

# Extras 111

Chapter 111 The Ninth Floor [Pt 2]

The rest of the Floor exploration was a breeze for Rey.

He realized that when he was really trying, C-Tier Monsters really weren't a threat to him.

He wasn't even giving them a chance to attack him before rendering counters and destroying them where they stood.

... Or where they hid.

A few were actually able to renders attacks in the form of [Ice Breath], but Rey was easily able to counter with his [Grand Fire Magic] or [Greater Explosion].

He also considered it a waste since he already had an [Icy Breath] Skill.

They both functioned the same, and were in the same Tier, so there was really no need keeping the Skill he got from the monster.

By the time he arrived at what was supposed to be the Boss Room... he was already Level 25.

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"Status Window." Rey mumbled.

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Rey Skylar.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Elite Enigma (B-Tier)
- Level: 25 (99.19% EXP)
- Life Force: 22 (+16)
- Mana Level: 84 (+16)
- Combat Ability: 30 (+16)
- Stat Points: 9
- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): Nil
- Alignment: Neutral

[Additional Information]

You are a mystery to the world. While the underworld trembles in your presence, those on the surface do not understand your true strength

[End Of Information]

"Looks like I killed quite a number of them. Or maybe they were a lot stronger than they seemed..."

Either way, for Rey, he felt a sense of accomplishment from watching his Stats blossom.

'My total Mana Level is 100. Finally... I'm in the Triple Digits.'

With buffs aiding him, he could get a considerable stack of Mana on his side.

'Now then... back to business...' Rey's eyes darted to the gate that stood imposingly before him.

It was the Boss Room.

The gate had designs of glaciers imprinted on it—something surreal, but also imposing.

Blue and white complimented each other on the hardened surface that stood erect, but for Rey it was just another obstacle that needed to be destroyed.

~BOOOM!~

A single punch from clenched fist was enough to send the entire thing flying off.

"Let's make preparations..." He mumbled, ensuring his Buffs were still activated.

Skills could be divided into two major types—Active and Passive.

Passive Skills could be turned on and off, but by leaving them on, their effects were constant throughout the user's life without a need for 'activation.'

However, Active Skills had to be activated anytime a user wanted to utilize them.

'[Magic Application], [Combat Application], [Full Resistance], to mention a few others, are all Passive Skills that are currently on.'

The others that had to be activated every time he needed them were stuff like [Flight], [Armament], etc.

'I don't know how powerful the Boss is, but I don't want to overestimate it and use up my Buffs too early...'

Since Rey had rushed through the Ninth Floor, he was yet to even spend three hours here.

'If I hurry, I could challenge one more Floor.' His thoughts trailed.

"Well, let's go."

He stepped into the freezing cold room—much colder than the outer area had been.

Rey could certainly feel the frosty effect of his new environment, but it didn't take too long for his [Full Resistance] Skill to acclimate him to the cold.

"Let's see what we have here..."

The Boss Monster in this room had no throne or regal elegance attached to it.

It was simply an extremely robust BigFoot who had a giant halberd that seemed to be the very personification of ice.

This Boss wasn't as tall as the Boss Monkey Monster, but it seemed much more muscular than the latter.

It also had a weapon, which made it far more dangerous.

It stood before Rey, more like a warrior than a king.

'It must have some decent combat experience. I can't underestimate it.' Rey thought to himself as he glared at the beast.

Looking around him, he noticed the Boss Room was extremely spacious—designed to resemble an arena of sorts.

Rey could see a decent amount of mobs standing behind the icy barrier that surrounded the stage where he and the Boss stood.

There were at least a hundred of them—each with what resembled icy spears.

'They're not joining the fight? Why are they just standing there?' Rey wondered to himself.

His question was soon answered.

~THUMP!~

~THUMP!~

~THUMP!~

The BigFoots began to hit their spears on the frosty ground, all of them following the same symphony.

The clattering sounds of their weapon's loser end hitting the ground made a deep sound that echoed throughout the room.

Growls of the creatures filled the air, almost as if they were cheering for their Boss—champion of the Floor.

'Ahh... I see.' Rey thought to himself as he looked around him.

The BigFoots had the arena completely surrounded, yet they would not take advantage of their numbers and positions to attack.

They just kept humming and pounding their weapon on the ground like a savage tribe.

'So this is like a match to them?'

The Boss Monster raised his halberd at this point, his silent growls growing louder by the second.

He pointed it at Rey, and then hit the bottom of the ground, as if trying to pass a message across.

'So they're intelligent too. I should have figured...'

However, compared to the Hobgoblins, these Monsters were unimpressive.

The Hobs would have used their numbers and strength to come up with better strategies than what these idiots were doing.

How could they just watch as he faced their leader?

'This works fine for me, though...'

Rey didn't intend to waste any time dispatching all of them at all.

'Since I've advanced this far, why don't I use an S-Tier Skill...?'

The particular Skill he had in mind to use belonged to a girl he just recently had an encounter with.  
... Belle.

She was among the only three in the Class who possessed an S-Tier Skill—outside Rey of course.  
And, out of all of them, she was the only one who had an attack Skill in the S-Tier.

Adonis had [Absolute Defense].

Alicia had [Absolute Healing].

As for Belle, well...

The Boss took its stance, ready to charge at Rey and initiate its first attack.

The growls of the surrounding monsters grew louder.

Tension filled the air.

And Rey... all he did was move his lips and casually raise a hand forward.

"... [Absolute Wind Magic]"

That was all it took.

One second, the Boss and its followers were excited for the bloodshed they were about to see.

The next... they were rendered into chunks of white meat.

The sharp gust of wind that blew all across the room cut through everything around.

The giant halberd halberd into chunks of ice, and the robust Boss became blocks of dead flesh.

Its blood sprayed everywhere at the same moment that all the cheering BigFoots also found themselves dead.

None of them even realized it on time.

They were dead before they knew what was happening.

"And with that..." Rey looked around to see the gleaming Monster Cores around.

"... It's a wrap."

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## **Chapter 112 Early Arrival**

"Huu..."

Once Rey was done collecting all the Monster Cores, he heaved a heavy sigh.

As misty breaths escaped his lips and nostrils, he could clearly see the gateway to the next Floor.

The doorway existed at the furthest end of the ring—almost as if it was being guarded by the Boss Rey had just defeated.

That was his next destination.

"I Leveled Up three times just now..." Rey mumbled, realizing just how much EXP he must have received from the Boss and his minions.

With every Level Up, it got increasingly difficult to do so again.

Considering the fact that Rey had Leveled Up a total of five times before reaching the Boss Room by killing hundreds upon hundreds of BigFoot Monsters, it was surprising that he was able to Level Up three times just from a hundred others and a Boss.

'The BigFoot Monsters here were holding weapons, so they're probably stronger than the ones I faced outside...' Was Rey's line of reasoning.

The Boss had to also be quite strong.

With those thoughts in mind, Rey was happy he didn't dawdle at all.

'I still have about two hours left. I can still challenge the next Floor, right?'

Rey knew he was pushing it, but he liked his current streak.

He didn't want to ruin the momentum.

'If I can reach Level 30—no, Level 35—today... I'll be satisfied!'

