

Extras 141

Chapter 141 The Main Event [Pt 1]

"I suppose it's time for the main event."

Evals grinned as he threw aside his coat, letting it land in some odd corner in the room.

He took off his suit as well, leaving him with only a waistcoat and his brilliant white shirt, along with his incredibly knitted tie.

His black trousers and shiny shoes gave him an air of elegance, and as his long black hair danced on his shoulders, his lips widened in even more amusement.

"Get ready, masked one. None of your tricks will work on me."

Even though Evals Redarts wasn't a particularly skilled Mage or Warrior, he had his own way of fighting.

And that was with his Exclusive Skill—a Skill he was born with since birth.

'[Item Equip]!'

Using this A-Tier Skill, one that only he possessed, he could equip any Item in his possession.

Magic Items usually had requirements for use, and while many Items sold in the mainstream markets or even the general stores within the Black Market, we're mostly for anyone, there existed certain Items that were exclusive to certain groups or individuals.

For example, the [Eye Of Truth] that was embedded in his left eye, covered by an eyepatch.

It had the ability to see through all illusions and ruses, but only those who had a Magic Skill could use it.

He didn't have a single Magic Skill, yet he was able to utilize it perfectly—to its full capabilities too.

Then, what about the rest of the Items he was currently armed with?

From top to bottom, everything he wore was a Magic Item.

His earrings, his eyepatch, his tie, his shirt, his waistcoat, his trousers, his shoes... heck, even his underwear!

He also had rings on his fingers—five in total. A bracelet also sat on his right hand, and he had a necklace wrapped around his neck.

In essence, he was armed to the teeth!

"Hahaha! You really took my entourage for a ride, didn't you? You defeated them within a minute..."

Evals had never seen anyone do that to those two so quickly.

Sure, if it was the Grand Mage of the Kingdom, or the Head Warrior, he would agree that they were more than strong and fast enough.

But this guy was a nobody.

How was he able to keep up with Azul's speed, or get past Fey's Magic?

'So far, I've noticed a couple Skills that he has...'

Evals could see that the masked man had some sort of transmutation ability, an illusion Skill, a sort of attraction Skill, and a Skill that augmented his physical ability,

'He can also fly, so that makes it five Skills. What a monster...'

Evals knew that having five Skills was already too much for a normal human to have.

Peak individuals, like the strongest in the United Human Alliance, had five Skills.

'And yet he has those two. Is he on the same level as them...?'

Evals knew he was stretching things too far, but he couldn't help but imagine.

'If that's the case, then...'

"Hey, I have an offer. Why don't you join me and serve as my subordinate?"

Evals smiled as he said this, exuding nothing but sheer confidence.

Having someone strong—especially as strong as this masked man—as a subordinate was expensive.

That was because they were highly valued in a business that required a show of power, and being constantly on the dominant side.

Not many, no matter how daring they were, would even try to hire someone with five Skills.

However, Evals was different.

'No matter what price he calls, I'm willing to pay him.'

The Slave Trade business was booming, even if it was hidden under the dark.

He had a lot of connections, and his prospects were as high as ever. It didn't matter what kind of price was called, he was ready to pay.

"Why are you silent? Contemplating my offer? Trying to think of a price? Don't worry! Take your time—!"

"That eye behind your eyepatch... is that how you are able to select high-quality Slaves for yourself? The Eye Of Truth, huh...?"

The moment Evals heard this, he recoiled in shock.

'H-how does he know about it?!'

His Eyepatch Of Hiddenness ensured no one could see through its surface or detect the powerful object in his eyes.

It also ensured his overall Mana Level remained hidden, causing him to appear like an ordinary guy.

He often used this tactic to fool his targets and cause them to power their guard.

It was how he tricked Billy too.

'Yet he saw through all that?!'

"You look surprised. That means you don't know about [Absolute Appraisal]. Hmm... does that mean you don't know the details of the Skills that those you capture possess?"

'H-how is he deciphering all of these things? Did he just say [Absolute Appraisal]?'

Evals had never heard of that Skill or Item before, so he was confused.

'Is that how he knows all of what he's saying?'

"I see now. You can only tell how strong someone is, or maybe their potential. You can also see through any ruse or hidden things with the Eye. A useful ability, but... I guess it's not too accurate or specific."

