

Shota 521

Chapter 521 Dungeon Exploration (1)

The team that went into the dungeon this time was completely different from before.

We were fully equipped and there were elves and dwarves that came with us.

If this team were to show up anywhere else, one might even think that they were an invasion force with how well armed we were.

But this was all to deal with this dungeon.

Just like Cecilia had reported, there was nothing special when we entered the dungeon.

After going forward for a bit, we met the slimes that they had encountered before.

This was something that was easy to deal with, so we didn't break formation as we just let the adventurers take care of them.

The adventurers were happy to do so since easy to kill monsters were always welcome. It helped that these slimes were also worth quite a bit.

The slime that they released was a lubricant that the nobles enjoyed using.

As for what they used them for...it was better not to say.

Still, Haley would happily buy the slime from these slimes to sell, so she had already given a price to the adventurers that made them happily charge at the slimes.

As the adventurers cleared out the slimes, we didn't push any further as we remained in formation.

My position in the formation was in the center, where it was the safest. But from this place, I wouldn't be able to see a single thing with everyone surrounding me like this.

So I went forward to the edge of the formation.

When Cecilia saw me moving, she quickly came forward to stop me and asked, "What are you doing?"

I looked at her with a calm look and said, "I'm going to take a look at the walls. I want to see if I can find anything from them."

Cecilia looked like she wanted to stop me, but then it was as if she realized something that stopped her from stopping me.

She looked at me for a bit before slowly giving a nod.

Seeing this, I started walking towards the wall.

The guards and knights that were around me saw this and couldn't help looking at Cecilia with strange looks. But in the end, she gave a nod to them that made them move aside for me.

But they also made sure to follow close to me as I went over to the wall.

They were completely on guard, so they would react as long as anything happened.

However, it was just a simple walk over to the wall, so there was nothing that could happen.

When I came up to the wall, I reached out my hand to tap it before rapping it with my knuckle, as if I was trying to find something. After tapping it a few times, I couldn't help knitting my brows and moving closer to the wall to take a closer look.

Cecilia could tell that this wasn't normal, so she came over to ask, "What's wrong?"

I didn't answer as I leaned up against the wall, putting my face almost right up against it as I looked at the wall carefully.

I even turned to move my ear closer as I rapped it again with my knuckle.

Finally, after a long silence, I finally said, "Come here and take a listen."

Cecilia had a confused look on her face, but she still came over to the wall where I was standing.

I had her put her ear up to the wall and rapped it again with my knuckle.

Cecilia revealed a confused look as she didn't understand what I was doing.

Seeing this, I finally said, "Can't you hear that it's hollow?"

"Huh?" Cecilia couldn't help saying before bringing her ear up to the wall again. This time, she rapped it with her hand as well and her expression quickly changed.

It was clear that she heard what I was talking about.

I didn't mind it as I said, "It seems that there's some kind of space behind these walls."

Cecilia and the others who were standing around me all revealed shocked looks.

Cecilia narrowed her eyes to look at the wall again before taking out her weapon and saying, "Should I try to break it then?"

I stroked my chin thoughtfully before slowly giving a nod and taking a step back.

Cecilia brought out the dildo bat and she swung hard against the wall, but she wasn't able to make a single dent.

This was with the dildo bat that had 50% penetration to it, so it was easy to imagine just how hard this wall was.

Cecilia revealed a surprised look before going in for another swing.

But before she could, I stopped her by saying, "Alright, there's no need for that. There's no knowing what we might stir from hitting it randomly like this."

Cecilia had an unhappy look, but she stopped in the end.

She came back to me and asked, "What should we do about this?"

I said with a shrug, "What can we do about this? Unless we can break through the wall, it isn't as if we can reach whatever is behind it. So there's no point in staying here and worrying about this. We should at least go in and see what the rest of this dungeon is like."

Cecilia didn't answer right away, but she did give a slow nod after a while.

Though there was a clear unhappy look that was still on her face.

In truth, there was something that I knew that could have worked.

While the dildo bats only had a 50% penetration effect, the original had a 99% penetration effect.

So if the original was used, it was very likely that the wall would have been broken.

But I kept quiet about this since I didn't want that to happen.

It might seem contradictory, but I didn't really want to break through the wall.

This place had clearly been made by someone, but I had no idea who that person was or what they wanted to do.

All I knew was that this place was dangerous, so it was best not to poke around too much.

Chapter 522 Dungeon Exploration (2)

It didn't take the adventurers long to clear out the slimes that were gathered in front of the entrance.

These were slimes, they weren't that powerful in the first place.

When they returned, they all had happy looks on their faces.

But those happy looks quickly disappeared when they saw the sour look that was on Cecilia's face.

They couldn't help feeling worried that they had done something wrong, so they quickly took their position in the formation.

However, that worry didn't come true in the end.

Cecilia didn't even bother saying anything to them as she just simply said, "Keep moving forward."

The adventurers couldn't help letting out a sigh of relief when they heard this, but they did look at Cecilia with a strange look after hearing this.

It was as if they couldn't believe what was happening.

Cecilia had trained them quite harshly these past few days which had caused them to form a slight phobia towards her.

Now that she had fallen silent like this, it really was strange for them.

It was a feeling that they couldn't get used to...

The team continued forward without encountering much trouble.

Most of the slimes had been taken out by the adventurers earlier and those that appeared were instantly taken out by the guards and knights. There was nothing that stood in their way as they advanced deeper into the dungeon.