He stared at the black gate that led to the next Floor. It wasn't covered in frost or anything, which surprised Rey.

That had to mean that the gate had special properties, or... the Floor that it led to was extremely hot.

Rey braced himself more for the second possibility.

"I'll have to speedrun this one..." He whispered, more white clouds of cold air escaping his lungs.

Time wasn't on his side.

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Alicia silently read her book in the library, flipping through the pages with a small smile on her face.

She wasn't smiling due to what she was reading, but because of something else.

... Someone else.

'In a few more hours, Rey will come here.' She didn't want to explicitly admit to herself why she was happy about this prospect.

But she was.

Alicia was almost done with the current book in her hands—a literature text regarding the common practices of the people of H'Trae which had now been outlawed.

She had read this particular book before, but that was so long ago—back when she just started frequenting the Library.

A lot had happened since then, and so she wanted to revisit the literature and see if she could have a new, more informed, grasp on what she had read before.

So far, she had encountered a bunch of mundane things—like the outlawing of eating certain foods out in the opening.

This was done to ensure proper sanitation of the streets and to prevent dirtying the roads.

However, this rule only applied to high-brow areas like the Capital. Places such as the Adventurer City were exempt from this regulation.

A couple of financial limitations and transactional oversights were also mentioned in the book.

These concepts might have been too complicated for Alicia to grasp in the past, but she understood a lot more now.

In a way, she found this whole thing funny.

Why was she learning so much about a world that she intended on leaving very soon?

'Maybe when I get back, I should write a novel about all of this... ' As she chuckled, a dark thought suddenly appeared in her mind.

'Rey doesn't want to go back... haa... '

That thought was enough to cause her bright smile to diminish.

Before she could dwell on it too much, though, she quickly brought her attention back to the book.

While there were a lot of mundane, inconsequential regulations recently placed on previously accepted practices, there were still a few that were big deals.

One of them was slavery.

'It's hard to believe that the Kingdoms used to practice slavery up till even a decade back... '

The catalyst for stopping the slave trade was the rising conflict between the Humans and other Races, as well as the most important one yet.

... The rise of the Dragons!

'Once the Dragons invaded, and the Human Kingdoms began to band together, a lot of reforms were made... '

One of them was the abolition of the slave trade.

According to the book, there were still some who engaged in the slave trade—both buying and selling.

However, they were considered among the highest kinds of criminals in the United Human Alliance.

They usually operated in secret—deep in the inner recesses of the Black Market.

'This is just awful... selling humans as a commodity... '

It seemed no matter the world, the stain of slavery remained in their history.

Thankfully, it wasn't legal anymore.

'If it was, I'd have some issues with this place.' As Alicia had these thoughts, she noticed someone enter the Library.

It was a familiar presence she could spot from a mile away, and seeing him made her smile return almost instantly.

'R-Rey?!'

Yes, the boy she had been thinking of for so long now entered the Library and instantly spotted her.

'What's he doing here so early?'

Rey usually came to the Library in the night. She still didn't know what he did in his spare time, and while she had been meaning to ask him about it, Alicia didn't think it was the right time.

"Hi." Rey said with a smile as he approached her.

'Hmm. Strange...'

Whenever Rey got close to her, she usually had one single thought—

'He smells nice!'

However, this time was different.

It wasn't like he smelled or anything—at least, Alicia didn't want to think he did—but he just didn't have the same ambiance.

"Hi." She responded with a smile regardless.

"Want to hang out? I was thinking we should go to the Town together."

Alicia raised her brow in even more surprise.

Usually, Rey would want to hang out with her in the library. He was often very interested in reading as much as he could, and he even sought her consultation on some books to read.

Alicia had even been thinking of introducing him to the current book she was reading once she was done.

So, this was strange...

"I-I have a surprise for you. Haha..."

Once Alicia heard that, she couldn't help but smile to herself.

"Another surprise, huh?"

"H-huh? I mean, yeah! Haha!"

Alicia couldn't help but giggle at Rey's awkwardness

She thought he had already gotten over his nervousness around her, and she still remembered how incredibly confident he had been the other day.

The timid version of Rey had his charms, but she liked it better when he became more assertive

It showed he was comfortable around her.

"Alright then." Alicia closed her book and rose to her feet.

"Wouldn't want to keep the surprise waiting!"

"Yeah! I know, right?"

Rey's fidgety attitude made her feel like this 'surprise' of his was a big deal, which was why she abandoned her book.

She was a bit curious to see what he had in store for her.

'Could it be... a confession...?!'

Alicia didn't think she was ready for something like that yet.

She liked her current vibe with Rey and didn't want him to ruin it.

'I shouldn't assume. Let's just see where this goes...'

With that in mind, Alicia left her book on the library table.

'I'll continue reading it when I get back.'

That was what she thought.

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### **Chapter 113 The Juice Shop**

They went past the town square, towards the marketplace.

Throughout the journey, Rey kept bringing up random topics, and Alicia didn't quite understand why.

For example; things like her dreams, her thoughts on certain guys in their class.

The breaking point for Alicia was when he asked about what she thought about Billy.

She actually considered him to be an imposter at some point—maybe Justin disguised as Rey.

But on their way out of the Royal Estate, they saw Justin hanging out with his friends.

It couldn't have been him.

Still, Alicia wasn't sure this was really Rey.

To exercise caution, she asked him questions that only Rey would know—questions involving things they discussed in the Library or in his room.

"How many cats do I have in my grandparents' house again?" Was a good example.

And every time... EVERY SINGLE TIME...

"Over thirty-seven, right?"

... Rey knew the answers to her queries.

It had to be him!

'So why is he being so weird?' She wondered to herself.

Perhaps this whole surprise thing had him all worked up. That was Alicia's excuse for him.

The two of them eventually went to a shop that sold "The best Fruit Juice around!" according to Rey.

She didn't know he had been exploring much of the city, especially since he never told her about it.

'I would have liked to know... or even come...' Alicia's thoughts trailed.

But she quickly shrugged it off.

The Shop was more like a restaurant, with tables and chairs set in multiple places.

For a place meant to be the best, it was scanty at best. A few men were seated in certain corners here and there, but there weren't more than seven of them.

They all had big jugs of juice in front of them, but the liquid contents were almost full to the brim, showing that they had barely been touched.

'Is Rey really sure about this place?' Alicia wondered to herself as she scanned her surroundings.

She saw a few men taking sips, but they were hardly making pleasant expressions.

Instead, their hardened faces seemed distracted.

Some even stared at her a few times.

"U-um, Rey... I don't really feel comfortable here..." She whispered into his ears.

She just had a bad vibe about the place and worried for the safety of both of them.

However, he just casually shrugged it off.

"Don't worry. It's always like this. There's really nothing to be uncomfortable about."

The way he waved off her concern felt unlike Rey.

... Almost too insensitive.

But Alicia decided to trust his words. They had come all this way for the surprise anyway, so she decided to get it over with.

Although she didn't think she was in much of a mood for anything.

They got a table pretty easily, and once they sat, someone came to attend to them.

"What would you like to have?" The woman who asked this had a plain face and a somewhat shabby appearance.

