

# Extras 121

## Chapter 121 The First Clue

'Looks like you finally went and did it, Adonis...'

Rey's thoughts flowed as he watched Adonis storm out of the room.

Even though he expressed shock just like everyone else, Rey was actually smiling within.

'Don't blame yourself too much. This was inevitable.'

There was no way all of the twenty-eight students would be equally useful to the cause.

Most of them were going to abandon the Alliance at one point or another.

Rey thought he was probably being too pessimistic, but he knew enough about his classmates to tell that they weren't the selfless, altruistic type.

They were merely teenagers who wanted to have fun, enjoy life, and live carefreely.

The only reason they stuck around for this long was due to the perks of developing their powers and learning how to survive.

Once they could no longer gain anything from the Royal Estate, they were bound to leave.

'It's unfair, but that's just how it is...'

Only a few were going to remain, and while not all of them had the purest of intentions, Rey felt like their motivations were enough.

'Even if I leave the Royal Estate, it'll be so I can focus on getting stronger. I don't think I'll ever abandon the people here...'

After all, Rey already knew within himself that he didn't want to go back to Earth.

If this was the world he wanted to live in, then he had to help defeat the Dragon Emperor and keep everyone safe.

To do that, though, he needed power.

'Then, there are a few others that I think won't leave...'

Trisha was definitely in the list, considering her personality and how much she valued growth and strength

She was definitely going to challenge the Dragons—but not necessarily because of the people of this world.

Belle was also on the list.

'She's crazy, but she's not stupid. She recognizes that her powers will be very useful in stopping the Dragons, and she definitely desires to stop them so she can deal with Adonis and Alicia.'

As much as Rey disliked Billy, he knew the guy also wouldn't abandon this world.

His desire to be accepted by people and seen as a chivalrous individual would drive him straight into the fire.

'Plus, he has something to prove to Alicia...'

Then, of course, there was Adonis.

Rey already knew his personality, and based on what Alicia told him about their dear Hero, he already knew Adonis would never abandon H"Trae.

Hearing him proudly say it out loud now only cemented his already solidified belief.

'I'm not sure about the others. Alicia will definitely try to help, since she's a kind person, and she can see the bigger picture, but apart from her... I don't know about the others.'

Noah was a coward, so he would probably back out and hope that someone else defeated the Dragons for him.

Most of the students were like that too.

They were probably thinking Adonis would lead the way and do most of the heavy lifting while they only watched from behind.

'The thing is... I don't think Adonis minds doing the heavy lifting. I think he just wants comrades who have his back.'

But most of these students were not those kinds of comrades.

'I'm sorry, Adonis. I genuinely don't know what's going on in your mind, but...'

Rey glanced around him and saw most of the students looking conflicted by all they had just heard.

'... These people aren't the saviors this world needs.'

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Rey returned to his room after the meeting was called off.

Grandmaster Conrad assured the students that they would update them on the recent happenings, and he also made a pathetic attempt to make everyone feel better.

He probably thought doing so would discourage the students from leaving, but Rey saw it as pointless.

Everyone already knew what was at stake this late in the game.

If the so-called saviors were still being uncooperative, then...

'It's better to nip it in the bud early. The useless ones should leave so the serious ones can remain.'

That was his simple line of reasoning.

However, the moment he entered his room and collapsed on his bed, his thoughts swiftly changed to the initial issue.

'Alicia's missing... and she was last spotted with Billy.'

To Rey, this entire line of logic didn't make sense.

After they made up in the Library, on the night after the Excursion, Alicia had told him all about what Billy did to her.

The entire incident in the Town Square was known to him, and he could clearly see the disgust on Alicia's face as she described it.

There was no way she would want to associate with Billy after that.

Rey had heard a few people whisper stuff in the lines of "Maybe they're secretly dating..."

However, he didn't believe it for even a second!

Sure, Rey was doubtful that he had a chance with Alicia, and he knew Billy seemed to be a man with better prospects than him.

But...!

'I know Alicia would never go for that snake! He's a creep, and nothing about their interaction strikes me as anything more than a one-sided obsession.'

Rey didn't doubt Alicia for even a moment.

'Billy must have done something to her. Maybe he charmed her or something...'

It was possible that he had even eloped with her after placing her under his Spell.

'I wouldn't doubt it if he was that unhinged now!'

Just thinking about Billy and the possibility of what he could have done to Alicia placed Rey in a different state of rage.

'I need to join this investigation.'

It was possible that he could make considerably more progress if he had access to the resources of the Alliance's investigation, but Rey had a different thing in mind.

'I can't trust the process. If I want to find her, I'll have to do it on my own.'

There was one thing that kept popping into Rey's mind when he thought about Alicia.

'The White Ember!'

All he had to do was find the ring, and he'd be able to know where she was.

With his first clue in mind, Rey already knew where he had to go.

'Looks like I'll be returning sooner than I expected...'

This time, however, this wasn't about business.

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## **Chapter 122 A Dark Place**

"U-uhh..."

Alicia groaned as she slowly opened her eyes.

The expanse around her was dark, and she struggled to see since her vision was still blurry. Accompanied with the surrounding darkness, her sight was a mess.

She felt her entire body ache as her head pounded. Everything around and about her hurt, so it was painful just raising her eyelids

"You're... awake... huh?" A familiar voice sounded right next to her.

She recognized it instantly, though she couldn't properly see the face of who spoke.

"B-Billy...?" As the whisper escaped her lips, she felt like her throat was on fire.

She felt too uncomfortable to do anything without it hurting.

'What happened? Why am I here? Where is this place? Why is Billy—?'

Before Alicia could complete her set of thoughts, chunks of her most recent memories began to flash in her mind.

She remembered how Rey approached her in the library, and how they went to a shady shop.

And then...

'N-no way!' Alicia's eyes popped wide open as she winced in pain.

'I was kidnapped? Set up by Re... no, that definitely wasn't Rey!'

Now that she was in this state, considering everything with the benefit of hindsight, she was a hundred percent sure that the person she met wasn't the guy she knew and liked.

It was someone else. Perhaps even...

"I'm sorry, Alicia. I... I really am..." Billy's voice echoed in the area just as she was about to think of him as the culprit.

'So it was YOU!' Her thoughts nearly echoed out through her lips.

She felt rage rise up from within her, but it was quickly suspended thanks to the pain and discomfort that swelled throughout her body.

"I just... wanted you to love me. To see me the way I see you... I..."

Alicia didn't know how Billy was able to talk so much when she could hardly leak out a few words without such stinging pain.

'It must be due to his Stats and Class.'

Alicia was jealous. If she could speak even nearly as much as he could, she would tell him to shut up.

'He tricked me and actually allowed both of us to be kidnapped! What in the world?!'

As much as she was curious about why and how it happened, Alicia didn't think she wanted to hear it from him.

The forgotten disgust she had was welling up, especially now that she remembered how he treated the waitress in the shop.

'Now that I think of it, everything makes sense now!'