While we were heading deeper, Cecilia suddenly looked at me and said, "If there was a space behind the wall, does that mean that someone intentionally created this dungeon?"

I couldn't help being surprised by this question.

It wasn't the content of the question that I was surprised by, but rather that she was asking this question.

I thought that I had made it clear enough that there was someone behind this dungeon, but it didn't seem like Cecilia had understood that.

If I had said it more clearly, would she have acted normally then?

After all, she had a look on her face that seemed like she had figured out something very challenging after thinking deeply for a long time.

I just gave a sigh and said, "That's right."

Cecilia revealed a look on her face almost as if she was proud of herself for figuring this out.

Seeing this, I really didn't know what to say.

But at the very least, she went back to normal after figuring this out, so I guess that was good enough for now.

As we continued deeper into the dungeon, Cecilia suddenly said to me, "This is where we were ambushed."

When I heard this, I immediately focused on the surrounding area.

But then I couldn't help asking, "Are you sure that it was here?"

Cecilia gave a nod in response.

I looked around again and just couldn't figure out how she knew that this was the area..

After all, she said that there was something that came out of the ground, but there were no holes at all here.

Was it because the dungeon had repaired itself?

Or was it because this was simply the wrong place?

The fact that Cecilia had spent so long thinking about what I had said before to only figure out something that I had already stated did play a factor here.

But in the end, I trusted what Cecilia said.

I pulled out an orb and injected some of my mana into it.

When this orb received the mana, there was a ball of light that came from it.

This ball of light floated into the air before creating a beam of light that shined down.

This was a special item that I had received from the treasures that the fourth prince gave me. This was a item that created a light when injected with mana.

Though we had torches, that was far from enough.

This was a cave that was large and covered in darkness.

The torches just gave off a little light that was far from being enough to cut through the darkness.

That was why I pulled out this item.

When the elves saw me do this, they also started gathering their mana and chanting.

When they finished, there were several balls of light that appeared around them as well that started shining beams of light in the surrounding area.

They were using a spell that had the same effect as the item that I used.

This completely lit up the surrounding area.

I gave a grateful nod to the elves before looking around the area.

There were no holes that showed that something had come from under the ground, but there were some chunks of dirt that were scattered around. This wasn't a natural spread of dirt, but rather it looked like something had burst out of the ground and had scattered all of this.

I couldn't help knitting my brows when I saw this.

But before I could do anything else, I suddenly felt something.

This was a feeling that was faint at first, but then it became stronger and stronger until I felt it coming from right beneath us.

Or rather, it was coming from a certain area right beneath us.

I could see that the elves also felt the same, but there was no time for us to tell everyone about this.

The only thing that we could do was...

I immediately controlled the light of the ball to create a spotlight.

This spotlight shined down on an area that was right in between the mercenaries and the adventurers.

The elves were confused by this at first, but then they quickly understood what I was doing.

They controlled their to do the same as my light.

With all of these , a very clear area was marked out where there were some adventurers and mercenaries standing there.

Seeing this, I quickly shouted, "Move out of the range of the light right now!"

The adventurers and mercenaries were completely caught off guard when they heard this.

Chapter 523 Dungeon Exploration (3)

But they still had their years of experience to rely on.

They reacted quickly and didn't stay in a daze for long.

After hearing what I shouted, they all jumped out of the circle of light that was cast.

Right after the last person jumped out, there was something that peeked out of the ground.

It was the same thing that Cecilia had described to me before.

There were these mushrooms that suddenly poked out of the ground, but they didn't seem that dangerous to me.

They seemed like normal orange mushrooms with white dots on their cap.

These seemed like normal mushrooms no matter how I looked at them...that was until they started to change.

These mushrooms sprouted out of the ground and then...they started to grow in size.

They continued to grow larger and larger until they were the same size as humans.

Well, they were a bit shorter than humans, just reaching between around three to four feet.

But that wasn't the most shocking part.

The most shocking part was that there were faces that appeared on these mushrooms. They appeared on the stipe of these mushrooms, right under their cap.

And the weirdest thing was how cute the design of these faces were...

For some reason, these mushrooms seemed familiar to me. It was almost as if I had seen them in some kind of game before...

But now wasn't the time to think about that since they were coming at us.

The important thing now was thinking about how to deal with these mushrooms that had suddenly sprouted out of the ground.

Cecilia was much calmer than me as she said, "Shields up and take formation. Use the arrows and spells to pelt them down while keeping them in place with the shields."

The guards and knights didn't hesitate at all as they took their positions.

They had been well trained by Cecilia, so they knew exactly what to do.

They split up in two groups with the first group lifting their shields to form a wall in front of the second group, The second group pulled out spears and arrows to aim at the mushrooms that were in the center of the blockade of shields.

The mushrooms tried breaking free, but they weren't able to.

Since what had happened last time, I had made sure to strengthen the shields with some runes.

I had planned on keeping these things for later, but it didn't seem like the time.

So before heading into the dungeon, I had worked with the dwarves that had come with Elsa to engrave all of the shields that they had brought.

The shields were able to block the attacks of the mushrooms, but it was all about whether the people holding the shields would be able to resist the brunt of the attack.

However, Cecilia had also thought about that and had trained them in this situation.

They were using a two man formation with each shield.

There was one that was holding the shield and there was one that was holding the one holding the shield. That second person would help bear the brunt of this attack, so they didn't collapse even if the shield could resist the attack.

With this shield wall, the mushroom monsters were completely trapped in this one area.

The arrows rained down on them and the spears stabbed through the gaps of the shield wall.