The way the masked man analyzed Evals and his Item felt degrading.

It got on the Slave Trader's nerves.

"Oi! It seems you're forgetting who you're talking to. Just accept the offer and things don't have to get out of hand."

"..."

For the next few seconds, there was silence.

Evals Redart watched as the masked man said nothing. He just stood there, almost like a statue.

Then—

"Kukuku... kekekekeke... kuhahahahaha!!!"

—A burst of laughter echoed from him.

His face was utterly covered by his mask, but the laughter was enough to display the emotions of the man.

It wasn't a laughter of joy or relief.

No... Evals had made laughs like this one before, so he understood what it meant.

This was a laughter of amusement.

'He's amused? What's so funny?'

"Do you think I care about who you are? If I did, do you think I would have come here to take away all your slaves?"

In response to this, Evals chuckled and slapped his forehead nearly dramatically.

"I suppose you're right. It was stupid to think of sparing your life."

There are types of men that exist—the reasonable and unreasonable kind.

"It is said that anyone can be bought; you just need to know the price. But this only applies to the reasonable men..."

Evals straightened himself as he prepared for combat.

"The unreasonable ones, like yourself, are nothing but beasts that need to be put in its place and slaughtered."

Evals no longer considered it to be a waste to get rid of the man before him, even despite his strength.

'It would be more disadvantageous for me if I took him in...'

No one would want a bloodthirsty monster guarding them, no matter how powerful the thing was.

Instead, strong monsters were hunted down.

Life in H'Trae was as simple as that.

"It's time for you to die now." Evals pulled up his sleeve and adjusted his tie.

It was too late for any other outcome now, but...

"I'll make you wish you had accepted my offer."

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Chapter 142 The Main Event [Pt 2]

There was a truth that no one but Evals knew.

His two most powerful subordinates—Fey and Azul—were incredibly powerful and experienced.

However, compared to him... they were nothing.

Evals had always made it a personal principle of his to be stronger than his subordinates—by all means necessary!

The only reason behind his entourage was to give him an air of authority, and also so he didn't always have to deal with the violence himself.

That was why, even though the two of them were so easily defeated by the masked man, he didn't so much as flinch.

He could see everything, and he knew from what he saw... that he was stronger!

'And now, it's time to put this fool in his place.'

~WHOOOSH!~

Evals swiftly teleported right in front of the masked entity, certain that he would surprise him by utilizing such Magic.

'Hahaha! Fazed yet?!'

Spatial Magic was very rare. Not too many people could use it, and even Evals had never encountered anyone who could utilize such incredibly complex and powerful Magic.

The reason he could was simply because of one of his Rings—an Item he could equip because of his Exclusive Skill.

'Now then...!' Another ring of his shone brightly, and Evals' hand turned purplish-black.

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He lunged his hand towards the masked figure, knowing that he was still recoiling from his sudden appearance.

'My shirt and trousers give me enhanced physical abilities, and my shoes give me additional speed. With all these items influencing his abilities, he was even stronger and faster than the Warrior Azul. And now, with his hand currently influenced by the 'Ring Of Corruption', he would be able to poison his masked enemy with a quick-acting poison that would paralyze him.

'And after that...!' Evals Redart grinned like a wild beast.

'... You'll be mine!'

~WHOOOSH!~

An invisible wall suddenly stopped Evals from advancing further.

'W-what?!'

As if that wasn't enough, this invisible barrier seemed to be pushing Evals away—like a push that he could not resist despite how he tried to advance forward.

"Nngh!"

In the end, he found himself thrust away by the attack he could not see, forced a couple of meters back.

... Right to where he started from.

'What did he just do? Is this also part of that PULL ability that he has?'

As Azul struggled to understand what just happened, he heard a voice that sent jitters down his spine.

"Do you have any other Skill to show me? Just using those few won't cut it."

The masked man's voice felt deep and dark; immensely threatening, even for Evals Redart.

'This guy...!'

He was pissed off now.

'I wanted to paralyze him and take my time torturing him, but I guess it's going to be better to just end this as fast as I can.'

Evals prepared to teleport once again—this time, right behind his foe.

He also prepared his necklace—which would generate a protective field around him. With it, he could resist whatever push and pull effect his enemy would throw at him.