Alicia always knew Rey wouldn't do the things Billy was doing, yet she couldn't disprove his identity.

Now that she was sure, it all connected.

'I can't believe he would do something so creepy...'

"F-forgive me... please..." She heard Billy murmur and groan, however Alicia didn't care much for what he was saying.

'I've been kidnapped. I need to find a way out!'

That was the only thing on her mind.

'Status Window!'

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Alicia White
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Grand Tamer (A-Tier)
- Level: 9 (34.90% EXP)
- Life Force: 1/10 [Critical]
- Mana Level: 30 (+100) [Locked]
- Combat Ability: 23 [Locked]
- Stat Points: 0
- Skills (Exclusive): [Divine Beast Summon]. [Absolute Healing]. [Greater Ice Magic]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): Nil
- Alignment: Lawful Good

[Additional Information]

A pet-lover who desires to return home, but can not afford to see others in a state of distress. Your Skills and Class are in perfect synergy with you. fre(e)webno(v)el

Warning: You are currently under a Status Condition that renders you incapable of much of anything

[End Of Information]

"W-what is this...?"

Alicia could not believe her eyes. Her Mana and Combat abilities were locked, which meant she couldn't utilize them even if she mustered the strength to.

She had never experienced anything like this before, so it took a while to wrap her head around it.

"You... you've checked your Status, haven't you? I checked too..." Billy's voice echoed to remind her of the obvious.

"We can't escape..."

'Would you shut up?! Who put us into this mess in the first place?!' Alicia wanted to yell, but she knew she couldn't.

Yelling was unproductive anyway, so she decided not to suffer for it.

"Are we... the only ones here...?" Alicia finally spoke.

It hurt her to do so—both physically and mentally—but she had to gather more information.

Since he had been awake for longer, surely he'd know.

"No. There are a few others... but they were taken out... to eat."

Billy wasn't called out, and she was unconscious, so did that mean he decided not to leave her all by herself?

Alicia knew it was something that Billy could do, but that didn't mean she suddenly felt grateful.

If it hadn't been for him, she would have been reading her book in peace.

"What's... going to happen to us?"

"..."

Seconds after Alicia croaked out this question, there was no response from Billy.

Only his heavy breathing could be heard.

"Answer me." Alicia hardened her tone, causing her to wince in more pain.

A few more seconds passed before Billy's trembling voice revealed the truth.

"S-slavery..."

As Alicia heard this, her eyes widened.

'Slavery?! We're going to be sold?!' Her heart raced, causing her body to feel much weaker than before.

"It'll be better if you don't get... too worked up." Billy murmured.

"It'll hurt more... if you struggle."

Alicia felt more and more upset as she heard him speak, but Billy wasn't wrong.

Right now, she was in tremendous pain thanks to her current disorientation.

'I can't escape in my current state, and if I don't do anything, we'll be sold to slavery.'

That was her current predicament.

'Is there a way out of this?'

There was none that Alicia knew of. It made her increasingly frustrated, but she kept her emotions in check.

She had to take her time to analyze it.

'H-hold on! That's it... TIME!' She still had no idea what the time was, and how much longer it would take before they would get sold.

Naturally, she did the only thing she could do to find out.

"How long... do we have until we're sold...?"

If they had like a week before being sold, there was a chance that the Royal Estate's search party would find them first.

The Black Market was somehow involved in this, so she knew the Royal Council would crack down on their activities to find her and Billy.

'We still have a chance of our powers returning too. I don't know how long this [Locked] effect lasts for, but it can't be forever, right?'

They just had to be vigilant and bide their time until the perfect opportunity arrived.

"Tomorrow."

"... E-eh?"

As Alicia heard this, her thoughts instantly froze.

"W-what did you just say...?"

Deep down, Alicia hoped she didn't clearly hear what Billy had just whispered.

Much to her horrors, however, her hopes were dashed.

"I heard... we are gonna be sold... tomorrow..."

Her body trembled at the news.

"I-I'm sorry... Alicia... I really am..."

At this point, Alicia was too deep in deep fear to even hear Billy.

She was too scared to think.

The only person she could think of at this point was Rey.

"H-help me..." As Alicia struggled to feel the White Amber on her finger, she couldn't.

This discovery broke her heart even more, and tears fell from her eyes.

"P-please help me... anyone... Rey..."

Even though her prayers fell on deaf ears, Alicia wouldn't stop mumbling to herself.

... Until she finally fell unconscious once again.

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## **Chapter 123 Adonis' Worries**

"This isn't how it's supposed to go..."

Adonis mumbled to himself as he stared at the night sky.

He didn't remember every single detail of the past, but he knew about this incident.

'The kidnapping of Billy and Alicia... it's supposed to happen way further in the future!'

Sure, a lot of things had been altered now, but he never expected such a drastic change to the original timeline.

'They'll nearly be sold at the Slave Auction a few days after being captured, but thankfully the investigation was done before the process was complete.'

As a result, the Royal Knights rushed in and apprehended a lot of criminals in the Black Market and Slavery World.

Unfortunately, this huge victory came with a great loss.

'Alicia's mental state became unstable and she became insane. Billy was fine, but he was too concerned with Alicia's health that he didn't focus on training any longer...'

Eventually, Alicia's mental health deteriorated to the point that she eventually committed suicide and died.

As for Billy, he joined her in the afterlife not long after.

Adonis didn't know the details of their relationship back then, or how they were captured in the first place, but he suspected that they were lovers.

... Or something of the sort.

'Billy still seems very fond of Alicia, but it didn't seem like she felt the same. I thought, for sure, they wouldn't ever go on that date of theirs that led to the incident.'

And even if they did, it wouldn't be anytime soon.

'So why...?!'

Adonis felt anxious—the most anxious he had ever been since his regression.

If he didn't act fast, the same tragedy that occurred last time would happen again.

'Like last time, it'll probably take a few days for the investigation to bring forth fruit. I just hope we can find them earlier this time.'

Adonis didn't know where the Auction Center was, and even if he did, the location was said to constantly change for each Auction.

With the kidnapping happening much earlier than anticipated, there was a good chance that it wouldn't be the same location as last time.

It bothered Adonis to the core that he felt useless at such a crucial moment.

He gritted his teeth and sank his fingers deep into his palm.

'Things can't start falling apart now! We've hardly even begun!'

Somehow, it felt like things were even worse now.

Sure, everyone was growing stronger at a much faster pace, but problems were arising here and there that didn't happen in the original timeline.



'... And I honestly don't know what to do.'

The most he could do for Alicia and Billy was pray that they were found earlier than last time.

And if Alicia's madness repeated itself this time, he could solve it using his extensive knowledge of H'Trae.

As long as they weren't dead... Adonis was confident that his two comrades would be fine.

'The same can't be said about Brutus, though.'

Adonis' face darkened the moment he thought about the Head Warrior's current situation.

'This is yet another change I wasn't expecting...' .c(o)m

In his past life, there was an investigation carried out by Brutus and Lucielle, but it wasn't anything too serious.