The mushroom monsters weren't able to do a thing as more and more of them fell under these arrows and spears.

It seemed that everything was about to go well, but then...

The mushroom monsters seemed to realize that there was no way out for them, so they became desperate.

There were some that started throwing their entire body at the shield wall.

Based on how much the guards and knights were buckling under the tackle of these mushroom monsters, it was clear that they were quite heavy.

But they were able to hold on in the end and didn't buckle under these attacks.

However, that wasn't the only thing that the mushroom monsters did.

There were some that stood in the center that didn't follow the other mushroom monsters to throw themselves at the wall. It seemed that they were preparing something with the way that they were gathered.

Cecilia naturally also recognized this, so she said, "Forget about suppressing the ones that are charging, aim for the ones in the center! Take them out before they get a chance to do anything!"

The archers immediately raised their bows up when they heard this and aimed their arrows at the mushroom monsters in the center of the formation.

After taking a second to adjust, they released their arrows into the air.

The arrows flew over the heads of the shield wall and the mushroom monsters tackling said shield wall, perfectly aimed at the mushroom monsters that were in the center.

But before they could hit them, there were some mushroom monsters that suddenly jumped up in the way of these arrows. They blocked them with their bodies so that not a single one of the arrows would land on the ones in the middle.

It seemed that they didn't even care about their lives as they let the arrows pierce right into them.

This was someone that no one had expected, so no one had prepared a back up to take care of the mushroom monsters in the center.

This delay was all that they needed to do what they wanted to do.

The mushroom monsters in the center suddenly bent down as if they were compressing themselves.

As they compressed themselves like this, they started to shake and there seemed to be some kind of yellow dust that came from the caps on their heads.

This dust grew more and more dense before they suddenly stood up again and shot that dust into the air.

As the dust flew into the air, it instantly scattered apart and started to spread in all directions.

Chapter 524 Dungeon Exploration (4)

This yellow dust that had been shot into the air, it was the spores of the mushrooms.

No one knew just what effect these spores would have, but they must have been shot for a certain reason.

The spores hung in the air for a bit before suddenly falling down towards the shield wall.

But they couldn't dodge out of the way since the mushroom monsters were still throwing themselves at the shield wall. They had to keep those shields up or else the entire formation would collapse.

It really seemed like this was headed towards disaster until...

I suddenly shouted at the elves, "Fire spells! Use fire spells to burn away the spores!"

The elves were caught off guard when I shouted this, but Moon quickly said, "Do it now!"

As she shouted this, she had already raised her hand and flames had gathered in her palm.

When they received this order from Moon, the elves no longer hesitated and gathered flames just like Moon had done.

They quickly fired these flames out as a jet of flames at the spores that hung in the air.

As the flames made contact with the spores, they immediately burned away the spores. They were completely incinerated, not even a trace of the spores were left after the flames burned them away.

But these spores floated everywhere, so it was hard for the flame spells to get them all.

They were able to get most of the spores that floated there in the air, but some of it made it past the shield wall and fell on the guards and knights that were there.

As soon as they fell onto these guards and knights, they immediately took root.

The places where the spores fell, there were mushrooms that formed on their skin.

It didn't seem like these mushrooms were doing anything at first, but then the guards and knights that had these mushrooms growing out of them suddenly started to scream in pain.

The mushrooms had taken root in their skin and seemed to be draining them of their nutrients with the way that the roots wriggled under their skin.

It seemed that if they were left like this, they would be completely drained of any life that they had.

But this wasn't the time to deal with this since the pain had caused the guards and knights who had been inflicted to be unable to do anything.

It would have been fine if they were all part of the group that shot arrows, but there was one knight that had been a shieldbearer that had been touched by the spores.

This single knight collapsing created a gap in our shield wall.

It seemed like the mushroom monsters were about to break through when Cecilia suddenly charged forward.

She left the command up to me, that was the trust that she had in me. She charged forward to grab that shield and take the place of the knight that had been infected.

So the shield wall was able to keep going, but it didn't seem like it was over yet.

The mushroom monsters in the center seemed like they were getting ready to go again...

My mind quickly turned when I saw all of this before suddenly shouting, "Send fire down on the mushroom monsters in front of the shield wall. It doesn't matter if our men get burned a bit, just kill all of the mushrooms in front of the shield wall."

The guards and knights forming the shield wall revealed bitter smiles when they heard this, but they didn't let themselves get distracted.

I looked at Moon and said, "Follow me."

Moon gave a nod before raising her hand to gather the flames again.

I also raised my hand and started chanting.

"Flames of this world, gather at my command and follow my will..."

As I chanted, there were flames that gathered in my hand.

This was part of what I had learned with the priest.

Since I had strained my mana using the Orb of the Dead, my mana pool had grown much larger and I was now capable of using .

I had learned some simple spells from the priest, but I never thought that I would be using them here.

With Moon, we gathered flames above the mushroom monsters in the center and before they could run away, we let these flames fall down on them.

The mushroom monsters clearly didn't expect this as they didn't dodge out of the way at all.

The flames were very effective, not just against the spores, but also the mushroom monsters themselves.

When the mushroom monsters were engulfed in the flames, they were completely burnt to ashes.

It was as if as soon as they touched the flames, the parts of them that touched the flames burst into flames as well.

These flames didn't discriminate as they quickly spread across the mushroom monsters.

They even lit each other ablaze by standing too close.

The flames jumped from one mushroom monster to another, quickly setting all of them ablaze.