He also activated the ability in his bracelet, allowing himself to be shrouded in dense Mana.

His three other rings gleamed as they granted him Lightning, Wind, and Fire affinities.

With these, as well as all the enhancements he had received earlier, Evals Redarts felt invincible.

He was at his peak right now, and no one could stop him.

'Let's see how he handles the combined might of all my Items!'

As he grinned widely, preparing to teleport and then throw the most powerful blow that would blast his foe into smithereens, he heard a comment that caused his body to tremble slightly.

"You finally showed me everything. I guess I should end this now."

~WHOOSH!~

In a flash, before Evals Redart could even process a fraction of what was said, the enemy appeared right in front of him.

"H-huh?!"

It was the same short-range Teleportation that he had just used.

How... how did his adversary use it?!

'C-could it be—?!' Evals' bloodshot eyes widened as he stared at the masked figure of death.

'... Has he always had that Skill?'

If that was the case, then Evals had been miscalculating all this time.

This man before him didn't just have five Skills. He had six!

'No. If I count that Appraisal thing he said before, and how he knows so many things about me, then...'

It was probably seven—perhaps even more.

Evals didn't have a wealth of imagination to possibly comprehend just how vast his opponent's skillset was.

He only knew one thing.

"W-wai—!"

He was screwed.

~BOOOOOOM!~

A surge of energy blew off all the defenses and Mana Armor that Evals had activated.

In that instant, his defenses were left bare.

"Someone like you... who would do this to innocent ones... you don't deserve to live."

As Evals heard this, he felt some kind of liquid dripping down his pants.

His legs felt hot as they trembled as he gazed upon the crimson eyes of the masked man.

"P-please s-spare my—!"

~BOOOM!~

A sudden punch landed on his stomach, causing the waistcoat and shirt he wore to rip to shreds.

Just like that, layers of his defenses were torn apart.

Evals had gotten most of his Items—both for his subordinate and for himself—from the KariBlanc Group, so he was certain of their quality.

For this single man to do this to such high-value products, it just went to show how immense his power was.

This masked fellow wasn't a man! Evals was certain of it now, and all of his consciousness screamed it out as he opened his trembling lips.

"Y-you're a MONSTER!"

~BOOOOOM!~

Yet another punch landed, but this time on Evals Redart's face.

The impact caused his brain to vibrate within his skull as his body was sent flying to the wall within the room.

He just the wall and it cracked, nearly shattering apart.

"Guark!" Evals puked blood out of his mouth as he felt his body growing hot with pain,

He collapsed to the ground, barely able to stand as he coughed out more red fluids from his disfigured mouth.

Some of his teeth fell out, and his pummeled face appeared pathetic as he struggled to breathe.

His vision was growing blurry, and he felt like passing out. However, Evals knew that if he did such a thing, it would be game over.

And so, now that he was out of cards, he did the only reasonable thing that the leader of an elite and powerful organization would do.

"GUARDS! EVERYONE! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FORRR?!"

His thunderous voice echoed within the room, though to someone listening, it sounded like the desperate ramblings of a scared man.

"ARE YOU ALL DEAF?! ARE YOU NOT LISTENING?! COME IN HERE AND PROTECT ME! DESTROY THIS MAAAN!"

No one came to his aid, though.

The desperate man's face contorted in surprise and confusion.

Why wasn't anyone answering? There was no way they couldn't have heard all the noise and commotion, and his plea for help.

So why...?

"W-WHY AREN'T YOU—?!"

"They can't hear you, Evals Redart." The masked man said this, and then took a step forward.

"None of them can."

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Chapter 143 Leaving The Warehouse

"N-none of them... can...?"

It didn't take a genius to understand what those words meant.

Even for Evals, who was currently wallowing in confusion and pain, the words made it painfully clear what the masked man did.

"Y-you killed them...!!" His eyes nearly popped out of their suckers as his smushed face trembled in terror.

He feared he would be next.

"What? No! I just prevented all the sound we made from escaping. They can't hear anything... literally."

The way the masked man spoke about it felt like he was joking.

Evals didn't know what to believe anymore.

"You deserve death, but that would be a waste. You'll be way more useful alive." The masked man continued as he advanced further.