The students were soon able to begin exploring Dungeons and killing Monsters.

'But the timeline has changed. Apparently there's a strong monster that surfaced... one that didn't do so in the past.'

Adonis tried to think about the possibilities, and he had a few ideas.

'Right now, I should be stronger than them.'

And so, he was fairly confident that Brutus and his team would be able to subdue the monster and return.

However...

'... This had to happen.'

Adonis was puzzled to his core about so many things.

'Where did all the Mana Crystals and Monster Cores go? Our Seventh Floor Dungeon Exploration remains memorable to me because of that stash we found.'

It was a huge victory for the United Human Alliance, and it helped them greatly in their preparation for the imminent war.

But now... all those resources were gone.

But why?!

'There's a possibility that there is another class traitor. I can't rule it out completely.'

Adonis felt his heart ache, and he felt his head hurting. There were a lot of possibilities to think about, and it was a little too overwhelming for the Hero.

'And the fact that none of them are helping matters is the worst part of all this.'

Adonis never expected his classmates to suffer the way they did in the past.

In fact, the whole reason he was training so hard was to save everyone.

But... he couldn't do it alone.

'I need help. Tons of it. But none of them are being very helpful.'

Adonis thought he could be the glue that held everyone together—especially after seeing what happened the last time—

but after being so patient with them and seeing the way things were going, he had to face the truth.

Most of them were useless.

'I'd have better luck with a select few than such a crowd.'

That was why he had to save people like Brutus.

'He's a knight that's loyal to humanity, and in the near future, he'll become even stronger than he is now.'

Brutus was an indispensable asset to the salvation of the world

—something he couldn't say about most of his classmates.

"I have to save him. I have to save all of them."

Preparations were already being made to explore the depths of the Dungeon, and with the Magic Item that existed in the Royal Treasury, it was possible to directly teleport to the depths of the Dungeon.

'It's a one-use Item, though, so we'll have to climb back up once we rescue Brutus.'

Adonis wasn't sure he was currently strong enough to face all the Monsters of the Lowest Floors, but he didn't have to.

'If it's just escaping, I'm confident about that...'

Besides, he still had the Item he got in the Black Market. He would have to alter his initial plan for it; but it couldn't be helped.

'If I use it to open a rupture in space to a Top Floor, we can use that to escape.'

Even if it was the 30th Floor or something, Adonis was confident that it would be more than enough for the rescue to proceed smoothly.

Adonis leaked out a heavy breath and closed his eyes.

'I'll have Lucielle with me, at least. It'll be a close one, but we should be able to win.'

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## **Chapter 124 The Departure**

The next day arrived much faster than anyone anticipated.

As the early morning sun was beginning to peek out in the sky, about fifty Knights and Mages stood before Adonis and Lucielle.

They were also graced by the presence of the members of the Royal Council.

This was the Rescue Unit that would be going to the depths of the Royal Dungeon to save their dying comrade.

Thankfully, Brutus wasn't dead yet.

However, he was dying. If they didn't hurry, his life could be forfeit.

"... And that's the end of the briefing. Any questions?" Lucielle asked the fifty who stood before her and the Hero.

However, none of the stern-faced ones had any questions.

"May I ask one?" A loud, feminine voice came from behind the two leaders.

Adonis and Lucielle swiftly turned back to see a bunch of teenagers standing resolute.

The one who asked the question was Trisha, and the people with her were all Otherworlders.

Belle, Justin, Clark, and Eric.

"Can we join your group?" Trisha smiled, her arms folded.

"Y-you guys..."

Adonis' eyes were widened in shock. He was pleasantly surprised, to say the least.

He didn't expect anyone to show up.

'And this lineup... it's great!' His thoughts beamed.

Belle was known as the best Mage in Alpha Class.

Justin, despite being very playful, had the [Assassin] Class—a B-Tier Class that exceeded the C-Tier [Thief] Class.

He had very useful Skills too.

Like his popular [Mimic] Skill, and also stuff like [Stealth], [Sleep], [Voice Mimic], and [Perception].

One might think he didn't have any attack Skills, but he actually did. His [Marionette Skill] was B-Tier, and mixing it with the rest of his other Skill, Justin was pretty unique in his build.

Clark was also a member of the Alpha Class, and his Skills made him seem more like a superhero than a warrior.

He had [Flight], [Super Strength], [Super Speed], [Icy Breath], [Heat Vision], etc.

His [Paladin] Class also made him pretty sturdy—the perfect tank. fre(e)webno(v)el

Then there was Eric; the one with the most diverse sets of Magic-based Skills among all of them.

Even though he had the C-Tier Class of Mage, his Skills ranged from A-Tier abilities like [Grand Sound Magic], to B-Tiers like [Greater Corrosion], [Greater Explosion], and even a couple C-Tier stuff like [Blindness] and [False Pain].

He was a true Mage—a jack of all trades, though master of none.

If he had a better Class, there was a chance he could give Belle a run for her money.

It seemed like all the members of Alpha Class—with the exception of the two kidnapped ones—were present.

'And then, there's her...' Adonis looked at the girl who stood at their center, and probably the one who banded them together.

Trisha—The strongest Beta Student.

She had the [Swordsman] Class, but extreme Skill to make her stand out even to the Alpha Students.

'I think her Skills are [Greater Lightning Magic], [Combat Application], and [Danger Sense]...'

Her combination of those three Skills, in addition to her experience, made her very formidable.

'And they're all here to join us?' Adonis was overjoyed, and a sudden wave of relief washed over him.

'It seems I was wrong about some of them...' As he had this thought, the image of a certain boy flashed in his mind.

Rey.

'I guess he wasn't up to it. I can't blame him, though. He probably felt he wasn't strong eno—'

Before Adonis could complete his thoughts, his eyes caught the very boy he was thinking about among a group of casually dressed men.

He recognized the men as soldiers in disguise. Since they were searching for the Black Market—specifically where Alicia and Billy were being kept there—they had to blend in.

It was far more efficient than brandishing weapons and announcing themselves as soldiers of the Alliance.

'What is Rey doing with them, though?' Adonis thought to himself.

"Come on, Adonis. You won't give us an answer? That's harsh, man!"

Justin's voice woke Adonis from his dazed state, causing him to look right in front of him again.

"S-sure! We'd be really happy to have you join us!" He swiftly smiled.

"Lucielle, please excuse me for a moment. You can use this opportunity to quickly brief them."

"Alright."

As soon as he heard this, Adonis jogged to where the disguised soldiers stood.

It was clear that they would be departing to town very soon.

It didn't take him very long to reach their position, and thankfully Rey had already caught him running from a distance.

"Hey, Rey! What are you doing here?" He asked, expressing genuine surprise.

"I'm going to be joining the Investigation. I'll do my best to find clues with them."

Upon hearing those words, Adonis smiled slightly.

'He must have thought he was too weak to go to the Dungeon, so he decided to help out in another way...'

