate through the front gate, and proceeded towards the Martial Arts District. After a while they came out at the First Ring Road which was as crowded as always. This thriving place was pure chaos.

Passing in front of the adventurer guild, the shouting of an announcer reached them.

——Adventurers! It's not your job to only work in the labyrinth! Although it's unclear whether it has been influenced by the Magic Resonance of Emptiness, there is a group of mysterious tree kings, which has killed many adventurers, in the sea of trees with the thin interstice continuing east from Benrack! The entrance to an ancient ruin has been discovered in the northern Great Goldix Desert, but great numbers of big desert worm monsters have gathered in its vicinity, killing countless local adventurers by causing sand tsunamis!

"There's plenty of A and S rank monsters around, isn't there?" Souther reacted to the words of the announcer spreading the news at his information booth.

"I have heard about them, too." Fuu said.

"I don't have much interest. I shall only work for mine lord to whom I am indebted." Bia commented, and then revealed her feelings of anger, "I want to become stronger. I want to dive into the labyrinth together with mine lord, and not just collect magic stones."

Naturally she ended up invoking her demonic eyes, <Paralyzing Snake Eyes>.

That caused a male merchant, who had been selling freshly gathered eggs while holding a big basket that was bound to his chest with a cord, to collapse, smashing the eggs in the process, and a handsome adventurer to fall over, burying his face in the huge chest of a female merchant in front of him, an event that would make Shuuya envious.

While extending her snake tongue, Bia reverted her eyes to their normal, vertically slits, and acted innocent by saying, "It's got nothing to do with me..."

"...You're right. We have to do our best after having received such nice equipment."

The combat slaves nodded at Fuu's words.

In addition, there were dancing, street performers; a plump priest who was preaching a god's teaching while standing on a small stand, and in contrast to the priest, a thin pilgrimaging preacher who held a passionate sermon without standing on a scaffolding; a group of the Aria Church releasing spells while holding their twisted wands aloft; two pretty girls who were selling goods from desert cities while shouting that they have only few left; invitations by an adventurer possessing a dignified aura despite missing one arm; a merchant selling fresh vegetables; a sorcerer selling fishy scrolls; a cloaked, largely built merchant pulling bits connected to pack horses while making special horse cuffs ring; muscled adventurers who squared their shoulders; a dwarf who was being made sport of by a fat, teasing mare; a group of humans selling and putting together several cocks for cockfights; an elderly couple of exorcists making a magic monkey beast and an ogre monster follow them while pulling the chains at their collars; a warrior with scaly skin who wore a cowboy hat while riding a magic beast with the size of a griffon; and a silver-haired archer with five eyes riding a rare huge turtle. Mamani and the others were walking along the noisy street in front of the labyrinth with all kinds of races coming and going.

The announcers shouted various other pieces of information, but the girls proceeded onwards while ignoring them, and then stepped inside the cylindrical building which many adventurers were leaving and entering.

All of them touched the crystal in the center of the building, and Mamani said "Fifth Floor" as representative.

They were directly warped to the fifth floor, arriving in a wasteland. The sky had dark clouds and was clad in an eerie light. Magic light sources were floating here and there in the dim vicinity. They belonged to the adventurers camping nearby.

Those adventurers stared at the combat slaves who had appeared from the crystal. Especially the beauty Fuu gathered their eyes.

Mamani silently lifted her arm, pointed east while ignoring the adventurers' looks, and started to walk. Bia quietly went ahead while making her snake body wriggle. It was a characteristic way of movement special to her who had a thick lower body half.

Just like that the vanguard Bia advanced while drawing her black shamshir and readying it. The assault vanguards Mamani and Souther followed her slightly behind, and the rear guard Fuu was at the end of the line.

As they proceeded through the barren land roughened up by a whistling wind, Mamani's <Olfactions> reacted.

While her tiger nose twitched, she spoke up, "The smell of four, no six poison flame wolves from the front! Everyone, be on guard."

"Affirmative." Bia became alert.

Souther drew the twin water swords (Ispal & Seldoy) from her back, saying, "Okay."

After hearing the words of Mamani, the one in charge of instructions, Fuu held up the magic wand

Bastoral's Cheek in front of her chest, and said, "——Alright. I will bring down the poison flame wolves in the back with magic."

"Spotted them! I shall take the lead——" Bia took out one javelin from the pipe on her back with the left hand, and threw it.

She directly struck the head of a wolf. Then she defeated two more wolves with javelins. The remaining wolves immediately spread out to the left and right. In response, she shifted to holding her tower shield in her left hand, and advanced while holding the black shamshir in her right.

"Shhaaaaaaaa." Bia unleashed her provocation skill <Roar>.

The eyes of the wolves focused on Bia.

'Now! A chance!' Mamani threw her disk weapon relying on that strong feeling. Blades grew out of the rotating edge of the shuriken-like disk, which she had thrown after swinging it like a morning star.

The disk caused a buzzing sound as it flew, and struck the head of a wolf. The blades at the disk's edge sunk deeply into the head while rotating dreadfully, vertically breaking through from the head to the torso. In the end the disk stabbed into the ground behind the wolf while raising a cloud of dust.

'It's an amazing weapon. I'm grateful to master.' While feeling thankful towards Shuuya, Mamani drew her dagger and stood on guard without reeling in the disk with its black chain.

At that moment Souther ran past her from behind. She had her physical ability raised by the Prolonglus' effect. After sharply stepping in and closing the combat distance to a wolf, she slid along the ground. She thrust out the magic sword in her left hand, and at the same time of stabbing the side of the wolf's head, she swung the twin sword in her right hand sideways.