Evals Redart didn't let the distance fool him, though. He knew the man could just appear in front of him anytime he wished.

In essence, the slave trader was trapped.

"You run a whole network of trade in the Slavery Business. I'm sure you're well-connected to the other slave-traders in the United Human Alliance."

The masked man wasn't wrong.

Evals knew the other two who ran an equally successful empire as him.

None of them were friends, and in most instances, they were competitors.

However, they shared a mutual banner—the illegal trade of living humans as if they were nothing but livestock.

"All of that information will be useful to the Royal Council. I'm sure they'll use it to prevent more tragedies like this from happening ."

The moment Evals heard this, his eyes widened more than ever before,

"Y-you... you report to the Royal Council?! Is that why you're here?! To stop me on their behalf? Y-you... you are—!"

"[Sleep]." The moment the masked man said this, Evals felt a wave of drownings hit him.

However, the feeling didn't last long thanks to the Resistance his Enchanted Earrings provided him with.

"Oh? You resisted that, huh? I guess we'll have to do this the old fashioned way."

The masked man vanished from his position and appeared behind Evals before the latter could even complete his words.

'The Royal Council? Those corrupt bastards?' Evals' thoughts echoed as he gritted his teeth in sheer frustration.

He remembered how many times his two other competitors bragged about how they were being backed by four members of the Royal Council.

Despite him not going down that route and building his empire from scratch, he still had to pay his dues to the Royal Council.

Every member of the Black Market had to do so!

This information was only privy to those at the top—like the Obsidian Council—but even the helm of the Black Market answered to the four anonymous members of the Royal Council.

THEY were the ones who ruled the underworld.

'The only reason the Slave Trade has been able to flourish this far is because of them!'

And now, he was being taken to that very same Royal Council?

"Y-you bastard! They're—!"

Before Evals could say anything more, he felt a hard impact on his head.

Everything went black, and the sensation instantly sent him to the same place as his two subordinates.

... The realm of the unconscious.

"I guess that settles it." Rey murmured as he looked at the unconscious body of Evals Redart.

It was a relatively easy and quick fight for Rey, but he still couldn't forget the experience.

Why?

"Looks like I got a bunch of new Skills thanks to him."

Rey was grinning widely as he stared at Evals.

'The teleportation one is particularly useful. Eye Of Truth is nice, but I already have [Absolute Appraisal], so what's the point?'

There were a bunch of other Skills too, and Rey found himself recoiling in glee.

'I guess this fight wasn't for nothing, after all.'

He had used [Absolute Appraisal] on Redart, which was how he got to know of his [Item Equip] Skill, and the current Items he had equipped.

Rey had waited for him to display all the abilities so he could use [Doppel] on them.

Thankfully, the Slave Trader didn't disappoint.

Since he was done with Evals, it was time for him to finish the job once and for all.

'And, to make sure this entire place is out of the reach of people like Aldred, I better destroy everything...'

Rey took one final glance at the two other unconscious people in the room, and then Sylvia's hanging corpse.

He knew within himself that the people he had shown mercy to were absolute monsters.

'How different are they from the Hobgoblins who keep DarkWolves as livestock?'

Despite thinking this, Rey couldn't see humans as monsters to kill. He felt immensely frustrated by it, but in a way... he was relieved.

'I'm not too far gone.'

After interacting so much with the Black Market and the criminal underworld of H'Trae, Rey had been questioning his own morality.

The way he constantly acted for his benefit, and how he constantly kept secrets and involved himself in illegal activities...

It was wrong.

He knew that fully well, yet he indulged in the act repeatedly.

However, on this very day he finally understood the difference between himself and the true denizens of this dark world.

He didn't compare to them in the slightest.

There were lines he didn't—couldn't—cross, and there were acts he would never indulge in.

And that brought Rey relief.

'At least, I know I'm not a monster too...'

And he never wanted to be.

"[Black Hole]"

Rey sent out a small spatial orb of darkness towards the compound that stood before him.

What happened next did not come as a surprise to him.

~VWUUUUUUMMM!!~

The darkness expanded, swallowing everything in its path in order to feed its endless hunger

In no time, it grew large enough to consume the entire Warehouse building, eating away the compound as well as the surrounding land.

It dug itself into the earth and consumed even the underground passage until there was nothing left.