She held a piece of paper in one hand and what appeared to be a pen in the other.

Once Alicia focused on her hand, though, she noticed her hands trembling.

"Hey, are you okay? Your hands are trembling." Her voice echoed concern as she asked the waitress.

The lady in question expressed shock. She probably wasn't expecting Alicia to notice, talkless of asking.

As a result, she was too stunned to speak.

"Oh, she's fine, Alicia. Let's just make our order and—"

"I wasn't asking you, Rey." She quickly shot him a distasteful look.

This was the very first time she had felt this way towards him. It almost felt like repulsion—the kind she felt for certain kinds of guys.

She didn't think Rey was such a person.

'Could I have been wrong? Is he finally showing his true colors after all this time?' She asked herself.

No... no, she didn't want to believe that.

"I... I just have a cold, that's all. Nothing too serious."

The waitress' voice woke Alicia from her thoughts, prompting her to return her gaze to the nervous-looking woman.

'Maybe she's shy, or it's her first week working here...'

Alicia was still concerned, but she didn't want to cause more of a scene since most of the few men in the shop were already looking in her direction.

"Alright then. Get well soon."

"T-thank you..."

Alicia smiled sweetly, but that expression quickly died down as she turned to Rey who was smiling intently at her.

She might have felt some measure of bashfulness if she saw this a few hours ago, but now she felt a little annoyed.

"Why don't you pick something for me? You know this place best." Alicia sighed, taking her gaze away from him to look around once again.

"O-okay! Then you should try their strawberry shake! It's the best!"

"Really...?"

"Yep! I just tried it out yesterday, and it was fantastic..."

'Yesterday, huh...?' Alicia's thoughts trailed as she reigned her gaze to Rey

"You seem pretty excited about this place and what you got yesterday, yet you didn't mention it to me at all when we spoke last night..."

"A-ah, well... I... I was eventually going to... really..."

Alicia could see from Rey's expression that he was lying.

'Why? Is it because of the surprise?'

Either way, she didn't like it one bit. She never expected him to lie to her, even under these circumstances.

'That's why he's the one I trusted most among everyone here...'

He was someone she could be honest with, and she thought he saw her as the same.

But now, Alicia didn't know anymore.

"H-here you are. Two strawberry shakes."

As the waitress brought a tray that held two medium cups of the same liquid, Alicia felt it was too fast.

'Don't they take longer to make these things...?' She pondered.

She gave Rey his own strawberry shake, to which he didn't respond to with any smile or words of courtesy.

He just kept looking at her like a creep.

'I really don't like this...'

Alicia had the mind to leave the place and return to the library to finish her book, but she decided to simply wait for the surprise.

Perhaps this was simply a manifestation of the vestiges of feelings that she still had for the boy before her.

The waitress proceeded to give Alicia her cup when, all of a sudden—

"A-ah—!"

The waitress slipped, causing the cup to nearly topple over and splash its contents all over Alicia's casual outfit.

Before it could do so, though...

~WHOOOSH!~

... Rey swooped in like the wind and caught the cup, shifting Alicia's chair so not even a drop of the splattered juice reached her.

The waitress, unfortunately, wasn't saved.

"A-ahh... I deeply apologize. I'm sorry... so so sorry..." She nearly sobbed as she remained on the ground.

Alicia thought she looked pitiful, and her powerless state struck a chord within her.

"N-no, it's fi—"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!" Rey's voice suddenly echoed, exuding sheer rage.

Alicia had never seen him this way.

"YOU NEARLY SPILLED THE CUP! YOU NEARLY STAINED ALICIA! ARE YOU RETARDED?!"

Hearing those words proceed out of his lips, Alicia found her heart in a deep state of shock

And then, the thought surfaced in her mind again.

'I-Is that really... Rey?'

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## **Chapter 114 The Big Reveal**

'I-Is that really Rey...?'

Alicia's stunned expression as she stared at the aggressive scowl on Rey's face was downright obvious.

She couldn't hide it anymore.

"GET UP! DON'T TRY TO PLAY THE VICTIM ANYMO—!"

"That's enough!" Alicia yelled out, a glare now imprinted deep into her face.

"A-ah, Alicia, don't mind me. I'm just telling this—"

"Save it. I don't want to hear anything from you..." Alicia raised her hand and walked past Rey, completely ignoring his lame excuse for a reason.

She walked towards the waitress and knelt beside her, holding two of her trembling hands.

"It's fine, don't worry. I'm not mad at you."

The lady seemed immensely surprised by Alicia's kindness, and even Rey appeared stunned from behind her.

Alicia no longer had any business with him, though.

"Please stand up."

She helped the waitress up, and after they both rose to their feet, she nodded and smiled even more broadly.

"You made a mistake. It happens. Maybe take the rest of the day off."

Since this lady wasn't feeling too well, and she was probably inexperienced in her job, it was best to rest.

"A-ah. No, I c-couldn't..."

Alicia instantly understood why.

'How could I have been so stupid? She's probably working like this because she has no choice in the matter.'

Life wasn't all rainbow and sunshine for everyone in the city—even in a place like the Capital.

A lot of people were struggling, and since the laws outlawed begging, many couldn't turn to that for survival.

"I understand..." Alicia smiled as she grabbed the woman's two hands and slipped something inside.

It was a Gold Coin—the one she didn't get to spend during the first Excursion.

She drew closer to the waitress, practically embracing her, and whispered words into her ears.

"Use this to take care of yourself and your family well. You can quit this job and start something you really want to do."

A Gold Coin was powerful in this world. Alicia knew full well the value it had, and she knew the waitress—a native of this world—understood as well.

Alicia could feel the lady tremble, and she thought she saw tears as well.

"Just go. Okay? Don't make a fuss about it."

The lady nodded and Alicia took a few steps back before nodding at her with a look of support.

'Whatever venture you want to start... I wish you good luck!'

Alicia watched as the lady went away, entering the same staff-only place where she got their juice from.

Perhaps she was going to tender her resignation and leave for a better life.

That was her hope for her, at least.

'Now... where was I?' Alicia turned back and saw Rey standing behind her, his expression sullen.

'It seems he already recognizes what he did was wrong.'

In all honesty, Alicia felt like leaving the shop that very instant. She wasn't even interested in whatever surprise he had to show her.

She merely wanted to get out of this dreary place, and out of his sights.

But...

'The least I can do is drink the juice that she brought for me.'

Alicia didn't know if it was the lady who prepared it. She probably wasn't, considering the fact that she was sick and clumsy.

'But, since she was my waiter, I should respect her service by at least trying out the drink.'

"Sit." She told Rey, and she took her seat.

He obeyed and went to where his hair was, pushing it closer to the table. Alicia adjusted her displaced chair as well.

"Just so you know, I'm not staying for you. Once I'm done with this drink, I'm out of here..." She took the cup.

She expected him to argue or render some stupid excuse that would disgust her more.

Somewhere deep within Alicia, she actually hoped he would give her a reason that would convince her.

... That would make her see him the way she used to.

But Alicia doubted that would ever happen.

There was really no reason for anyone—especially someone like Rey—to be an asshole to a powerless woman.

Especially since he understood what it meant to be weak and looked down on.