When it was over, there were only charred mushroom monsters that were left.

With this charring, there was a smell that filled the air...

It was the smell of grilled mushrooms...

Though no one would actually dare eat these mushroom monsters.

But it would be a lie to say that it wasn't tempting.

They strangely smelled delicious.

However, that wasn't what I was concerned with right now.

There were still people that had mushrooms growing out of them after all.

I quickly went over to those people with Moon and she tried to cast a healing spell on it, but it had no effect at all.

Healing spells would heal injuries, but it wouldn't remove a parasite like this...

So they tried cutting the mushroom off, but it just grew back right away. And when it grew back, there was what seemed to be a strong suction that came from the roots embedded in the skin that made that person scream out in pain.

It seemed that these mushrooms were very resilient...

Chapter 525 Dungeon Exploration (5)

The one that they were operating on was the knight that had been a part of the shield wall.

Seeing the mushrooms that were growing from his shoulder, this knight revealed a bitter smile and said, "It seems that my time has come. I thought that I was careful enough, but now it seems that I was just fooling myself."

He turned to the others and said, "Give me some alcohol for the pain and put me out of my misery. I trust that you will all take care of my family after this."

Everyone around him had conflicted looks when they heard this.

On one hand, they didn't want to see him suffering in pain like this, but on the other hand...they really couldn't think of a way to cure this.

As many of them seemed like they were going to give up hope, there was one that didn't have the same look of despair as everyone else.

I had been carefully looking at the mushrooms that were growing from the knight's shoulder, as if I was trying to find something special about it.

The way that the roots extended down into the knight, it seemed like it was more than just a parasite. It seemed that it was living and growing, as if the mushroom would become something much bigger if it was left alone.

Since the mushroom was alive, then it meant that it was able to regrow its cells...

But if that was cut off, would it still be able to regenerate?

After thinking for a bit, I suddenly pulled out something terrifying.

Everyone was shocked to see this thing appear.

Cecilia even asked, "What are you doing pulling that out now? The battle is already over."

The thing that I had pulled out was Durand.

All of them were shocked to see this thing appear, but I didn't care as I came right up against the knight lying on the ground.

Seeing me bring that sword over, the knight couldn't help being terrified as he said, "My lord, what are you doing? I know that I asked to be put down, but that sword...is just too terrifying!"

I ignored him as I brought Durand over to his shoulder and with the way that I was holding it, it seemed like I was about to cut him with Durand.

But before I could, Cecilia suddenly came forward to grab my hand.

When she did, she couldn't help wincing as she felt some kind of stinging coming from her hand.

She didn't know what it was, but she could guess that it was coming from the evil looking sword that I was holding.

But still, she held firm as she didn't let me bring this sword down to the knight's shoulder.

As she held my hand, Cecilia asked in a calm voice, "What are you doing?"

Though it was spoken in a calm voice, it was clear that she wouldn't let me do what I wanted to do unless she approved of it.

So unless I gave her a proper explanation, she would even go against me.

I wasn't surprised or angry, I understood why she was doing this.

This knight was one of her men, so she had to take care of him.

It was her duty as their commander.

I looked at her and calmly said, "I have a way to save him, but I need to see if it'll work first."

Everyone was surprised when they heard this before there were bits of hope that appeared in their eyes.

Naturally they would want to save this knight if they could, but they had almost given up hope when they had failed with everything that they had tried.

Now that I had brought back this hope, they naturally wanted to bet on me.

But Cecilia wasn't that easily convinced.

She narrowed her eyes to look at Durand in my hand before looking at me.

It was clear that she still had her doubts about all of this as she said, "How are you planning on doing that?"

However, I didn't bother explaining what I was planning to do.

I knew that it was better to show her what I was doing than to explain it since it would make a more compelling case.

I looked at her and calmly said, "All I want to do is cut the mushroom with this sword. Once I do, you'll see what effect it has."

Cecilia knitted her brows when she heard this.

When they had tried to cut the mushroom earlier, it had caused indescribable pain to the knight, so it wasn't something that she wanted to do again...

But there was no better solution right now, so she started to hesitate.

The knight was the one that made the decision in the end.

"I want to try it."

Everyone was surprised to hear him suddenly say this.

Cecilia looked down at the knight as if she was trying to make sure that he was certain of this, but the knight just gave a firm nod.

With that, she released the hand that was holding the hilt of Durand, but she also didn't move away. She made sure to stay right behind me just in case anything happened.

Since I had been given the go ahead, I brought Durand up and put it right against the stalk of the mushroom.

Then in one swift motion, I brought the sword forward to cut the top part of the mushroom off.

When that happened, the knight immediately braced himself as he felt the roots inside of his skin start to move. It seemed like the same thing as before would happen where the roots would start draining him of his life essence to regrow the mushroom.

When Cecilia saw this, she immediately narrowed her eyes to glare at me.

However, I just ignored this as I waited to see what happened next.

In the end, the mushroom roots stopped shaking and settled again.

The top of the mushroom didn't grow back.

It was as if there was something that was inhibiting it.

Chapter 526 Dungeon Exploration (6)

I couldn't help letting out a sigh of relief when I saw this happen.

It had only been a theory that I had, but seeing that it actually panned out was definitely something to feel relieved about.

After all, if I had killed this loyal knight under me because of a mistake, then I really wouldn't be able to live it down.

Luckily, my guesses had been correct.

Durand really was able to inhibit the growth of the mushrooms that sprouted on their skin.

This was because of the special effect of Durand.