After it was done eating everything, still expecting more, Rey canceled the Skill.

'It'll keep eating away my Mana and keep expanding if I don't stop it...'

 His thoughts trailed.

The purpose of the [Black Hole] was done, though.

Everything about the Warehouse was now gone—granted as an offering to the void.

'Looks like I'm done here.'

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Chapter 144 Reuniting With Aldred

[Skill Categories] novel

~ Attack Category: 30

~ Defense Category: 13

~ Buff Category: 12

~ Miscellaneous: 12

[New Skills: Please Select Their Categories]

~None~

[Total Skills: 67]

"Looks like I have 67 Skills now..." Rey mumbled to himself as he looked at the System Window in front of him.

While waiting for the Black Hole to complete its task, Rey had gone ahead to place his new Skills in their respective categories and even removed the unnecessary ones that he accidentally used [Doppel] to copy.

Things like [Lightning Field] or [Lightning Magic] and [Wind Magic] were unnecessary to him.

He had better Skills, or even similar Skills that performed the same functions.

There was no need to have them take up space in his arsenal.

'Also...'

Rey looked around him and found all the slaves he rescued, as well as all the people he captured, floating in the air—all surrounded by winds.

'... This stuff really drains my Mana.'

Using [Black Hole] and [Absolute Wind Magic] simultaneously, while also using [Absolute Appraisal] a few times had drained his Mana.

Sure, he had a Mana Recovery Skill, but it was a B-Tier Skill, and the rate at which it restored his Mana wasn't fast enough to keep up with the effects of his [Absolute Wind Magic] alone.

'Did I bite off more than I can chew? I don't think I'd be able to get to my destination like this...'

Rey planned on taking all the criminals and victims to the doorstep of the Royal Estate. But, it was a considerable journey there, and his current reserves weren't looking so good.

'I overdid it, didn't I?' As he sighed to himself, he noticed two presences nearing him.

'Oh? Those are—!'

In a flash, both Aldred and Yuri appeared before Rey with wide smiles on their faces.

"Welcome back, Sir Ralyks!"

"Welcome back, Sir!"

As the two said these words, practically at the same time, Rey raised an eyebrow in surprise.

"I thought you guys left already. You decided to stick around?"

"Well... something like that." Aldred made a slight laugh as he itched his hair a little.

Rey narrowed his eyes as he stared at the two.

'Were they spying on me? I guess they really wanted to see my power.'

At the very least, the fact that he had nearly two hundred people floating in the air, and he just destroyed the entire Warehouse with a black hole had to be enough spectacle for them.

'Hopefully it's enough to convince them not to mess with me.' Rey sighed to himself.

"Where's the other guy? I thought you wanted to torture him or something..."

"I already have. I did it all while you were inside, and now he's nothing but mincemeat." Aldred's calm smile as he just talked about brutally murdering someone unnerved Rey.

Once again, he felt disgust well up from his depths.

Fortunately, after all he had experienced for the day, he had developed something of a resistance to these things.

"That's fine then." He managed to speak without retching.

Aldred seemed to beam as he said this.

"But Sir Ralyks, I noticed you don't kill. Is there any particular reason why? You even took all those prisoners."

The one who spoke was Yuri, and she asked the question in the most excitedly innocent manner possible.

It almost made Rey forget what kind of a cold-blooded killer she was.

Fortunately, her charms could not erase his memory.

"I have my uses for them. The slaves too."

"Ohh! So you're taking them for yourself!" Yuri beamed with a brighter smile.

'I never said that!' Rey wanted to scream, but he assumed it was probably best to leave the details to her imagination.

"I know it's no problem for you, but wouldn't it be a tad bit inconvenient to carry all of them like this?"

The moment Aldred said this, Rey felt a tingle down his spine.

It really was inconvenient for him!

More than a tad bit!

"En. What do you suggest?" Rey maintained his cool facade and asked.

"We could help you transport them to whatever location you desire. You can trust us with the merchandise."

Rey nearly recoiled when he heard this, but he kept his cool.

So far, the KariBlanc group had been very helpful to him, and he didn't think they would be incompetent in their duties either.

He was just slightly surprised by their willingness—or Aldred's in particular—to help.