'What are you going to say now? Let's hear it?' She nearly rolled her eyes as she took a sip of the juice.

It was sweet. Too sweet.

"I understand." Rey's echoed in her ears, his words surprising to hear.

He wasn't whining or trying to make excuses. It seemed he truly recognized what he did was wrong.

'At least you can see that...' Alicia strangely felt a tinge of relief after hearing his sullen voice.

It seemed he wasn't beyond redemption, after all. Perhaps he needed time to reflect some more.

'But this... isn't this false advertising?' Alicia shot Rey a look of disgust as she traced her sight to the cup in her hand.

The red liquid in her cup slushed around as she glared heavily at it.

'This stuff is hardly a decent fruit juice, talkless of the best.'

Alicia had tasted smoothies and juices back on Earth, and they also existed in this new world.

The Otherworlders were treated to the best kinds of meals, so it didn't come as a surprise that she got to drink some every once in a while.

In her opinion, the stuff back on Earth tasted better.

Still, it wasn't like the fruit juice in H'Trae tasted bad or anything.

'But this is just... bad.'

Alicia didn't think it was fair to compare a local juice shop to the stuff she had the privilege to drink in the Royal Palace.

However, even by normal standards, what she was drinking didn't feel like a good drink.

It was nowhere near the best.

She struggled to down a few more gulps out of respect for the waitress, but after that, she was done.

Any more, and she would feel sick.

"I think I'm do...ne..." As Alicia jumped to her feet, a sudden wave of nausea hit her.

She felt something hot rising within her stomach, and everything around her suddenly started to get blurry.

"W-wha...?" Her eyes spotted Rey, who was still seated in his chair.

"R-Rey... what is... what's happening to... m-mee...?"

As she felt her body collapse, a pair of strong arms grabbed her.

They felt strong and rough—not the kind that Rey would have.

"It didn't have to be this way..."

The voice that whispered into her ears felt oddly familiar, but because of the faint echo that rang in her ears, she could quite place it.

All Alicia knew was that she hated the sound.

"... But this is all for the best."

After she heard all that, she fell unconscious, completely disconnected from reality.

... And the dark reality that awaited.

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"Haaa..."

A teenage boy traded his fingers through his dark dark brown hair as he held his beloved with a single hand.

His muscular physique made it obvious that he was a strong warrior, but his obsessive blue eyes were tainted—unbefitting of a noble knight.

As he hungrily eyed the unconscious girl in his arm, the same way a starving predator would its prey, he smiled widely.

"You're finally going to be mine... Alicia."

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### **Chapter 115 Billy's Grand Plan**

After the events of that fateful night—the night that he witnessed Alicia's betrayal—Billy only had one thought.

... To make Alicia his no matter what?

He threw away his noble code and whatever vestiges of pride that were left within him.

The self control that held him back snapped, and now that he was unhinged, he could see the light.

Billy knew what had to be done.

He reached out to Evals Redart, and they both reached an agreement.

He would lure Alicia to the agreed-upon location, and that was where the deed would take place.

The only reason he was successful was due to the effects of the ring he had in his right finger—The Ring of Deceit.

All he had to do was touch Alicia with it once, and he would be able to turn into whoever she trusted most.

Earlier that day, he took the first step and brushed past her, using the ring to touch her skin.

She noticed it instantly and shot him a disgusted look, but Billy knew it was only because she was confused.

She misunderstood his intentions.

'This is all for your own good. For the good of both of us...' Was what he thought of anytime he remembered her reaction to him.

She was simply confused—too confused to see that he was the perfect guy for her.

But soon... that would all change.

The entire shop was occupied by his allies—subordinates of Evals Redart. Their purpose was to act as mere enjoyers of the shop and also to act if anything went wrong.

The shop owner had already been 'settled' according to Evals, so Billy figured he already had the guy's permission to use his place of business.

With everything going well—all according to plan—Billy didn't expect his plans to nearly be ruined by an incompetent waitress.

He would have hit her if Alicia wasn't present. However, since she was around, Billy thought he would just let her go by saying a few words.

Apparently, that was too much for Alicia.

He still remembered the look of disgust that she shot at him. It tore him inside.

However, if he had any consolation, it was this;

'She thinks I'm Rey, so it's Rey she looked at like that. There's no way she'd look at me that way once this is all over!'

Billy was secretly happy about how everything went down. Why?

"Once I'm done rescuing her, she'll despise Rey so much and she'll love only me."

Yes...

"We'll be a power couple!

... That was the plan.

Evals Redart had proposed a kidnapping scheme; where Alicia would be the damsel in distress, and he would be her Hero.

'I'll have to let her endure a bit of torture, though. Nothing to severe...'

Once she reached the brink of despair and desperately needed someone, that was when he would appear.

Billy was going to save her from her horrible kidnappers and become her savior!

'... And no one can say 'NO' to their savior.' He grinned.

She would love him as a man, and she would see his mighty power as he got rid of her torturers.

"Hehehe... hehehe..." He laughed silently, raising Alicia so she could sit on the table that she so abruptly stood from.

"Hate Rey. Love me. That's all I—"

"Looks like it's done. I was worried there for a second."

"Me too... whew!"

"Nice work, Sir Billy."

Billy was approached by the men who had played their part well as the extras in the shop.

Thanks to them, Alicia didn't really suspect anything.

"It was nothing..." Billy grinned, noticing that each man was still holding their jug of juice.

"Let's celebrate!" One yelled out, jugging down the liquid contents of his massive cup.

"YEAH!" Everyone followed and did the same.

Billy felt it was all weird, but he figured this was how the locals behaved.

"Yeah!" He also raised his cup of juice and drank of its contents.

It tasted like plain juice—not too bad and not too good.

'Alicia's juice had to be sweetened so she couldn't notice the bitter taste of the sedative they gave her.'

However, his juice wasn't so great either.

'Well, I guess that whole lie about this place being the best will also be pinned on Rey.'

Billy chuckled more to himself as he saw the ring that gleaned on Alicia's finger.

A wave of envy rushed into him as he felt hot within his stomach.

He felt his head pounding and he took it as a sign of rage.

"That ring... you don't need it!" Billy staggered as he rushed to where he placed Alicia.

He yanked off the ring and threw it on the floor, almost as if it was nothing but a mere pebble.

Billy didn't know how much the ring was worth, but since it came from Rey, he knew it couldn't have been worth very much.

"I'll buy you a better one! I'll... give y-you a... proper... ri..ng...?"

Billy felt nauseated, and everything around him began to turn blurry.

His heart pounded heavily within his chest as he watched the men around close in on him.

They seemed to have smiles wrapped around their faces—

facades that seemed to be masks of malevolence.

"Y-you..." He slowly began to realize what was happening.

"... W-what do you guys... think you're... doing...?"

His warrior body was trying its hardest to resist the effects of whatever they fed him, but it was too late for him.

He couldn't even feel his body any longer.

"Hehehe! What an idiot!" He heard one man say.

"Look at the stupid expression on his face!" Another said in a loud cackle.

'Y-you can't talk to me like that!' Billy wanted to tell, but his lips felt sluggish.