He felt nothing but respect for Rey.

'Even though you're weak, you do what you can...'

If that wasn't the definition of a true Hero, what was?

"Alright! I wish you good luck!" Adonis nodded and widened his smile.

"Thanks! You too!"

They both chuckled despite the fact that they were meant to be under a lot of pressure.

"I'll need it... thanks, Rey."

Rey nodded and returned the look of genuine camaraderie.

For a second, they both stood still... not saying a single word to each other.

That was when Adonis remembered that time was running out.

He turned to see Lucielle already done with the briefing, so he laughed awkwardly.

"I should probably get going now..."

"Yeah, you should."

The next thing Adonis did seemed to surprise Rey.

Stretching out a fist towards the boy before him, Adonis smiled and whispered.

"Please find them..."

Rey nodded and knocked his own fist on Adonis', creating their first ever fist numb.

"Don't lose." Rey responded.

They both weren't smiling any longer. Only expressions of resolve oozed from them.

As the Mages, Knights—disguised or not—and Otherworlders watched the two from their respective positions, the silence was deafening.

Until Adonis broke it.

"I won't."

They both parted ways after that—with Rey leaving the Castle Walls with his team, and Adonis returning to the group.

Neither of them could have guessed the horrors that were about to unfold.

The tragedy that would come.

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## **Chapter 125 Finding The Lost Item [Pt 1]**

Aldred Winsley sat on his desk early in the day, just like every other day.

Business in the KariBlanc Group's Central Building didn't really pick up until late evening/night, but a few customers preferred coming when there were fewer eyes on them.

As a result, diligent workers like Aldred had to make themselves available.

Aldred behind on his luxurious desk, taking care of some paperwork while waiting to be called for any 'special case.'

His hair was stylish, as always, and his formal attire was neat and properly—to the utmost limit.

Even though he was all alone in the room, with no one watching him whatsoever, he went about his business with as much finesse and dedication as possible.

He was just about to pick up another file when he finally got the call.

It was from his Enchanted Bracelet.

~Out Esteemed Guest is here for you, sir. He says he wants to meet with you and it's urgent!~

The moment Aldred heard this, he jumped to his feet that very instant.

There was only one person that he told the other workers to call 'esteemed guest' when calling him about them.

'It's Sir Ralyks!'

Aldred had a mixed expression of both surprise and relief.

He was glad to see that their best seller hadn't abandoned them, and he had even come sooner than expected.

However, that didn't stop Aldred's surprise at the entire situation. After all...

'He only arrives in the afternoon. What's this new arrangement?'

Besides, after their first meeting, it was obvious that Aldred was always going to attend to him or his subordinate no matter what.

'So why did he bother asking to see me; and he says it's important as well?'

He began to get goosebumps, but he knew he couldn't afford to be crippled by the uncertain future ahead of him.

'I can't dawdle for too long, else he'll think I'm disrespecting him!'

Sir Ralyks was not only the best seller to their KariBlanc Group, he was also someone with a Skill in the realm of Absolutes—The S-Tier.

If he didn't want their organization to perish, all possible respect had to be attributed to this man—whoever he was.

"Tell him I'm on my way. I'll be with him shortly." As Aldred rushed out of his office, he uttered these words to the one who called him.

She responded affirmatively, and Aldred found himself outside his office already.

All that was left was to locate the most pristine Bargain Room and speak to Ralyks.

'I hope all is well...'

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'T-this is...'

Aldred Winsley was now seated right opposite KariBlanc's top seller and most esteemed guest, but he didn't feel too comfortable.

He fought very hard to keep his body from trembling, and he was sure that all the color had drained from his face.

... Why?

Well, the answer sat right in front of him, in the form of Ralyks.

'... This pressure is... something else!'

Just by sitting and remaining quiet, Aldred could send an incorporeal pressure pressing against him.

It was a power he could not define or explain.

Was it a Skill? Or... was it just pure, unbridled bloodlust?

Aldred didn't know.

However, he did know that he wasn't the cause.

'Ever since I entered this room, I felt the pressure already. I do not believe I've done anything to insult or disrespect him.'

Even if he did, Aldred felt like the man before him wasn't the type to take offense at such things so easily.

The strong didn't need to keep quiet about their dissatisfactions.

They were often vocal about it.

'So what is up with this situation? Why is he being like this...?'

As Aldred gulped down his saliva, taking one of the glasses of water that sat on a tray—right atop the center table that demarcated then both—he noticed something.

Ralyks began to move subtly, raising his head slowly so he could look him in the eye.

Aldred braced himself for whatever was to come next.

However—

"Sorry to come here so early in the morning. However, I need something from your company."

—Ralyks' words were surprisingly calm and polite.

It was almost like he was being very carefully gentle with his words.

Honestly, Aldred was so relieved.

"W-what are you talking about, Sir Ralyks? You can come here at any time and always be welcome!"

Aldred knew that even if he was busy with another customer or seller... the moment Sir Ralyks was in the building, he would leave his earlier engagement to someone capable and attend to him.

He was KariBlanc's golden goose—and they didn't plan on letting him go anytime soon.

"What do you need? We will try our best to procure it for you!"

As he asked this, Aldred wondered if both Ralyks and his subordinate enjoyed the gifts they were given.

He wanted to ask, but decided it wasn't the best time.

Business came first.

"My ring... the White Ember, it's missing."

The moment Aldred heard this, his eyes twitched slightly.

"The person who was wearing it is also missing. I'd like to find them both... I hope you understand what I'm driving at?"

Aldred nodded slowly, his expression darkening slightly.

'Someone took his Beloved and also had the audacity to take the ring from him...?!'

He couldn't believe someone like Ralyks was clumsy and reckless.

He was probably not present when the incident happened.

'Yet he came here for a solution. So he already knows...!' Aldred made a nervous smile

This man really was too much.

"I understand perfectly well, sir. Please come with me."

They both rose up and Aldred took him upstairs.

... To the Second Floor.

Compared to the first and second floor, no one but specific staff were meant to even take a step into the Floor.

However, for every rule... there is an exception.

And that exception was the man with him.

'Since he came to the KariBlanc, he must already know of the special power in our grasp.'

There was no use hiding it from him at this point.

'... Our Enchanted Item Tracker!'

The KariBlanc Group's Central Building was a three-story building.

Its Ground Floor was used for commerce. Its First Floor was used for brokerage and special transactions—as well as the storage of regular Items.

As for the Second Floor... It was used for three major purposes.

One was to store the best of products. The second was adding the finishing touches for these products.

And as for the last reason, it lay behind the door that Aldred was about to open.

The Manufacturing stations existed in the bulkier half of the building that served as an extension to the back.

Since the building had a lot of space—especially behind it, it wasn't surprising that manufacturing occurred there.



That place was also off-limits to those without access, but compared to that, this place was the real deal.

The Holy of Holies.

\*

## **Chapter 126 Finding The Lost Item [Pt 2]**

The KariBlanc Group's Central Building was a three-story building.