"I'm sure you've had some business with the Evals Redart. He's a customer, isn't he?" Rey narrowed his eyes as he asked.

"Yes. Or should I say he was?"

"I'm sure you also purchased some merchandise from him as well."

"That is correct. Most of our factory workers come from the delivery he makes for us."

The fact that Aldred could so shamelessly spout words like these to Rey told him that the man thought of him as a fellow denizen of the criminal world.

He didn't really know how to feel about that.

'At the very least, they don't think of me as a softie. That's good...'

Despite all this, Rey was already considering leaving this illegal kind of life alone once he returned to the surface and the entire issue blew over.

'I can't keep this up...'

 He nearly sighed.

"Why are you helping me, then? I just eliminated someone you did good business with."

In response to his question, Aldred merely smiled and shrugged.

"It is what it is. I always make sure to side with the stronger side. You were simply stronger and took him down. So, I choose to side with you."

'I see...'

 Rey had already figured this much out.

As long as the KariBlanc Group considered him useful and mutually beneficial—more so than the other side—they would support him.

He knew he wouldn't have to rely on them for too long, but Rey couldn't help but feel a drive within him.

Something told him to act now.

'This seems to be the perfect time anyway. I might as well utilize the opportunity...'

"I understand." Rey spoke. "I'll leave their delivery to you, then."

Rey caused most of the people he carried to descend, their bodies slowly touching the ground.

Only three remained in the air.

Alicia. Billy. Esme.

"I'll personally take care of these ones." Rey answered the unspoken question that was written on Aldred's face.

"Noted. By the way, if I may ask..."

Aldred glanced in the direction of the girl that floated closest to Rey.

"... Were you able to find the girl you were looking for?"

"Yes. As you can see..." Rey raised his hand towards the girl who was covered in tatters.

Her pitch black hair hid a portion of her face, and her dirty body marred her beauty. However, locked in her finger was the White Amber ring.

"I-I see. That makes me glad, then." Aldred looked up and saw two others floating in the air.

They were shrouded in cloaks and a mask, causing most of their bodies to be hidden. They also floated on a higher level in the air.

"People I have a special interest in. I'll be seeing to them personally."

"Understood. Forgive me for asking so many questions."

"As long as you know."

Once Rey concluded this section of the conversation, he made a small smile and exhaled deeply.

'Aldred, you sly bastard. It's a good thing I took my precautions.'

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Chapter 145 Making Arrangements

'It's a good thing I took precautions earlier...'

Rey sent his gaze to the unconscious Esme, focusing on the ring that graced her finger.

'I'm sorry, Alicia. But this is to keep you safe...'

It was better for Aldred to suspect Esme as being close to him and not Alicia. That way, he could protect her and hide her identity.

'By using the ring, he'll believe she's the one I went through all this trouble for.'

However, despite all the factors, Aldred was apparently still not convinced.

At least, that was what Rey observed.

'Why else would he be concerned about Billy and Alicia that are above? He probably thinks I'm lying...'

Thankfully, Aldred didn't have any proof that it was the case.

'Still, I better be careful.' Rey thought to himself.

At the very least, he comforted himself with the fact that all of this would be over soon enough.
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He just had to complete his activities here for the day.

'It's getting late already. I better wrap things up.'

"Where do you intend on transporting these slaves to, by the way?"

Once he heard the question, Rey already had the answer to give.

"The Royal Estate."

Once Rey said this, Aldred and Yuri expressed instant shock.

"Drop them in front of the gates. Once the guards see them, they'll know what to do from there."

Their eyes widened even more—especially Aldred's.

He seemed truly shocked.

'I know they'll be surprised, but it's simple. I'll make it seem like I have connections in the Royal Estate. This will boost my rep a bit.'

According to Rey's plan, the guards were his connections. He would pretend as if they were his agents, and that they would help him preserve the 'merchandise' in a secure location.

'I don't have any other foothold in town. And if they're transporting so many people, it's bound to draw attention. This is the best arrangement.'

Besides, his initial plan was to leave the slaves to the Royal Estate so they could handle them.

'This way I solve all my problems without being directly involved.'

That was his rationale.

"I-I see! So it's like that! I never imagined you also... ah... I shouldn't have expected any less..."