"A gullible buffoon! He has no idea that he and his lady are gonna be sold off."

"Hahaha! He doomed himself and the poor girl. All so he could play the hero!"

"Looks like the Boss was right. He's nothing but a naive sucker!"

As Billy felt his eyes forcefully close, feelings of betrayal and fear tugged at his racing heart.

'B-but... we had a deal...' His thoughts trailed pathetically.

'... I even gave them... a Gold Coin... for their... services...'

\*

## **Chapter 116 Den Of Criminals**

"Haha! Is it all done?"

A burly man, robust with a bulging stomach appeared from the inner recesses of the 'staff-only' room.

He had blood stains on his hand, and each finger had rings on them. His fat-ridden body moved slowly as he cleaned his bloodied hands with a rag and flung it to the side once he was done.

"Oh, Leader? Did you kill that woman already?" One of the men who had secured both Alicia and Billy said with a somewhat disappointed face.

"What do you think?" The fat man answered with a twisted grin.

His hands were meant to be clean now, but stains of red still appeared in some areas.

"I-I see... I shouldn't have even asked."

In all honesty, this man—as well as the rest of his six comrades—wanted to have his way with her.

He had been looking forward to enjoying the waitress for some time now.

'When we killed her Boss and took over this shop, I expected my time to come soon...'

He felt frustrated that his Leader had done away with her already.

"She intentionally tripped, that woman. I was watching everything that happened with my Skill." The robust man said with a smirk.

"I had to... punish her."

The sadistic gleam in his eyes told the men that watched him that it wasn't a quick experience for the poor lady.

She must have suffered intensely.

"Her corpse is still there, if you want to have a go. I tried to keep her in as good a shape as possible."

As the robust man said this, he brought a coin out of his sleeve and tossed it in the air, before picking it up from the air and placing it in his pouch.

"At least I got a reward for my troubles..." He chuckled silently.

The men who watched him didn't move. They remained in their positions despite already having the permission to fulfill their carnal desires.

"What's the matter? Is it because she's a corpse now? It's not like you've not done it that way before." He chuckled.

He wasn't wrong.

This man, Gus, knew how sick and demented his men were.

They would shove their meat into anything female that had a hole—dead or alive.

So what was stopping them this time?

"Hahahaha! It's fine."

"I'm good, thank you."

"Me too!"

The reason for these reactions towards Gus was simple.

The men understood that the woman they lusted after was not the one they were going to meet behind the 'staff-only' door.

Her body would have been smashed to a pulp by Gus' massive arms, her teeth would have been knocked out by his bronze rings.

Her body would have been thoroughly mutilated—torn apart in its entirety.

That was how messed up Leader Gus was.

"Hahahaha! Is that so? Then I suppose we better forget all about this and focus on the task at hand."

All the men nodded.

Their two prisoners—potentially slaves—were right in their grasp.

Based on their expensive-looking attires—despite how casual they seemed—they were quite rich.

The fact that the lady even gave a total stranger a Gold Coin attested to the fact.

These men could have simply kidnapped them and waited for ransom from their families.

However, that wasn't their intention at all.

"Just as the Boss instructed, we'll take them to the warehouse."

Their Boss—Evals Redart—was a Slave Trader, and a prominent one at that.

He ran the largest Slave Trade business in the Southern Parts of the United Human Alliance, and men like Gus and his minions were only a fraction of the people he had under his command.

This 'warehouse' that they were taking these two to was one of the many places they held slaves.

Only one of its kind existed in a city, so the Capital's warehouse was especially important—as well as large.

"The 'Special' place, right? We remember."

Slaves had varying values placed on them.

Some slaves—like random beggars that were kidnapped in the streets—were common commodities that weren't worth much.

Women were priced higher than men when it came to regular folks, since the pleasure that was associated with a female slave seemed to outweigh the labor that a male could provide.

Those who had special abilities—Skills or a useful Class—were valued even higher.

They were taken to the 'Special' area of the Warehouse, where only the best of commodities were kept.

"Seems you already know what to do. I'm off to take a shit. When I come back, we'll get going."

Everyone in the room knew what Gus was truly going to do in the restroom, but no one said anything.

They just watched him leave.

One of the men spotted a gleaming white ring on the floor while his Leader's back was turned against him.

The same man that desired the waitress the most.

He recognized the ring as the one that the lady called Alicia had worn when she entered the shop.

The same one that Billy had flung away in rage.

'Hehehehe...!'

It seemed luck hadn't fully abandoned this man yet, considering how valuable the ring seemed to be.

While no one was looking, he yanked it from the ground and licked his lips in greed.

"I won't be long, don't worry!" Gus' echoing voice caused him to tremble as he dipped the ring into his pocket.

No one could know what he had just done, else they'd eye him for a prize he rightfully earned.

'I'm sure it's worth at least a couple Gold Coins. Maybe... just maybe... a Platinum Coin?!'

Men like this common criminal had never been privileged to hold a Platinum Coin in his hand before.

He could only daydream about it.

But now... now he had a chance to earn it!

'Once I sell it, I'll buy my freedom from Sir Redart and return to my hometown!'

Once he brought tons of money to his people, they were bound to welcome him as a hero and not the rogue that everyone knew him to be.

Eventually, he could settle down and have his own family.

That sort of life didn't sound so bad.

... Even to a common criminal.

\*

## **Chapter 117 Strange Observation**

"Haaa... haaa..."

A young, dark-haired man stood at the center of what appeared to be a corpse-party.

He had a dark mask on his face, and his eyes glowed bright crimson, even as his hair fell and covered his face.

In this hellish world, one filled with unimaginable heat, steam, and flaming geysers, the young man leaked out a musty sigh and chuckled.

"Hehehe... hahaha... hahahahaha!!!"

Gleaming Monster Cores appeared around him, and the destroyed bodies of what appeared to be crimson-looking monkeys—a striking variant of the Monkey Monsters and BigFoot Monsters

These ones had very dark dirt and crimson bodies. Their bodies were a mess now, all of their innards strewn around and cooked by the intense heat in the area.

"Looks like I made it in time!" The cackling boy smirked as he looked ahead to see a crawling figure.

The Boss Monster—a massive Crimson Bigfoot—was trying to crawl away after three of its four total limbs had been severed.

Right now, it only saw one option... RUN!

Unfortunately for the beast, not even that was a viable option.

"[Force]."

The Boss Monster suddenly lost control over its battered body, feeling itself get pulled back despite all attempts to advance.

It screamed at the top of its lungs for help, but...

~FWUUSH!~

... There was no one to listen.

"G-gurrruk!"

It was the strongest in that Floor, and now it was the only one remaining.

~SQUELCH!~

A hand dug through its chest, causing hot blood to flow out like a faucet.

The monster could feel as its Core was grabbed and forcefully yanked out.

This was the end.

"G-gurrrr...k...."

It couldn't complete whatever pitiful words of plea it had to offer before it completely lost its life.

All its life, this creature never thought it would die this way. It had always assumed that it would live long enough to challenge the Ice Dwellers who dwelled a Floor above them.

But now... that was too late.

Or perhaps it was a dream not worth having, to begin with.

The light in the Boss Monster's eyes went out as it plopped to the ground, splashing heated blood all around.