The torso of the wolf on her right was cut up in a straight line. The wolf, which had the side of its head stabbed, was still alive, and made its black loop expand, trying to stage a counterattack.

Souther calmly pulled out the sword from its head, and slashed it swiftly down after making her small elbow point upwards.

Instead of a flame breath, which the wolf tried to spit out, only a "Gafuoh..." escaped its mouth. Right afterwards blood gushed out of the gaping cut wound, and the wolf collapsed.

A swarm of earth pebbles, released from Fuu's wand, stabbed into the last wolf, crucifying it on the ground.

As result, an entire pack of poison flame wolves had been defeated without even a single of them being able to use their prided poison flame.

Captain Mamani recovered her disk weapon by reeling in the black chain with one arm. Once finished, she equipped the disk weapon on her arm as a big shield, striking an elegant pose, while solemnly declaring to her party members, "——Everyone, hurry with the magic stone collection! I will stand guard."

"Okay." Fuu approached the corpse of a wolf, seductively crouched down, dismantled the corpse with a knife, and took out the magic stone.

"Oki." Souther stored her two swords in their scabbards.

The sound of metal clicking into place was faintly audible.

"Affirmative." Bia confirmed.

After the magic stone retrieval, the combat slaves took a rest. They always took such breaks after a hunt as they carefully proceeded through the wastelands, faithfully following their master's words. And then they reached the area between the Crystal Cliff and the Forest of Smoke Pollution. On top of there being few adventurers here, it was a region with many blind spots and something similar to smoke rising from the ground. It was a gloomy place where the search of enemies through smell didn't work all that well.

Just when everyone was walking while strengthening their vigilance, "Purine! Why!? Guaaaaaaaah," could be heard from a place where a slightly dim light was floating, apparently illuminating a corner.

A man collapsed after having both his legs pierced by bone needles. The woman called Purine had a linear tattoo from her forehead to her eye. And while her light blue eyes shone, she made mysterious, long and narrow skeletal fish, which were connected to her through mana that she released from her body, float in the air.

"Purine? Ooh, you seemed to harbor feelings for the owner of this body. Fufu. However the soul of this woman has become niice nourishment for me." The woman gently caressed a skeletal fish swimming around her while speaking with an eerie, female voice.

"Fuck! D-Did you monster eat Purine?"

"Indeed. She was delicious. As expected, the meat quality, memories, and soul of adventurers regularly visiting the fifth floor are completely different. Ufufu." She winked adorably.

"...Damn monster! Purine wouldn't do something like that! Give me back my Purine!"

Upon the warriors words, "Pupupuhahaha, hiihii...there's no way I could do that, is there? I mean, I digested her inside my "stomach" already." Purin burst into laughter while holding her sides.

"S-Shit! Shiiiiit——"

"——I'm sorry for being a monster, okay?" In the middle of talking, the man's forehead was pierced by a bone needle, ending his life.

The fishy woman with the strangely, shining eyes had thrown it. She held several bone needle-like weapons in both hands.

All the adventurers scattered in the vicinity had been stabbed by countless bone needles. The combat slaves including Mamani guessed that they had probably been defeated by those needles.

"...Is that a falling out between fellow adventurers?" Standing in front, Bia asked quickly while slithering her snake tongue.

'...That mana, which stirs and withers irregularly inside her body, is formidable. It's quite possible that she's a strong fighter,' Bia thought while asking the other three.

"Looks like it." Mamani raised her alertness.

"There are many blind spots around here..." Souther lifted the twin swords in her hands, adopting her usual stance of crossing them.

"Scary..." Fuu was even behind Souther, but she felt frightened after watching that spectacle.

"No~ow then, it's my long-awaited daily pleasure~. Time for the harvest festival~!" The woman declared and laughed by herself while making her eyes shine faintly.

She approached a fallen corpse, went down on both knees, pressed her fingers with nails that had a beautiful black manicure against the corpse's cheeks, and pursed her lips as if about to give a kiss. The instant she recited an incomprehensible chant, the bone needle stabbed into the forehead started to shine. The blood, which had been streaming down from the base of the stabbed needle, started to gush out like bubbles, and a white aura-like ectoplasm was sucked into the woman's pursed lips from the shining needle.

The same happened to the corpses scattered in the vicinity. The woman absorbed the white aura-like smoke one after the other.

And then, when the white smoke ceased coming out of the needles as she had apparently sucked out all of the white auras, the woman's pretty nails unnaturally grew like snakes, stabbing into several corpses at once. At that instant the stabbed corpses seemed to dissolve and were absorbed into the black nail snakes.

All corpses vanished completely.

"Aah~ That was delicious~ The harvest is complete." The woman straightened her back while donning an ecstatic expression.

The crest tattoo and her eyes shone in light blue at the same time, and the skeletal fish floating around her grew by one size, too.

Furthermore, once the woman clad her entire body in a bluish white mana, the color of her skin became darkish while her body squirmed, visibly developing swelling muscles all over. Eventually she transformed from the cute appearance, who was called Purine moment's ago, into a completely different, muscular woman.

Her hair changed into curly, entangled hair with a tinge of silver. Parts of the leather armor covering her body were torn, exposing her belly button and her healthy private parts.

'Even though it should have been a simple magic stone collection...

"...That person is dangerous. Let's withdraw." Just when Mamani advised the others, the woman noticed Mamani's group.

Although her appearance had changed, the color of her eyes had remained the same.

"Mmh? Ah, I guess I was seen~" Seemingly in the middle of her transformation, the woman spoke in her characteristically silly way while knitting her eyebrows, and then threatened, "I'm going to kill you."