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The Holy of Holies.

'I haven't taken permission from father to do this, but...'

Aldred knew what his father would say in this situation

Right now, there was no room for hesitation.

"Right this way, Sir Ralyks."

Despite what he would have normally done, Aldred allowed the man to enter first, before finally proceeding behind him.

As the door creaked and closed behind them, yet another tension filled the air.

Though, no one could tell where it came from.

\*\*\*\*\*

The room that the two men entered was completely dark, save for one source of light that glowed even in such deep darkness.

Both of the men walked to the source of light, as if attracted to it for some reason.

"This is the Enchanted Tracker. It's imbued with the best kind of Tracking Magic."

Aldred knew this thing was incredibly powerful—with a failure rate of 0 percent.

Tracking Magic was very difficult to use, and it required a lot of Mana to pull off.

Naturally, the first criteria also applied to this gleaming orb. However, the initial problem—the difficulty of Tracking Magic—had completely been solved.

"All we have to do now is track your beloved's ring."

"She's not my... never mind." Aldred could hear mumbles from the man in the mask, but he couldn't quite pick it up.

Rather than straining his ears, he gave up on it.

"So... you use this Item to track down the merchandise you sell, huh?"

A somewhat dangerous tone suddenly echoed in the air.

Aldred nearly jumped as he watched Raklys take a few steps forward to closely observe the Orb.

"I-It's not like we ever do it without permission. That'll be a violation of our contract." He quickly protested.

"Do you really care about all that when it comes to business within the Black Market...?"

Aldred was very helpless in the presence of Ralyks' accusation.

The Group had a lot of protocols, and one of them was the non-use of Tracking Magic on the Enchanted Items that they sold.

The only exception was by special request, and even then, none of the customers were brought up here.

They were like only remain in their lounges on the First Floor until the job was complete.

However, Aldred seemed Ralyks to be a reasonable man.

... A dangerous one too.

"If we were to use Tracking Magic, the item that is being tracked will react to the influx of energy resonating with it. In essence, it would be a reaction you noticed."

A keen user of their Enchanted Item would find it suspicious that the thing was glowing for no reason.

It wouldn't take very long for them to figure out that it was tracking the Item.

And once they did, their eyes would unanimously turn to the one who sold them the Item.

"It would be a terrible business move to keep track of all Items, even if they were fine with invading privacy."

Aldred didn't think he had to explain all of these to Raklys, since he knew the man had a very strong sense of business.

Still, he did anyway.

"I understand. Alright then... find my White Amber."

Wherever the ring was, the user existed there was well. Aldred knew this logic already.

"Alright then. Let us begin..."

Aldred pulled out a piece of paper, seemingly out of nowhere.

This piece was a receipt of purchase—one that was kept for purposes like this

Even though the two items were a gift, Aldred still had to keep it for the sake of record-keeping and transaction management.

"Here I go, Sir."

Aldred placed the receipt on the glowing orb, and all of a sudden... the bright sphere began to grow brighter.

It seemed as bright as the sun at some point, filling the entire room with white light.

~VWUUUM~

The orb pulsed, creating warbling sounds as the energy that swelled within it began to ooze out.

A small vortex of wind formed around it, causing the room to tremble a bit.

The two men remained in their positions, though. This was merely a process, and then both of them were guaranteed of their safety.

And then, after a few more seconds of making noise, the sphere finally died down.

~BZZTZZ!~

A small glitchy sound echoed within the room, and an overhead panel suddenly appeared above the orb.

[Registered Item Located]

[Enchanted Item (Grade 6): White Amber has been located. Coordinates will be displayed below.]

[Tap For More]

There was initial silence in the room, but Aldred proceeded to tap the panel, and it fully displayed the map of the Black Market.

Several buildings lay in sight—almost like a one would see in a map displayed on a mobile app.

The KariBlanc Group gave off a 'blue' glow, which was meant to signify the start-point of the journey.

And then, in some obscure area within the same Black Market Area... there was a 'red' dot.

That meant only one thing.

"Your Enchanted Item is over here, Sir Ralyks." Aldred said with a relieved smile.

The masked man said nothing.

Aldred could sense something in the atmosphere that brought about unease, so he decided the best thing to do was to keep talking.

"It doesn't seem to be moving, so we can safely guess the wielder is stationary—at least, for now."

There was still no word from the dark-cloaked one.

Aldred had no choice but to ask the question that now burned in his mind.

"What would you like to do now... Sir Ralyks?"

The question drifted in the air for a moment, until finally, the one in question finally broke the silence with his deep and commanding voice.

"What else? I'll find whoever dared to steal from me... and make them pay for it."

Aldred felt a chill go up his spine as soon as he heard those words.

It felt like some sort of lid had been opened on the repressed rage of the masked one.

'Whoever dared to do something like this... they have my pity.' Aldred smiled wryly to himself.

Normally, his task would end here. .com

He had shown their dear seller the location of his item, and also confirmed it to be stationary.

However, Aldred had another idea in mind.

"If you do not mind, Sir Ralyks, I'd like to come with you."

\*

## **Chapter 127 The Arrangement**

Rey's heart was racing as he stared at the coordinates.

His fists were tightly clenched, and he felt his eyes growing bloodshot.

'Why would Alicia be in the Black Market?!' He instantly knew that she couldn't have been there on her own free will.

She was clearly in some kind of trouble.

'Is it because of Billy? I'm sure it's him!'

Remembering the face of his former best friend was enough to make him grit his teeth.

He was fully annoyed.

Despite Rey's annoyance, though, he felt a wave of relief hit him.

'At least I found her. Ditching the rest and coming here on my own really was the right move.'

Rey was able to leave the watch of the Investigation Squad and come here on his own after they all split up looking for clues.

Thanks to that, he managed to slip into the Black Market space.

'I simply guessed that I could use their network or information channels to find Alicia.'

Rey had also considered them using Tracking Magic on their Items, but he didn't think it would be this detailed.

He also didn't like the implications that it brought to the table.

'If they can always track any Item I buy from them, then am I really safe from their prying eyes?'

However, after Aldred explained the process to him—revealing the implications of doing something of the sort—Rey recognized that they probably wouldn't want to do something like that.

And even if they did... he would know.

'I better hurry, though. Since we've located the Item, it would have alerted the one who has it.'

In Rey's mind, that person was Alicia.

'If she's surrounded by the enemy, they might see the glow and recognize it as Tracking Magic.'

That meant he had to get to her before she got moved from her position.

'It'll be difficult to memorize all these routes in such a short period of time, but I have no choice.'

He was in a hurry.

Even though he was unfamiliar with a lot of places within the Black Market, and the target location was quite far from where he currently stood, Rey knew he still had to find a way somehow.

... And fast!

As he was contemplating these things and getting ready to depart, he was met with the most unexpected suggestion.

"If you do not mind, Sir Ralyks, I'd like to come with you."

Rey's surprise was well hidden under his black mask and the poker face underneath.