Alive, it was the most powerful of its people, but in death it was nothing but a mere chunk of meat among many others.

"Alright, then! Once I pick up these Cores, I should be done."

He was impressed with himself for what he had achieved thus far.

If there was one problem, though—

"Level 33, huh? It's not bad, but I wanted Level 35 at least."

Rey shrugged it off and smiled brightly.

'I achieved a great deal today. If I continue at this pace, I should be able to grow considerably more powerful.'

And in the end, that was what mattered most.

\*\*\*\*\*

Night met the world of H'Trae, and the Royal Estate was no exception to this.

As crept throughout the Castle Walls, Light Crystals that were affixed on the pillars that stood in several locations began to glow.

This source of illumination, very similar to street lights, ensured that no one felt too wrapped around in darkness even on an evening stroll.

Despite this special feature, hardly anyone could be seen in the Estate's vast compound at such a late hour.

The only ones that walked about were the guards on patrol, as well as one particular student—Rey.

He had barely made it for curfew, and after tending his 'Pass' at the Gate before entering, he jogged inside the Castle's embrace.

"Home sweet home..." Rey mumbled, realizing just how much he had gotten used to this place.

It wasn't just him, though.

Everyone in their class had already gotten accustomed to this world in their own way.

Rey almost considered it scary at this point.

Still, he took his mind off the topic, instead focusing on what his plans were for the rest of the day.

'First a good ol' shower... and then the Library!'

He could already feel a smile forming on his face as he strolled past a few guards while thinking about hanging out with his friend.

'I better hurry, then!'

\*\*\*\*\*

Rey felt a smile tugging on his face as he approached the Library.

After a long hard day, this was always the place that gave him solace.

Not just because of the books—though he enjoyed feasting on them, especially these days.

No, it was due to someone else.

"Alicia...?"

Rey's surprised echo filled the Library as he looked around the Library and didn't find anyone present.

He went to Alicia's favorite spot, and all he found was a closed book on the table.

'Strange...'

Alicia never left a book lying around, so it surprised Rey to see something like this on her table.

'First time for everything, I guess. Maybe she went for a short stroll...?'

There was also the possibility that she went to the restroom, though Rey didn't want to imagine that scenario for some reason.

"I guess I'll just see what she was reading while I wait for her."

Rey sat on the chair that was right beside Alicia's and opened the book to start reading.

\*\*\*\*\*

'Okay, something is definitely off...' Rey thought to himself.

Even after waiting for an hour—no, it was probably even more than that—Alicia had still not showed up.

It felt concerning, but Rey didn't want to overthink.

Perhaps Alicia simply forgot her book here and went back to her room to relax.

Yes... that was probably it.

'But why does that feel unlikely? I should probably just hang around here for a while longer...'

Rey felt so distracted by her absence in the Library that he couldn't focus on the book.

He just skimmed through the pages and read a few things in each page before flipping it.

And just like that, another hour passed.

"Okay... maybe I should go to—"

"Hey, Rey! Are you there?" A voice suddenly echoed at the entrance of the Library as someone walked in.

'Isn't that... Adonis...?!'

Rey's eyes nearly popped open for a moment, but he quickly shrugged off his surprise and stood from his position.

Just as he thought, he met Adonis approaching his table in the Library.

"Something has come up, Rey. You'll have to come with me to the Living Quarters."

\*

## **Chapter 118 A Walk With Adonis**

'S-something came up...?!'

As Rey stared into Adonis' eyes, he could tell that something was terribly amiss.

An expression of concern swept through his face and it felt like anxiety was welling up within him.

Before Rey realized it, his heart began to race.

"Am I in trouble again?" He asked, a bead of sweat formed on the side of his face.

"A-ah! No! No! This is something else. You'll understand once you come with me. Everyone is waiting..."

Adonis had never lied to Rey before—at least not to his knowledge. There was no reason to think he was doing so now, though Rey knew he couldn't be too sure.

After a few seconds of silent considerations, Rey decided there was no other option than to go with Adonis and see what was going on.

'I've not done anything wrong or suspicious lately, right? Or could it be another scheme by the mastermind of last time...?'

Rey shrugged off his complicated thoughts and left his position, carrying the book he was reading in his hand without realizing it.

"Don't you need to return that?"

"A-ah! True..."

Rey didn't know which section to place it, so he simply put the book on the closest shelf and skittered off to catch up to Adonis, who was already waiting for him at the Library door

"Alright! Let's go!"

\*\*\*\*\*

At first, Rey was on his guard.

He kept glancing around him as inconspicuously as he could to see if there were some hidden guards waiting in ambush for him somewhere.

He couldn't see any, though.

'Why would the guards need to ambush me, though? Why would Adonis even lie about anything?'

If he was in trouble, guards would have just stormed into the Library with Adonis, who would probably just explain the situation to him.

There would be no need for elaborate lies.

'That means something else came up! Could it be related to Alicia?'

Rey was about to ask Adonis about what he knew about the current situation when the Hero's voice echoed in the air.

"You've been working out a lot, haven't you?"

"E-eh...?"

The question surprised Rey, but he was able to maintain a respectable reaction thanks to his Class Effect.

"I've noticed it. It's well hidden underneath your baggy clothing, but I know you've really bulked up and toned up your body."

Adonis turned to Rey and smiled like any good guy would.

"That's good."

"Um... thanks?" Rey could only manage to say, completely forgetting what it was that he wanted to ask Adonis.

"I would like to make a wolf guess and say that the reason for your everyday disappearances is linked to your current growth."

Rey didn't understand what Adonis was driving at, but he wasn't wrong.

Thanks to hunting down Monsters and Leveling Up, he was becoming more and more physically fit.

... More than most guys in his class too.

'Just how much does he know?' Rey wondered, but chose to smile a little.

"You're not wrong. I work out a lot, but in secret."

Hunting Monsters and grinding Levels was a kind of workout for Rey, so he didn't think he was necessarily lying about it.

"Haha! I figured! Well, keep it up, Rey." Adonis made a slight chuckle and nodded.

He placed his hand on Rey's shoulder and even gave him a thumbs up.

Rey personally felt it was unnecessary to go so far, but he laughed a little and nodded along.

"A lot of people underestimate you because of your Class and Skill, but I don't necessarily think having power is everything. Do you agree?"

Adonis' statement sounded like a pretentious thing to say—an equivalent to a rich man saying stuff like "Money isn't everything."

If any other powerful guy had said this to Rey, he would have frowned in annoyance.

However, he recognized that Adonis said this from a good place.

And he wasn't exactly wrong.

'Even among Monsters, like the Goblins, it is the ability to learn, adapt, and grow... that's what matters most.'

"Yeah. I agree." Rey ended up smiling genuinely as he replied to Adonis.

Even the people of the United Human Alliance proved Adonis' words to be true when they chose to summon Otherworlders in response to the overwhelming threat of the Dragons.

If the people of this Nation were to survive, it wasn't due to their strength, but the ability to change with the times and come up with a solution to their problem.

Of course, all of this was meaningless without some measure of power, but Rey agreed that having power simply wasn't enough.

One needed to be resourceful with it.