As a cursed sword, naturally Durand had special effects that it inflicted when it was used to cut things.

One of those effects was its bleeding effect.

When Durand cut things, it would inhibit the wound from closing, causing the person to keep bleeding unless they did something to dispel the curse.

So this was the effect that I used against the mushroom.

Since it prevented it from healing, the mushroom stopped trying to regrow the part that it had lost and went dormant instead of sucking more nutrients out of the knight.

With this smaller mushroom to support, it should have sucked even less nutrients from the knight now.

But to make sure, I asked, "How are you feeling now?"

The knight looked up at me and gave a slow nod before saying, "It isn't as painful as before and it feels like I've gained a bit of my strength back, but it still feels like it's draining the energy out of me."

I gave a nod as if I had already expected this.

After all, I had only cut the top part of the mushroom and hadn't dealt with the base of the mushroom that was still parasitizing him. To completely solve this problem, I would have to pull out the roots of the mushroom as well.

But right now, this was a good stopgap measure.

At least they wouldn't die before I had a chance to figure out how to treat them.

I suddenly stood up and was about to head off, but the knight asked in a panic, "My lord, where are you going? Are you just going to leave these things inside of me?"

I looked back at him and said, "You're stable for now, but there are others who are in the same condition. I'm going to cut off their mushrooms as well and then I'll come back to you."

When everyone heard this, they realized that I was right.

He wasn't the only one that was affected by this, there were others that were suffering as well.

The knight slowly gave a nod when he heard this.

I just looked at all of them and said, "Bring the ones affected over here so it's easier for me to cut."

In no time at all, everyone infected was brought over to where I was and they were placed on the ground in front of me with their mushrooms revealed.

With a few quick strokes, I was able to cut off the mushrooms and stabilize their conditions.

After letting out a deep sigh over the fact that no one would be dying soon, I turned my attention back to the knight.

I came right up in front of the part of the knight that was infected and looked carefully at the mushroom parts that were left. Or rather, I was looking carefully at the skin of the knight, looking at the roots that were wriggling under his skin.

The knight had an anxious look as he watched me look at him in silence.

In the end, the knight couldn't take it and said, "My lord, can you save me or not?"

Though this was a bit rude, it was understandable since this was his life that was on the line.

It was normal for him to be a bit agitated.

I slowly stroked my chin and said, "I should be able to, but..."

I left my words hanging as if I was hesitating to say the next part.

The knight knitted his brows and asked, "But what?"

I looked at him with a look of pity and said, "You'll have to suffer a bit if you want to be saved."

The knight was surprised to hear this, but then he gritted his teeth to say, "Pain is nothing. I'll endure it all as long as I can live."

I gave a nod as I said, "Alright, you're the one that said it. I'll do it then."

I looked at two of the knights on the side and said, "Hold him down."

The knights were surprised to hear this, but they quickly moved forward to hold the infected knight down.

The infected knight was about to say that this wasn't necessary, but he felt a chill run down his spine when he saw me coming towards him with Durand held up.

"What are you...AH!"

In one swift motion, I used Durand to cut off the part of his skin that was infected by the roots of the mushroom.

It was a large patch of skin that was cut off and there was a lot of blood that came out.

It wouldn't be surprising if he died of blood loss with how much blood was spurting out.

But I wasn't finished yet as I used Durand to cut even more of the knight's skin off.

Finally, when I was done, I reached out with one hand and placed it on the part of the knight that I had cut off.

That part had still been bleeding this whole time, which was the effect of being cut by Durand.

However, when I put my hand on it, the bleeding stopped.

That was because there was a pair of wings on my hand that suddenly lit up when I placed that hand on the gaping wound.

Slowly, the bleeding stopped, though one could still see the torn flesh of his body.

But at the very least, there wasn't a single root left inside of his body.

It had all been cut out by me.

Chapter 527 Dungeon Exploration (7)

After making sure that all of the roots had been cut out, I turned to one of the elves and said, "Can you cast healing on him? Make sure to close up the wounds."

The elves looked at me with looks of terror when they saw me looking at them which made me feel very strange.

I looked at the others and found that they were looking at me with the same look.

Still, I ignored them in the end and wiped the sweat off my face with my free hand before patting the knight and saying, "You're fine now. Just get patched up and you'll be fine."

The knight didn't hear me since he had already passed out from the pain and shock.

Even with how strong he was, he wasn't able to endure all of this in the end.

I didn't care as I stood up and walked to the next patient.

But before I could, Cecilia suddenly came forward to stop me.

I thought that she was going to stop me since she was worried about me, but it turned out that this wasn't the case. Instead of stopping me, she just simply raised a handkerchief for me.

I was confused at first until I realized what it was for.

It was simply because I was covered in blood.

It wasn't my own blood, but the blood of the knight.

When I wiped my hand on my face earlier, the blood that had been on my hand had also been smeared on my face. With blood all over me like this, it really created a terrifying image that people couldn't help giving strange looks towards.

That was why everyone had looked at me like that earlier.

So I took it with an awkward smile and then wiped my face and the other parts of my body smeared with this blood. Once the blood was off, Cecilia actually pulled me to the next patient.

It seemed that she was even more anxious than me about all of this.

But then again, that wasn't strange since she was the commander this time.

She was responsible for all of their lives and if they died under her command, she would feel responsible.

As the good commander that she was, Cecilia would naturally do all that she could to save them.

As such, I would go all out to support her.

So without any hesitation, I started operating on the next person.

One by one, I cut through their skin and dug out the roots.