'What? He's a broker, isn't he? Why would he want to leave his place of work for me?'

Had Aldred sensed his unease and decided to help? Was there something else at play here?

In the end, Rey had no choice but to directly ask the person involved.

"Why?"

Then, the answer came forth in a calm, calculated manner.

"There is a possibility that your target might start moving after you leave this place. To keep track of their movements in real-time, it's best I accompany you."

Aldred explained that he had a syncing device that connected to the Tracking Device in the room.

They could use that to get an accurate read on the map and detect even the slightest movements of their target.

"What do you say?"

It was an honestly good reason. However, for the currently skeptical Rey... it wasn't enough.

"Why would you go this far for me? I might be a prized seller, but surely you aren't mandated to go as far as leaving your area of business for my sake."

As soon as Rey said this, he noticed a slight change in Aldred's expression.

From his small, humble smile... emanated a crooked look. He had a very menacing demeanor that one wouldn't find in a businessperson.

... It was the kind of face you'd expect from a thug.

"Someone dared to steal a product from the KariBlanc Group. Not many are foolish enough to do something so stupid..."

As Rey heard this, he watched Aldred's twisted smile grow even wider.

"I'd like to see who did this with my own eyes, as well as watch them be punished as much as they deserve. Of course, I'd like to ask you to leave some for us once you're satisfied.

Rey knew how merciless the KariBlanc Group could be.

He wasn't sure if bringing an agent of theirs on this mission was the right thing to do.

However, when he weighed the pros against the cons...

'He can see the real-time location of the ring, and he knows the Black Market much better than I do.'

... Rey already knew he had no other option.

"Fine. You can come along with me."

"Thank you, Sir Ralyks." As Aldred bowed slightly, Rey felt a slight discomfort in the pit of his stomach.

He still wasn't completely used to being called by his moniker.

'I'll have to grow accustomed to it, though.'

As Rey stole one more glance at the beeping red dot on the map, he narrowed his gaze.

Impatience swelled within him, and his body was prepared to dart out that very instant.

"You're the only one coming with me, right?" He asked Aldred.

"I would have liked to take a small group in order to display some of our power, but I recognize that it might inconvenience you quite a bit."

Rey nodded slightly. Knowing the KariBlanc Group—the little that he did—this 'small group' could end up being a squad of a hundred men or even more.

'Mobilizing such a force would take time, and I'm in a hurry.'

"So, how about this, Sir Ralyks? I'll only take one person with me. That'll make just three of us on this expedition."

Rey only needed to think about it for a second before nodding in agreement.

"Perfect!" Aldred clapped his two hands together as he beamed brightly.

It was almost as if he never displayed any malevolent grin before now.

Rey made a quick note to be wary around Aldred—warier than he was before—and the entire KariBlanc Group.

For now, though, something else was at the forefront of his mind.

'... Alicia!'

"Very well then." Aldred made for the door as he said with purposeful excitement.

"Let us depart!"

\*

## Chapter 128 Hideout Of Lowlives [Pt 1]

"Sir Ralyks, please meet Yuri. She's a very capable fighter, even among the ranks of the KariBlanc combat force."

Standing beside Aldred, who directed his hand towards her as a means of introduction, was a smiley-faced woman.

Her pink hair was cut short, barely reaching her neck area, and her bright green eyes gleamed like emeralds.

She had clear skin, and her bright smile made it impossible to tell that she was a warrior.

Instead of wearing armor, she wore a casual outfit—an oversized shirt and baggy trousers that resembled a skirt unless one really took a closer look.

Her overall demeanor was positive, so Rey was initially taken aback once the introduction was made.

"Hiya... I mean, greetings, sir! My name is Yuri, ah... I've already been introduced. A-anyway, I'm quite capable, so rely on me when you desire!"

The young lady raised both her hands as if trying to flex her muscles, but nothing except her baggy shirt was shown.

'What's this? She seems like a klutz...'

This girl—Yuri—appeared to be twenty at most, and her personality told Rey that she wasn't the best person to trust when it came to serious matters like this.

However, based on his experience, he knew it would be stupid of him to judge books by their covers.

'I hide my true self under a mask of mediocrity. Also, Lucielle is pretty playful... yet she's strong.'

Associating people based on how they talked or behaved was a rookie mistake that Rey knew he couldn't be found guilty of.

"I'll do my b-e... owww!"

Yuri slipped and fell to the ground the moment she tried to take a step forward.

It seemed her baggy trousers were too much for her, so she accidentally stepped on the edge.

'Ahh... she's making it really hard for me not to judge her, though.'

Yuri had a very cute face—one that didn't resemble the kind of fighter he expected the KariBlanc Group to be so proud of.

Rey knew that Aldred was seeking every chance to impress him, so this girl had to be undoubtedly strong, but...

'She truly doesn't look like she belongs in the Black Market.'

Still, Rey pushed aside those distracting thoughts and focused on the mission.

"Let's leave straight away." As he spoke, Yuri was rising to her feet and Aldred was maintaining his straight smile.

It seemed he was pretending like nothing had just happened in his presence.

'Does that mean stuff like this happens often with her? She's a natural klutz? The hell...?'

Still, Rey didn't allow any of that get in the way of his thoughts or reasoning.

It wasn't like he needed her or anything.

'I'll handle anyone who gets in my way. These two are just here as accessories.'

In the end, all he wanted was Alicia.

Everyone else involved could be the KariBlanc Group's scapegoats for all he cared.

They were currently still within the immediate area of the KariBlanc Building, so Rey turned to Aldred and asked the only important question.

"Has the target moved?"

"No. They're still in the building." Aldred responded after tapping on one of the many rings that decorated his fingers.

The thing displayed a mini System Window that everyone around him could see.

Rey nodded and turned in the direction they were meant to depart to.

The rest followed suit, both with smiles on their faces.

"Perfect! Let's go!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Gary narrowed his gaze on the deck of cards that he tightly held in his hands.

He kept the cards very close to his bare chest, alternating between looking at the game he was dealt and the pile of cards on the table.

He was seated on a very old-looking chair, and it squeaked with every movement he made.

The table didn't look like it was in a better condition, too, and the surrounding chairs had also seen better days.

Surrounding the table—and the pile of cards—were other men like him.

All of them were bare-chested, dressed only in their dirty boxer shorts. This very casual look was only allowed since this was their hideout, and they were on their day off.

After completing such an important task the previous day, they were all enjoying their break very well.

This enjoyment involved playing cards in a worn-down building, with the smell of mold and sweat wafting through the air.

"Hmmm..." Gary licked his lips as he looked at his cards.

None of them seemed to be any good.

He felt heat rising on his crotch, and it was swiftly followed by vibrations.

'Hm...?' He wondered why he was having this kind of reaction in a situation like this.



Was it because he was nervous—or scared that he would lose the meager sum that he bet in the game?

Gary didn't know why, but this wasn't the first time this was happening since he started this game. It had happened a few times already.