"The will to improve yourself... it's admirable. You workout every day, and then you go to the Library to study at night. I don't know if there's anyone here who matches your level of discipline."

As Rey heard this, he felt like Adonis was buttering him too much.

'He sounds so genuine, but come on!'

"What about you? You train a lot too, right, Adonis? You're definitely more hardworking than I am."

As Adonis heard this, he scratched his head and laughed a little awkwardly.

It felt like he was a little shy about the whole thing.

"N-no... that's not it. It's not the same for me..."

Adonis did not elaborate any further, but Rey could see a distant look in his eyes.

He must have had his reasons for training so hard, but Rey couldn't tell what it was.

He could only respect it.

"I understand. We all have things that haunt us, right? For me... I just want to stop being weak and become strong." For the first time, Rey took the initiative in the conversation.

Adonis appeared a little surprised by this.

"I'm sure you have a similar reason, right Adonis?"

'What the hell am I saying?!' Rey screamed internally as he completed his question.

Adonis was always the one who started conversations with him, and every time he did so, Rey always ensured he remained passive through most of it.

This was the very first time Rey was so assertive towards their Hero.

'Look at how he's staring at me? Now I feel like an idiot!'

He had gone to say something cheesy about himself, but how did he expect Adonis to relate to that?

Rey was still struggling to recoil from what he had said when he heard Adonis' footsteps suddenly stop.

Two hands landed on Rey's shoulders, and he found himself stopping as well.

"Rey..."

Adonis' voice sounded sullen. It had hints of sadness within, but Rey could clearly see Adonis smiling at him.

"... Thank you, man."

Rey hadn't ever felt this awkward in his entire life, but he allowed the moment to happen.

'I don't think this is necessary, though. Why is he thanking me for what I said?'

The look on Adonis' face proved he wasn't joking, and his bright eyes had never been so honest.

Thankfully, this didn't last for too long.

"A-ah, I apologize for being so forward. Everyone is waiting, so we better hurry."

"N-no, it's fine..."

Both the Hero and the Extra looked away from each other, expressing something like an awkward tension that one would normally find among teenage lovers.

It was difficult to explain, or even describe what was going on between these two guys.

Despite Adonis saying they should hurry, neither took a step forward.

At least, not immediately.

\*

## **Chapter 119 Bad News**

Rey and Adonis didn't speak another word to each other until they got to the Living Quarters.

Once they opened the door, everyone was already waiting for them in the living room—just as Adonis had said.

However, it wasn't just the students.

Conrad and all the four other members of the Royal Council were present.

Lucielle was also around.

'What's with their expression? They don't look so good...!' That wasn't all that Rey noticed as he walked in, though.

He looked hard at the crowd of students before him, counting only twenty-four instead of twenty-six, minusing him and Adonis.

He didn't see Billy in the crowd, which surprised him since he was always a stickler for the rules

However, much more concerning for Rey was the other person who seemed to be absent.

'Alicia isn't here...?!'

The fact that he didn't see her in the Library also meant one thing—something happened to her.

'What's going on? Is she fine?'

As he looked at the downcast expressions of the Royal Council Members, as well as Lucielle, he could tell that his hopes were probably going to be dashed.

A dark feeling washed over him as he took his seat and waited for the official words of the ones in charge.

'Please... let it not be bad...'

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Conrad swallowed his saliva as he stepped forward.

As the Grandmaster, it was his duty to address the Otherworlders on behalf of the council.

Normally, such a role came with more prestige than burdens. He even enjoyed the attention and felt important in taking charge.

But now, things were different.

The words he was about to utter weighed heavily in his heart as he pried his lips open to speak

"This is a very worrying night. I have two pieces of bad news to give you."

As Conrad sighed, he studied the faces of his audience.

Most of them had defensive expressions, while a few others appeared genuinely worried.

'I need to handle this matter delicately. I would have preferred being more diplomatic, but the Hero demands we be honest with the Otherworlders...'

Adonis was the Alliance's biggest supporter. They couldn't afford to get him on their bad side.

"Tonight, two of your fellows—Alicia and Billy—missed curfew. As such, we tried to track them down using the Royal Badges we gave you, but encountered a problem..."

Conrad gulped as he struggled to finish his words.

"... The Badges have been destroyed. As such, we can't track them down."

Royal Badges were by no means delicate. However, they weren't particularly the strongest thing to exist.

'They're not something to break on accident. It would require deliberate effort to do so...'

"And so, we are confronted with two options..." Conrad continued, despite seeing the shocked and downright concerned expressions of the Otherworlders.

"One is that they both decided to defect from the Alliance, cutting all ties with the Royal Estate, and —"

The moment Conrad said this, an uproar arose from the crowd of students.

"What?!"

"Billy would never do that!"

"Do you know how hard he trains?!"

"Maybe Alicia did, but not Billy!"

"No... even Alicia wouldn't!"

"Why not? She's strong enough to survive on her own, right? She has no connections here too..."

"Yeah, she's always been a selfish one, hasn't she?"

"Anyway! That can't be the case!"

Conrad ignored the statements made about Alicia, but he too agreed with the words of the students.

Of all the people most likely to leave the Royal Estate for good, Alicia and Billy seemed like the last who would consider it.

Adonis had also said the same thing when this was brought to his notice.

That meant the second option was most likely the case.

"Something bad must have happened to them. In essence, they're in danger." Conrad explicitly announced the second option.

The students found themselves exchanging puzzled glances.

There wasn't an uproar like the last time, but doubtful faces filled the room.

Conrad understood why.

'They're both powerful Otherworlders—one of the best among the group. There aren't many who could face them and win.'

Given a couple more months, Conrad was even sure they could surpass the Alliance's most powerful Warriors and Mage respectively.

"It could be the case of a kidnapping, or some other trouble that we are unaware of, but what we do know now is that they're missing."

"Can you track their last location or something?" A voice emerged from the crowd.

It came from a dark-haired boy in the crowd.

Conrad shook his head and sighed, turning to Lucielle to explain.

"The Royal Badge doesn't work that way. It serves as a Conduit for Tracking Magic. As such, it only reveals the current location of whoever wields it when the Magic is cast."

Once the Grand Mage was done explaining, the room fell into loud murmurs.

Students had varying theories about what was going on and what could possibly have happened.

"If you all have any idea about where they were going, or the plans they had, then please speak up." Adonis' voice cut through the murmurs instantly.

His face oozed the most concern, and while he appeared worried, nothing about that diminished his regal handsomeness.

"I saw the both of them walk past the gate together. It seemed like they were going somewhere."

Justin raised his hand and spoke as forthrightly as he could.

He and his friends had been hanging out when they saw them. Even though he called out to Billy, it seemed the boy was too distracted by Alici to see him.

"I see..." Adonis murmured, his hand on his chin. "Notice anything else?"

"Not really. I know they were dressed casually and smiling together. I found it weird, cus I have never seen those two together before..."

Justin's words elicited more reactions from the students in the room.

One student in particular—Rey—tried his best to hide his supreme shock.

"Thanks for the details, Justin. It's very much appreciated."

Based on the information Justin provided, it was very likely that the two went on a date, or to a casual location.