I had to make sure not to cut too deep, but I was able to do it in the end.

When it was all over, all of the people that had been infected by the mushroom spores had the mushrooms cut off and they were all healed up. The only problem was that their faces were a bit pale from all of the blood that they lost, but that was a problem that could only be healed with time.

We just had to let them rest to recover.

We also made sure to monitor them just in case there were more mushrooms that sprouted, but it seemed like there wouldn't be any other mushrooms sprouting.

It seemed that we had passed the danger zone and they were all fine now.

I let out a long sigh of relief seeing that they were all fine now and that was when my leg crumpled under me.

It wasn't just the patients that had been suffering, I had also been doing all that I could to help cure them. This required a large amount of energy and focus, so I was completely drained now that it was over.

As I fell, Cecilia suddenly came forward and grabbed a hold of me to stop me from falling.

As she held me up, she couldn't help asking with a concerned look, "Are you alright?"

I said with a nod, "I'm fine, just a bit tired."

Cecilia still had a concerned look on her face as she asked, "What should we do now? Do we leave this place?"

I said with a shake of my head, "No, there's no need to leave. We can just rest up in this area."

Cecilia immediately wanted to say something, but I cut her off by saying, "Just gather the mushroom corpses and place them in a boundary around us. It'll stop the monsters from coming over."

It had taken a long time to cure all of them and during this time, it wasn't as if monsters would stop attacking us. So there were monsters that charged at our line this whole time and the others had been pushing them back.

During this, I had noticed that the monsters that approached us seemed to avoid the corpses of the mushroom monsters on the ground.

It was as if they were afraid of them.

Cecilia looked at me with a doubtful look, but as if to prove my point, there were several monsters that suddenly came over.

It was the same slimes that we had fought before.

It would be easy for the adventurers to deal with them, but I said, "Just bring the mushroom monster corpses over and you'll see for yourself."

Cecilia still looked at me with a look of doubt, but she chose to do it in the end.

She had a few of the adventurers bring the mushroom monster corpses over to form a line in front of these slimes.

The adventurers looked like they didn't want to do it, but when Cecilia wanted something done, they only had a single choice.

So the adventurers could only grumble a bit before picking up the mushroom monster corpses and bringing them forward. The way that they held the corpses made it clear that they were afraid of being infected by touching these corpses, but that couldn't be blamed on them.

In the end, they were able to bring the mushroom monster corpses forward to form a line in front of the slimes.

When the slimes encountered this line, they...

Chapter 528 Dungeon Exploration (8)

The slimes immediately stopped in place and didn't continue forward.

They bounced up and down in front of the line of mushroom monster corpses as if they were hesitating about approaching, but in the end, they turned to leave.

It seemed like they had decided that it wasn't worth it.

Seeing this, Cecilia's eyes lit up and she immediately ordered the rest of the adventurers to bring the mushroom monster corpses to create a line.

The adventurers had also seen what had happened, so they didn't hesitate to follow her orders this time.

Even the mercenaries and the knights helped them since they could all see the effect that the mushroom monster corpses had.

While they prepared this, I sat down and took a deep breath as I tried to recover the energy that I had spent during all of this.

Cecilia came over with some food and water in hand for me before sitting down beside me and looking at me with a worried look.

During this, Elsa and Moon also came over with the same worried looks.

I just waved my hand to show that I was fine, but in truth, I was so tired that I couldn't even say words anymore.

It helped to get some food and water in me, but I definitely needed some sleep before I could do anything.

So Cecilia said, "I'll keep guard. Just don't worry about it and go to sleep."

Seeing her filled with energy like this, I gave a nod and went to sleep.

But before I could fall asleep, I felt something suddenly grab hold of my head.

When I opened my eyes, I saw Cecilia's face right above mine.

She was lifting my head up and putting her thighs right under them before saying, "This is the best position to make sure that you're safe."

The way that she said this, it was almost as if she was making an excuse.

However, I could see the blush that was on her face.

It seemed a bit hard for her to do this, but she did it for my sake.

I just gave a nod with a smile before closing my eyes again.

I didn't see that Elsa and Moon were both looking at Cecilia with envious looks.

That sleep was actually much better than I thought it would be.

Even though Cecilia's legs were a bit hard, those soft thighs still cuddled my head and provided me with comfort better than the best pillows.

It was as if I was sleeping on clouds.

When I woke up, I found that a small camp had been set up.

The adventurers and mercenaries were the ones that did this since they were used to camping out like this.

The line of mushroom monster corpses that had been placed there weren't disturbed at all. It seemed that there hadn't been any problems with the monsters with this line in place.

After I woke up and got some more food and water in me, I gathered the leaders of the various groups together.

We had to discuss what we were going to do now.

Once everyone gathered, I said, "We should keep going forward. If we leave now, we won't have another chance like this."

Everyone knitted their brows when they heard this, but it didn't seem like there was anyone that disagreed with me.

After all, everyone knew how dungeons worked.

If we left this dungeon, it would take us a while to prepare for another raid.

During this time, it would be very likely that these mushroom monsters would spawn again since this was a dungeon.

If we let them spawn again, it would mean having to fight through them once more. At the same time, there was the chance that these mushroom monsters would suddenly mutate during their respawn.

This wasn't very likely, but it wasn't something that could be ruled out.

So even if we had injured people, the best solution was to keep going since they were still able to fight.

Everyone remained silent after I gave this proposal and the one that broke the silence was Cecilia.