'Is it the ring? Is it reacting to my body or something?'

Gary wasn't sure.

But... he was certain of one thing.

'I can't afford to draw anyone's attention to my crotch.'

Why? Why would he even think that anyone would want to look at his dirty boxer shorts and pay attention to his glowing nether-region.

Perhaps it had something to do with the really expensive-looking ring that he luckily picked on the ground.

He still hadn't gotten the chance to sell it, so he kept it close to him at all times.

If any of his comrades saw it, it would be game over for him.

Since it was a hot day, and they didn't have proper ventilation in their building—except in the Leader's Room—the men were usually bare-chested, wearing only boxer shorts

And so, the only way to keep such a thing close to him was to hide it in his boxer shorts.

Gary had wrapped the ring in a very small pouch, and tied the container around his waist like a bead.

In order not to let his comrades find his greatest treasure, he had gone this far!

'Once I have time to myself, I'll make sure to sell it and get my money's worth!'

Gary had a few connections that could link him up with some of the local shops that dealt with this sort of stuff.

Even a few of the rich kind that traded the good stuff

... Enchanted Items and Luxury Goods.

"Hey! Stop delaying, Gary! You're wasting our time!"

He was woken by the words of his comrades, causing him to fumble the stack he held in his hands.

They accidentally spilled on the table, revealing the entirety of his hand to the six other men who sat with him.

For a moment, there was silence in the room.

Then...

"Hahahahaha!!!"

"Look what lil ol' Gary's got!"

"Are you serious right now? Pfft!"

"You should have just called it quits instead of wasting our time!"

Gary was the youngest member in the group—both in age and experience.

He just recently joined the group, and due to his lanky appearance, he was often picked on by his seniors.

Even now, they wouldn't let him catch a break.

However, rather than feel sad about it like always, Gary's internal self made a broad grin.

'Hehehe! Look at these fools! They don't realize it yet, but I'm going to be sooo rich!'

He was going to pay the Boss what he owed, and then leave their ranks to live a better life in his village.

A man with a single Gold Coin was praised in his village.

Gary couldn't imagine what would happen if he went home with stacks of them.

He would live like a king—unlike these miserable idiots.

'... It's only a matter of time.'

Gary called it quits at that point and told everyone that he was off to go take a piss.

"I win, baby!" He heard a voice say as he left their group and went out back to pee in a corner.

The outside world wasn't much different from the worn-down place Gary came out of. There were a bunch of uncompleted buildings and desolate areas where only the lowest of scums could dwell.

The people here were criminals—not merely illegal merchants and customers.

They were the savages that couldn't be contained by the surface world.

As Gary pulled down his boxer shorts to begin his release in a secluded corner, he didn't even bother to look around him.

No one cared about these sorts of things in the Black Market Slums.

This was truly where darkness shone.

As Gary let out his liquid content from his average-sized 'equipment', he could sniff the smell of ammonia that wafted through the air.

Some of it was his, but a majority of the smell had been there long before he came to relieve himself.

To distract himself from the nauseating smell, Gary grabbed the pouch that contained his grand prize and looked inside it.

The ring within was shining so bright that it nearly blinded him. It warbled with such intensity, and the vibration shook his palm slightly.

'What's... what's happening this time?'

\*

## Chapter 129 Hideout Of Lowlives [Pt 2]

[Privilege Readers might be confused, because you've all read this chapter as an extension of the previous chapter.

Sorry for the mixup, but I accidentally skipped a chapter in the earlier chapters, so by the time I was done adding it and editing it, things ended up like this. So please, go read the chapter called 'The Departure' right before 'Finding The Lost Item' so you can get the chapter that you missed.

I'm sorry for the mixup!]

"AHHHHHHHHH!"

He suddenly began to hear noises coming from within the hideout.

'Hm...?'

More noises greeted his ears, though they were very muffled since Gary was outside.

"Are they fighting again?" He grumbled. "Those idiots... they'll wake up the Leader!"

Gary quickly finished his activity, inserting his stick inside his boxer shorts, ignoring the remnant liquid that dropped down his dirty underwear.

This wasn't the first time he had rushed the progress anyway, so he wasn't too concerned.

He closed the pouch and tied it back around his Wesson, covering everything with his boxer shorts.

Right as he was done, he heard another scream echo within the place.

It was a blood-curdling one—not resembling one borne out of a fight among comrades.

Gary felt his heart skip a beat, but this fear was swiftly overruled by the fear of what their Leader would do to everyone if he was woken up by their screaming.

Even if Gary wasn't among, he knew the Leader's punishment was one he could not escape.

Spurred by this, he rushed inside the building, neatly ripping the door from its hinges, as he yelled—like the idiot that he was—at his noisemaking comrades.

"You guys, STOP! You'll WAKE the LEADER!"

As Gary rushed in, shutting his eyes to make this declaration, he realized something.

... There was no noise—at least, not anymore.

'E-eh...?'

Instead, a certain smell caused him to slowly open his eyes as it overwhelmed his senses with a familiar sensation.

'W-what is... this...?'

Blood and gore greeted his sight, as he noticed the severed parts of his comrades on the ground.

Warm blood flowed to the bottom of Gary's feet, as if welcoming him to join in the puddle.

"N-no..."

Gary could spot tons of internal organs—intestines, brain matter, and a bunch of other things—scattered all around the area.

He saw eyeballs outside their sockets, severed heads that rolled around, and chunks of human meat dipped in the stew that was their own blood.

It was all... so disgusting!

Repulsive!

"Bluerghh!" Before Gary realized it, he collapsed to his knees and vomited.

The sour stench of his undigested contents, mixed in with the gross smell of the blood around him, combined to form something new.

... Something worse.

Gary felt like vomiting once again, but he was stopped by a voice.

"Do that again, and you'll suffer even more before dying."

The moment Gary heard this, he automatically swallowed his second round.

Even though he was still very nauseated and downright disgusted by the sight of his earlier vomit sinking into the blood before him, he instinctively knew that he couldn't throw-up.

Doing so would mean certain doom.

'W-why...?'

Gary slowly raised his head as he spotted three figures before him.

One was a man who appeared like a gentleman—the kind of handsome noble that any pauper like him would want to punch in the face.

Then, there was a young lady who had an unsheathed blade brandished in her hand.

She looked so cute that it seemed like she would never hurt a fly, but the murderous gleam in her eyes as she looked at him, and the blood splattered on her pretty face told him she wasn't as innocent as she seemed.

In fact, the one that sliced off his comrades into these disgusting bits and pieces was most likely her.

"Hey, you..." The same deep voice from just earlier echoed in the still room.

This was the last person—the man shrouded in a dark cloak whose back was rested on the walls as he stood in a corner.

He had a black mask on, so his face was concealed in mystery.

His eyes glowed crimson, though, and it was the kind that told Gary that instant death awaited him if he made even the slightest blunder.

Gary had no idea what these incredibly powerful people wanted from him and his comrades, but he knew they meant business.