That ruled out some areas they would have searched.

"Anything else...?"

A hand was slowly raised in the air, and Adonis sharply turned his attention to the one who raised it.

"Yes, Rey?"

Rey rose to his feet with a conflicted expression staining his face.

He appeared very confused, but also certain about something.

... The fact that Alicia would never be caught dead with Billy.

"Alicia and Billy had a falling out the other day when we went for that Excursion. I think it's strange that they'd be together."

"Hey! I know what I saw, okay?" Justin raised his voice, slightly offended by Rey's insinuations.

"I'm not invalidating that. I'm just saying..."

"And how do you know all of this? Because you're close to Alicia? Is that it?" Another voice echoed among the crowd.

Suddenly, bursts of laughter began to echo among the students.

It only lasted for a second at most, though.

"That's enough, guys! Two of our classmates are missing, and they could very well be in danger, yet you all are laughing?!"

Adonis' annoyed face seemed to bring the much needed sanity into the room.

"Thank you for your contribution, Rey. That will also be considered."

Rey returned to his seat, and a somber mood filled the room. It was at this point that the situation truly dawned on them.

Billy and Alicia were missing!

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## **Chapter 120 A Hero's Disposition**

Once a few moments of silence was achieved, Adonis turned to Grandmaster Conrad and nodded.

It was time for the second grave announcement to be made.

"The Head Warrior Brutus has yet to return from his expedition."

This announcement didn't seem like much to the students, and to be honest, it wasn't supposed to be.

"We gave him and his men three days to complete their investigation, and it's only been two days. Normally, there would be no cause for concern, but a recent development has occurred."

The faces of the twisted slowly began to twist in worry. They could detect, from Conrad's tone and expression alone, that the matter was grave.

"His Royal Badge was also destroyed, but more than that... his Life Force is barely detectable."

Lucielle slowly nodded solemnly as Conrad said this, her brows creasing to form wrinkles of worry on her usually clear face.

As the Grand Mage of the Alliance, Lucielle had a lot of Spells at her disposal.

One was a Spell to detect a person's life force.

Of course, there were conditions to be met for this to work, such as Lucielle's proximity and extensive knowledge on the person in question.

As such, while she could not detect the Life Force of the two Otherworlders who were missing, she could detect Brutus' own.

... And it was waning.

"He's dying. Or, at least, he's in a very weakened state."

Upon hearing this, the students were appalled.

They had been assured that the Dungeon, despite being safe, wasn't a fatal choice. They were also told that Brutus and Lucielle would protect them.

Yet...

"I was able to track his location, thankfully. He's at the very bottom of the Dungeon—the Last Floor."

Everyone's eyes popped wide open.

The Royal Dungeon was rumored to have about 99 Floors.

How was it possible that the Head Warrior had reached the bottom Floor in such a short period?

"It's not something that is possible by natural means. That means something is definitely wrong—perhaps the Savage Monster he was investigating." Lucielle muttered as she rubbed her chin.

"S-savage Monster?!"

"You didn't tell us about this!"

"What Monster? If it's strong enough to put Brutus in that state, then..."

Lucielle instantly realized the mistake she made by airing out her thoughts.

Unfortunately, it was too late.

The Otherworlders began to whine and complain, their voices echoed around the room like joint cries of entitled children.

Yes, they were scared. However, more than anything... they were angry.

Angry at the Alliance for trying to make them descend into the Dungeons despite how dangerous it was.

They yelled about how their current training method was better, and how the Alliance was going to unnecessarily make them risk their lives.

None of the students—or at least, most of them—understand the rationale behind the Alliance's decisions.

They only saw the danger associated with the Dungeon and began to spread their words of distrust.

And with that came chaos.

"This is... getting a little upsetting."

~VWUUUUUMMMM!~

A sudden pressure filled the room, causing everyone to be silent.

Adonis stepped forward, his golden eyes flickering as he frowned deeply.

"Right now, our two classmates are in trouble. The man who taught us how to fight, and went to ensure our safety is also missing... and all you can think to do is complain?"

Adonis had never used such a harsh tone before, so it shocked a lot of people who heard him.

"Do you all realize what you sound like right now?" His words had no filter.

"... Selfish scum."

No one uttered a word of complaint or disagreement.

Instead, surprise and fear consumed the faces of the students who watched.

Right now, it felt like Adonis had finally snapped.

"I don't even care anymore. The students who aren't interested in helping out, or being at all useful should just leave."

Shock filled the faces of everyone in the room—even the members of the Royal Council.

"H-Hero, maybe that's a little too—"

"Harsh? Inconsiderate? Unwise? No... I don't think so." Adonis sighed, exhaling deeply.

His annoyed reaction remained, but the intimidating pressure he exuded began to dissipate .c(o)m

"What this world needs are saviors—soldiers who are willing to see the bigger picture and fight for the greater good."

Adonis wasn't wrong. The threat of the Dragons increased with each growing day.

The Alliance desperately needed capable warriors.

"But what I see before me are still immature children who think this is all a game and desire to be pampered."

They were only teenagers, so their previous displays of immaturity were very much understandable.

But the situation was different now.

This wasn't a time to murmur, gossip, or complain. It was a moment that required decisive action.

Yet... the very saviors of this world were not interested in any of that.

"What is the point of wasting time and resources on you if you won't do anything but complain at crucial moments like this?"

Adonis said it as it was.

"The Alliance doesn't need Otherworlders who simply want to grow strong so they don't get devoured by the dangers of the world. What they need are heroes who will brave the danger and save the world from peril."

It was a tough task, one that shouldn't be thrust on mere teenagers.

But for the people of H'Trae, 16 Years was the Legal Age for humans.

That was why the Summoning Spell had been so specific to summon high-schoolers who were that age.

The younger someone was, the more malleable they were to training, and the higher their growth potential would be.

That was why the Alliance needed their saviors to be as young as possible, but also adults.

Hence, 16-year-old teenagers.

What they didn't count on, however, was the kind of Otherworlders they ended up with.

Selfish, entitled, problematic, and self-preserving young kings who would rather ditch the world in times of trouble than save it.

"By dawn tomorrow, a team will be selected to descend to the depths of the Dungeon to rescue Head Warrior Brutus."

Gasps echoed out as Adonis said this.

"I don't expect any of you to tag along, but I am going. If I can not save just one person, or a group of people, from peril... how do I expect to save everyone?"

Right now, they were still unsure of the location of Alicia and Billy, which meant that the most urgent matter was Brutus' case.

... Especially since he was in danger of dying.

And so, while a thorough investigation would begin that very night concerning the two Otherworlders that were missing, radical action had to be taken in the Dungeon.

"Lucielle and I will lead the rescue team to save Brutus and his men." Adonis declared, his gaze cold and his tone oozing resolve.

"You all can choose to remain here, or enjoy your stay in the town for all I care. No, you could even leave the Estate if that's what you really want."

These were heavy words, but Adonis no longer held anything back.

All his diplomacy was gone.

"I will remain here, and I will do my best to save this world from the Dragons!" He roared.

Everyone was silent.

Everything was still.

All eyes were on Adonis as he walked out the door.

"... And I don't care if I have to do it alone."