"It'll be harder since we have casualties. If we keep pushing forward like this, we might all get wiped out. There's no knowing what is in front of us."

Though she agreed with me, she had no choice but to present the opposition since she was the leader of this expedition. Everyone's lives were in her hands, so she had to at least consider the other side.

It wasn't that she didn't want to go forward, it was just that without something to change the tide, she didn't think that they would be able to make it through those rat humanoid monsters.

I gave a nod in response since I had already expected this, but I had also come up with a solution.

Or it could be said that I had prepared a secret weapon.

I knew that forcing everyone forward wouldn't have any benefits, so the only way to convince them to go forward was to show them something that they could have faith in.

So I pulled out a certain orb that I had stored away in the system's inventory all this time.

When this orb appeared, Elsa and Moon, who were more sensitive to , immediately frowned as they looked at the orb in my hand.

The look on their faces seemed like they were disgusted with the orb that I was holding.

Of course, I could understand why they felt that way.

This orb that I was holding, it was the Orb of the Dead that I had looted from the demon back in Bright Water City.

I had kept it hidden the entire time since I hadn't been able to use it, but after my lessons with the priest, I was now able to use to a certain extent. With my skills, I would be able to pull out some of the powers of this Orb of the Dead.

So with this orb in hand, I walked over towards the line of mushroom monster corpses.

Chapter 529 Dungeon Exploration (9)

After reaching the line of mushroom monster corpses, I raised the Orb of the Dead in front of me.

Everyone looked at me with confused looks, except for Elsa and Moon who had dark looks on their faces.

It seemed like they could recognize the kind of that I was about to use.

Holding the Orb of the Dead up in front of me, there was this black energy that came from it that fell down into the mushroom monster corpse in front of me. This black energy quickly seeped into the mushroom monster corpse and in no time, it completely disappeared without a trace.

If one hadn't seen it, they wouldn't have known that it had been there.

But it didn't seem to have an effect on the mushroom monster corpse as it just laid there.

That was until there was movement that came from the mushroom monster corpse.

It was the stem of the mushroom that suddenly trembled.

This stem moved a bit before helping the mushroom monster stand up.

When they saw it stand up, everyone immediately raised their weapons as if they were prepared to attack. However, I just raised my hand for them to stop, though I didn't look back to see if they actually stopped.

The mushroom monster slowly stood up and turned around to face us, or rather it turned to face me.

It looked at me for a bit before suddenly bouncing forward towards me.

When Cecilia saw this, she immediately came forward to stand in front of me as if she was planning to risk her own body to stop the mushroom monster if it came to this.

But I grabbed her shoulder to stop her.

I looked at the mushroom monster and said, "Stop."

As soon as I said this, the mushroom monster stopped moving and just waited there as if it was waiting for my order.

When this demonstration was given, everyone was shocked.

They looked at me before looking at the mushroom monster and then looking back at me.

There were only a few people that weren't shocked since they had already expected this. This included Moon and Elsa who were sensitive to and knew what kind of spell I had cast.

Cecilia looked at the mushroom monster just waiting there in front of us and turned back to look at me to ask, "What did you do?"

I raised the Orb of the Dead and said, "I made a zombie."

"Huh?" Cecilia revealed a dumbfounded look before looking at the Orb of the Dead that I held up for her.

She wasn't as sensitive to , but she could tell that there was something special about this Orb of the Dead.

After looking at it for a bit, she looked at me with a concerned look and said, "But isn't this going to be a large drain on you maintaining this zombie? If you want to use zombies to pad the number of troops that we have, it'll use up your mana to maintain all of them."

I couldn't help revealing a look of praise when I heard this.

Not because of what she said, but because she had instantly understood what my intentions were from the context clues.

That's right, my plan going forward was to use this Orb of the Dead to create more and more zombies as we killed the monsters in this dungeon.

The more zombies that we had, the more troops that we had. The more troops that we had, the stronger our group would become.

Not to mention, the zombies were completely disposable, so we could use them as meat shields and escape if need be.

But there was one thing that she had been wrong about.

The situation that she was describing would only apply if I was using regular necromancy, but this was special since I had the Orb of the Dead.

The Orb of the Dead was a special item that came from the demon king himself, so it was anything but normal.

I shook my head and said, "This orb contains a mass amount of mana and has the power to maintain the zombies on its own. All I have to do is supply the mana to activate it, I don't have to supply the mana to these zombies to maintain them. The orb will maintain them for me."

Cecilia looked at me with a shocked look before looking down at the orb in my hand.

There wasn't much that she could say about this since she had no idea how this thing worked, so she could only turn to look at Moon who she regarded as an expert on .

Moon's eyes had been on the Orb of the Dead the whole time, so she didn't answer right away.

But after a pause, she slowly gave a nod.

However, before Cecilia could say anything else, there was a commotion that came from the distance.

We all turned to see that there were some slimes that were bouncing in our direction.

Since the monsters had delivered themselves to our doorstep, then I wouldn't say no.

It would be a chance to demonstrate the power of the zombies.

So I said to the mushroom zombie, "Go and take down those slimes."

The mushroom zombie bounced up and down once as if it was nodding in agreement before bouncing forward towards the slimes.

The slimes didn't react at first to the mushroom zombie, but when it got closer, they suddenly stopped moving. After jiggling for a bit as if they were figuring out what was happening, the slimes suddenly turned and started bouncing off in the opposite direction.

It was as if they were running away from the mushroom zombie.

But they didn't get to run far as the mushroom zombie suddenly compressed its body on the ground. Then with a single bounce, it closed the gap between it and the slimes, landing right in between the slimes without any fear.