If he didn't act quickly, he would have to join his now-dead companions in the deep pits of the underworld.

"... Where is she?"

The moment he heard a question from the man of darkness, Gary's body perked up as he remained kneeling.

His desperate, but confused face greeted the obsidian mask with helplessness.

"I... I don't understand..."

"Don't make me ask again..." The man's crimson eyes shone brighter as he stared at Gary.

"The girl with the ring. Where is she...?"

The moment Gary heard this, his eyes widened in utter fear and downright shock.

'T-the ring? What ring? The one with me?!'

Was that why these three were here? Because of how valuable the ring was? They probably came to retrieve it due to its high value.

Gary felt a mix of guilt and pride.

'I-I knew it was valuable! It's definitely in the Platinum Rank! I... I didn't know they would come to kill all of us for it!'

Right there and then, Gary thought of the most brilliant plan.

'I-I'll just give it back to them! Yes... that should solve everything!'

He swiftly squirmed in his pathetic state, digging his hand into his boxer shorts to bring out the pouch.

~VWUSH!~

It appeared like a flashing ray of light, and it was much faster than Gary could process.

At least, not until it was too late.

"GAHHHHH!!" His screams echoed in the air as he could no longer feel his hand.

The thing was now on the bloodied floor, separate from the rest of his body.

"G-guarhhhh!"

Sweat formed on Gary's face as he saw smoke rise from his severed hand, and he could feel immense heat seared into his gaping arm.

It was at this moment that Gary recollected what happened:

A beam of crimson light had come from the eyes of the masked one, swiftly burning off the connection that held his arm and hand together.

Thanks to the immense heat, Gary wasn't bleeding. However, he had lost an entire hand

... Forever!

"Uarrghhhhhhh!!!"

\*

## Chapter 130 The Taste Of Despair

Gary's eyes were seeing red.

His vision was clouded by a blurry, nauseating sight of danger and death.

He had killed his fair share of people, and this was by no means the first time he had encountered gore—or pain.

But, nothing he had ever experienced compared to this moment.

Seeing his own comrades—the one he was playing games with just moments earlier—now nothing more than lifeless chunks of meat, caused his stomach to churn and his throat to burn.

If not for the searing pain in his arm, and the certainty of death that weighed heavily on him, Gary was certain that he would have vomited once again.

"G-guahhh... ahhh... arghhh..." As tears and drool slipped down his face, mucus flowed from his nose and he shivered.

He looked like a pathetic sniveling rat that could only tremble in the face of pure danger.

"Ahh... I suppose I was being a bit impatient. For a moment there, I thought you were reaching for a weapon."

The way the masked one spoke so casually, despite Gary just losing an arm, made a flickering flame of rage burn within the pathetic man.

However...

"It seems you know nothing. You should be eliminated as well."

... That rage soon vanished the moment execution drew near.

"I-I know where she is! Please! Please don't kill me!"

As Gary begged desperately, he could see the red glow of the masked one's eyes dim a little.

The other two present in the room weren't making any moves either.

It seemed the one shrouded in darkness was their real leader—the Boss of the group.

"I-I wasn't reaching out for a weapon. I wanted to show you something..."

"Show me something? Inside your boxer shorts...?"

"A-ahh..." Gary felt like he was being labeled a pervert by the group.

Even the state of the girl told him she was thinking something along the lines of 'What a pathetic lech!'

But that wasn't it at all!

'I wanted to surrender and give you the ring. But now... now it seems there's another way.'

These people were after the girl, and not the ring. He had made a miscalculation on his part.

'I was confused then, but now... yes... now I know what to do!'

It was possible to show them the girl and he would keep the ring.

Sure, he had lost his right hand, but he still had his left one.

Besides, now that he was certain of the value of the ring, Gary was sure he could get his hand fixed with Magic and still have tons of change to spare.

'I just need to find a way around thi—'

"This is pointless. Use the tracker again, Aldred."

"Understood."

Before Gary could say a single word in order to initiate the deal, he felt a vibrating sensation in his crotch, and a warm feeling rose from the pouch.

It felt hot underneath his soiled boxers, and it wasn't just due to the remnants of pee that stained it.

It was...

"H-hold on... the tracker is detecting the ring... on him!"

"Something is glowing under his boxer shorts."

"...."

As the distinguished gentleman looked at some sort of screen in front of him, looking shocked, the pink-haired girl pointed at his soiled boxers, and the dark masked man said nothing, Gary felt something building up.

It was... sheet bloodlust!

~VWUUUUU!!~

The entire area was shrouded in such pressure that Gary felt he would die just from sensing the killing intent.

He felt like passing out a thousand times over, but he wasn't allowed to.

The joint bloodlust from all three who watched him made his heart nearly give out, and Gary was teetering between the edge of life and death

Then—

"You imbecile! You actually kept our luxury item close to your wretched dick?!"

No one could have expected the gentleman to utter such crude words, but he did.

"Shall I dispose of this fool, Master Aldred?"

The pink-haired cutie was already brandishing her blade, ready to turn Gary into a kebab.

Gary felt his body shake violently, he knew he was screwed just from the enraged faces they were making.

"No. Hold on... we can't act on our own." The man who had earlier been addressed as Aldred looked in the direction of the silent masked man.

"We're not the owner of the Item, so it's not in our place to mete out judgment."

It was clear that Aldred was immensely furious, but he deferred to the masked one.

—Another proof of who was in charge here.

"How would you like to handle this matter, Sir Ralyks?"

As the question echoed in the air, the man resting on the wall finally left his position.

"Haaa..."

A heavy exhalation, almost akin to a frustrated sigh, escaped his lips—invisible due to the mask he wore.

The one called Sir Ralyks took one step forward, and then two... on and on.

With each step, Gary felt like he had already reached the end of his life, yet he found himself still maintaining his mortal coil.

"Why ask me?" His question sounded strange, nearly sarcastic.

"That ring doesn't belong to me either..."

Despite speaking in such a cool tone, his crimson eyes had never been brighter.

"... But, I think I'll take it from here."

The two—pink-hair and Aldred—nodded politely and took a few steps back.

Now, only Ralyks stood at the forefront.

"Don't expect a quick death." His crimson eyes focused heavily on Gary as he gulped fervently.

This... this really was the end!

'I-I'm sorry! I won't do it again! I promise... I promise I'll be better!'

Unfortunately, his trembling lips were too impotent to let out the words that echoed loudly in his mind.

The end was here...

"Hold it right there!"

... Or so one would think.

~BOOOOOM!~

A sudden explosion shattered the wooden ground that separated the bringer of death and the helpless Gary.

Shards of blood-stained wood flew in many directions, with splinters and even a few large chunks charging towards Ralyks.

However, none touched him by some miracle. novel

"A-ahh...?!" Thanks to the commotion, Gary, who could finally move his body, turned his head back and saw the one who intervened.

His bulging eyes had never been so happy to see the man in his entire life.

'L-Leader Gus!'