

## Void 98

### Chapter 98

What were the qualities that described a human?

Some would argue that it was their nature while some would take a biological standpoint. Though there were many different ways people classified humanity and humans, none of them would fit the scenes in front of Rose and Elena.

AN da n ov el Yet, it was undeniable that the materials used by the researchers were from humans.

Elena's voice suddenly rang through Rose's head. 'Don't panic, this is a technique I learned using mana. Anyway, whatever those things that are giving off human aura truly are, some of them are giving off even more prevalent life aura.'

Rose's body slightly shook at this revelation. Whether they were human or not became less important with this information. After all, wasn't Elena telling her that some of these things were alive?

Rose wanted to figure out how the lumps of flesh she was seeing could be alive, but it wasn't the right choice. She knew that they would find more answers if they continued traveling.

While they walked through the halls, Rose taught herself to use the same technique Elena just did. It wasn't that hard, since it purely relied on mana. She simply created a thread of mana and shot it into Elena's head, using it to project her thoughts.

She didn't know how this kind of method was undiscovered on Apeiron. Then again, it might be known but she just wasn't taught to use it. In the end, all that mattered was that she had learned it now.

'I think we should descend to the next floor rather than continue on this one. Judging by what's happening over there, that's where the supply of these things comes from.' Rose transmitted as she signaled towards a certain area of the hall.

PA N DA N O VEL

When Elena looked over, she saw a tube-like object that was constantly producing these balls of flesh. Its source seemed to be further down in the bunker.

Nodding toward Rose to show her affirmation, Elena began walking in the direction of the staircase she saw in the distance. Rose soon followed suit.

The staircase was barely lit, causing the eeriness the two already felt from the previous scenes to multiply. However, it was nothing compared to what they felt when they reached the next floor.

Rather than rows on rows of researchers, what filled this floor were large glass tubes. Rose could only infer their function based on her surroundings, but Elena knew exactly what was going on. The only problem was, she never expected to see such a scene in real life.

Each and every tube out of the hundreds that spanned the hall was filled with clear liquid, and within that liquid were living beings, seemingly in deep slumber.

Not all of these beings were human, but most of them were. Yet, even the humans could barely be considered as such anymore.

The deformities that besieged them ranged from smaller things like extra fingers or strange protrusions that jutted from their bodies to more gruesome things like two conjoined heads or extra arms that seemed to have been transplanted onto them rather than natural.

Only one trait was shared between every being in the tubes. Each and every one of them had thick black lines running through their body like veins. Some of them were more prominent on the outside, resembling tattoos.

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It was honestly disgusting. Each of these beings was rigged with countless different wires and machines monitoring their vitals and other biological data, and periodically, small razors emerged within the tubes to slice off parts of their bodies.

No blood was spilled, and the cut parts were regenerated immediately. Not even a spike was seen in the heart rates of these beings as they were mutilated. Either their minds were already lost, or they had become numb to pain due to all the torture.

Neither Rose nor Elena wanted to find out. Even if this was the source of the matter being experimented with on the 65th floor, they didn't care. They wanted to move on. But both of them knew that if they continued, they'd only find more gruesome scenes.

Still, they steeled their hearts and descended to the next floor. But it was just the same as the one before it. Hundreds of beings in glass tubes that stood stationary as they were mutilated and rebuilt.

The girls ignored these scenes and continued down until they reached the 75th floor. And indeed, what they found was much worse than the previous floors.

Rather than the finished products of the experiments, they found researchers in the process of creating them.

“Subject 1258 is primed for dosage,” one of the researchers said.

“Affirmative. Rolling video log to monitor changes.”

Unlike the ones on the 65th floor, the researchers here were decked in full hazmat suits. Currently, the girls were only focusing on a single group, but there were countless others like them within the floor.

This group surrounded a man who was naked and strapped to a metal table. His mouth was covered, but the terror in his eyes was clear as day.

Rose and Elena watched as the leader of this particular group took syringes full of murky black liquid and injected them into the subject’s body.

As the liquid entered his body, the man froze up. His eyes rolled back until only the whites were visible as his whole body jerked in place.

And then, it was mayhem.

The man suddenly began thrashing around violently, ignoring the chains that strapped him down. The mechanisms that secured his head and blocked his mouth were destroyed, and the man's screams resounded through the area.

“AHHHHHHH”

Black veins began forming on the man's chest before spreading through the rest of his body. When they reached his throat, even the man's voice was destroyed. The veins pulsated as they grew in number, soon covering his entire body. And then, an even more horrifying scene played out.

A giant hole appeared in the man's thigh as blood sprayed out like a fountain, showering the researchers in crimson. However, the blood rain didn't last long.

Like thousands of worms crawling in his body, the man's skin wriggled around and began extending. Following this was the formation of new muscles and bones.

It wasn't just his thighs. Where the man's heart should have been, another massive hole opened. One could even see the cold metal of the table from underneath this hole. An arm began forming, turning into two before the hole completely closed.

The man's eyes had already lost the light of sanity, and it was clear he couldn't think. Like a crazed beast, he ground his teeth and growled at anything that got near him. The black veins on his body became more pronounced, carving themselves into the very being of his existence.

At that point, the lead researcher hit a button. A formless gas flooded the area, slowly putting the man into a forced coma.

“Another failure. Put him with the rest to be studied by the ones above.”

One of the researchers nodded and followed these instructions. The man was put into a similar glass tube to the ones the girls had witnessed previously and handed off to another member. It was clear where he was headed.

The girls could only look at each other with shock evident in their eyes.

‘What did we just witness?’

Elena was more shaken of the two. While Rose had seen the graphic depictions in the temple walls that showed the maniacal behavior of people and had also witnessed torture herself, Elena hadn’t been exposed to this kind of thing in the slightest.

Actually, it might be one of the first murders she’d witnessed. She didn’t count beasts, as she always saw them as a tool to gain experience, but it was different when it was humans. After all, this was her own species. She couldn’t overcome the trauma so easily.

Still, Elena tried her best to ignore the disgust and fear she was feeling. This wouldn’t be the last time she saw harrowing scenes, and she knew she’d have to kill humans at some point. On top of all this, it would jeopardize their current mission if she freaked out.

Elena could only promise herself that she’d destroy the organization conducting such terrible experiments with her own hands. It was the only method she had to quell her fear.

‘I’m getting a bad feeling about this,’ transmitted Rose. ‘That black substance...the way it moves is eerily similar to the Nox being me and Damien met previously.’

She couldn’t shake the feeling that there was some sort of massive plot behind these actions. Especially seeing how Niflheim was mutating villains and how the Nox mutated their followers from other races.

Rose shook her head. ‘For now, we just observe. We can think of a way to deal with this and also figure out more about what’s happening when we meet up with Damien.’

While the girls were recovering from the brutal scene they’d just witnessed, Damien was feeling something entirely different.

Even with the trepidation that he felt from the very core of his being, Damien couldn’t help but feel it.

Awe.

He could only describe the massive structure in front of him as awe-inspiring.