Even when the mushroom zombie appeared right beside them, the slimes didn't have any intentions of attacking.

They seemed like they were about to run off in different directions, as if they were going all out to avoid the mushroom zombie.

But once again, they didn't get that chance.

When the mushroom zombie landed, it suddenly compressed itself once more before uncompressing to release a cloud of spores around it.

When we saw the spores, all of us couldn't help taking a step back even though it was impossible for these spores to reach us all the way back here. That was just how much of a lasting impression those spores had left on us.

The spores coated these slimes and in no time at all, there were mushrooms that started sprouting on these slimes.

These mushrooms dug their roots deep into the slimes and we could see how they dug in with the transparent bodies of the slimes.

It seemed that they only dug down under the surface and didn't dig in deep into the body of the slime. That was most likely why I was able to scrape out all the roots without having to go too deep.

Once the mushrooms sprouted, the slimes immediately slowed down before collapsing on the ground.

With just a single attack, the mushroom zombie had taken out this group of slimes like it was nothing.

Chapter 530 Dungeon Exploration (10)

Everyone that saw the wrath of this mushroom zombie couldn't help being shocked by the power of this mushroom zombie.

This mushroom zombie was much stronger than any of them had expected.

Not to mention, there were still a bunch of mushroom monster corpses that were still lying there on the ground.

If they could all become zombies that were just as strong as this one...it was easy to imagine how helpful they would be.

I also didn't expect the mushroom zombie to be this powerful, but I was very happy to see that they still had this power.

If I sent the mushroom zombies forward, wouldn't it be the perfect way to deal with a wave of endless rats?

I never thought that there would be such a good blessing in disguise like this.

So without any hesitation, I started using the Orb of the Dead on the rest of the mushroom monster corpses.

In no time at all, there were over fifty different mushroom zombies that were gathered there in front of me.

There would have been more, but we had to use fire to deal with the mushroom monsters in the center of their formation. The fire had completely burnt those mushroom monsters to ashes, so there wasn't even a corpse left for me to use as a zombie.

Still, being able to get fifty of them was already good enough.

It was fine just seeing one of them, but seeing this group of them standing there like this made the adventurers and mercenaries take a wary step back. Even the guards and knights couldn't help revealing unstable looks on their faces seeing these mushroom zombies, but they were at least able to remain still thanks to their military discipline.

Once it was done, I was surprised by how little mana that it actually took to animate all of these mushroom zombies.

Just a single mana potion was enough for me to recover all of the mana that I had spent just now.

So it wasn't a problem for us to keep going right away.

"Spread out and surround us."

When the adventurers and mercenaries heard this, they couldn't help looking at me in shock. But then they were terrified to see that the mushroom zombies had already started moving to surround their entire formation.

They all looked at Cecilia as if they were complaining about this, but Cecilia didn't help them at all.

That was because she could see the strategic value of this.

This was clearly so that if anything happened, the mushroom zombies would be the first ones that would be hit. It didn't matter which direction this happened in since the mushroom zombies would be spread out in every direction.

The only difference in views was that she had full faith in these mushroom zombies unlike the adventurers who saw them as a dangerous element.

The adventurers were scared that if something happened to Count Zwein, the mushroom zombies would lose control and attack them.

But Cecilia had complete faith in Count Zwein, so there was nothing that she was worried about.

Seeing that no one would be speaking up for them, the adventurers and mercenaries had no choice but to accept this.

Though most of them made sure to maintain some distance with these mushroom zombies just in case anything happened.

With this formation, we started moving forward again after resting up.

Of course, there were also a few more zombies that I had made along the way.

The slimes that had been defeated by the first mushroom zombies could also be turned into zombies.

The adventurers and mercenaries didn't want these corpses since there were mushrooms that were growing out of them.

It wasn't just that they didn't want them out of fear of the mushrooms, it was because the mushrooms were inserted in a strange way that they didn't know how to butcher them anymore. They didn't know if they would even be able to get anything good out of these corpses, so they didn't bother with them.

So now we had several slimes that had mushrooms growing out of them bouncing along with us.

At the very least, it was a good way of telling them apart from the other slimes that attacked us.

But one thing that I was cautious of was whether the mushroom zombies would run out of spores eventually.

These undead mushroom monsters were still creating spores that sprouted mushrooms that were alive.

So that meant that the spores should still be alive.

Did that mean that they were just using spores that were left over from when they were still alive?

Would they eventually run out of spores?

This was not something that I could be certain about, so I made sure to hold back a bit when using these mushroom zombies. I wanted to make sure that we would have enough spores to deal with the rats in the end.

But since most of the monsters were afraid of the mushroom zombies in the first place, it really wasn't much of a problem.

It was easy for us to deal with the ones that came by pretending like the mushroom zombies were about to shoot their spores and then having someone else attack while they were caught off guard.

The monsters weren't as smart, so it was quite the effective tactic.

But there were a few that were just too tough for this, so I had the mushroom zombies use their spores in the end.

I wouldn't make it harder for us just to be stingy since there were always other ways.

The way that we moved through the dungeon was much easier than before.

We didn't even really need to fight the monsters since the zombies took care of most of them.

But as we were walking along, Cecilia suddenly raised her hand for our formation to stop.

When the formation stopped, the zombies also stopped since they had the order to move along with the formation.

Cecilia revealed a serious look and said to me, "This was where the rats came from last time."

I gave a nod with a grim look on my face.