Rey didn't know what Aldred was thinking in his head, but he knew he wouldn't have to put up with the acts that came with his current image for much longer.

As such, he gave them vague and half-assed words to imply that the guards were on his payroll... or something like that.

Aldred and Yuri nodded attentively, spouting words like—

"We understand perfectly."

And

"Everything will be done as you wish."

Rey found their behavior to be a little overenthusiastic, but at this point he was too tired and drained to venture into it any further.

'If they fail on their end, I'll just come for them with the force of the Royal Council.'

Reg doubted that they would turn against him, though.

"I have some business in your Store, by the way. I would like to purchase a considerable amount of Items." Rey swiftly changed the subject.

This caused Aldred's smile to widen even more, almost as if it would rip open his face.

The man must have been glad that his gift from the previous day had convinced Rey—or rather Ralyks—to patronize KariBlanc.

But that wasn't the case at all.

'I don't plan on coming back here for a very long time! It's best I take as much as I can now...'

That was all there was to his desire to purchase.

Since he also had a discount, he figured KariBlanc was the best place to do business.

"Let us leave." Rey began to walk away, leaving an awestruck Aldred behind him.

"G-give me a moment to call our agents to pick up the goods!"

Aldred gestured to Yuri so she would escort Rey by herself, and the cutie rushed to Rey's side in what seemed like a flash.

"Alright. I'll start heading there first. Don't keep me waiting."

As Rey said this, Aldred bowed deeply.

Rey saw this and smiled underneath his mask. He glanced at the young lady by his side and gulped slightly.

He was ready to set up his defenses at any moment.

'Let's just get this over with.'

"Sir Ralyks... you truly are far more amazing than I gave you credit for."

As Aldred stood and watched the man walking with his escort in the distance, he felt his heart race.

'I never expected him to know about the Royal Council's corruption, talkless of being involved in it...'

The way Ralyks spoke about the Royal Palace, it was clear that he was in on their involvement in the Slave Trade.

'Now that he has brought down Evals Redart, does he plan on taking over his business?'

Aldred wasn't so sure. He couldn't see beyond his limits, and he knew the man known as Ralyks was far ahead in terms of everything.

'It was risky, but I tried using the [Eye Of God] on the woman he came to save.'

Her Skill... was also impossible to read!

That meant it was definitely in the Absolute level—the S-Tier.

'So they are both monsters, huh? They perfectly suit each other...!' Aldred found saliva gathering in his throat and swallowed it.

He had no idea how Evals managed to capture such a monster, but Aldred knew it couldn't have been by mere luck or coincidence.

'I wouldn't be surprised if Sir Ralyks orchestrated these events just so he could be justified in taking over Evals Redart's trade.'

Aldred, however, couldn't completely commit to that idea.

After all, someone as powerful as Ralyks did not need any justification to do anything.

His strength was enough justification.

'The other two were out of my range, so I couldn't see their Skills. Did he intentionally place them out of my range? Does that mean he knows about my [Eye Of God]?!'

Knowing the kind of man he was, Aldred wasn't too surprised at the thought.

'Did he want me to see just how strong he and his partner are? What a solid move, sir!'

Aldred knew he could not let his guard down for even a second when confronting a man such as Ralyks.

Not after seeing everything he could do.

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Chapter 146 Mass Purchase

'Master Aldred was right! This man is strong!'

As Yuri walked beside the masked one, known as Ralyks, she couldn't help but slightly tremble in his presence.

She intentionally made sure she was a few inches behind him, just so he didn't misconstrue her walking by his side as disrespectful.

As an escort and guard, being beside a client was the best position to take.

Still, she just didn't feel comfortable walking beside him.

'That [Black Hole] attack was devastating. I've never seen anything like it before!'

Yuri remembered how Aldred was also gawking at the sight, showing just how phenomenal it was.

'That single casual attack destroyed land that spread for over an acre. Just how much more power does he possess?'

Yuri could initially not understand why Ralyks snuck into the Warehouse when he could have just wiped his enemies if he was so strong.

She still didn't understand, but now... it didn't matter.

'Someone on that level... I can't possibly hope to understand how he thinks.'

He was more amazing than any man she had ever seen.

'... Even Master Aldred.'

'Why is she looking at me like that?'

Rey felt uncomfortable as he felt the intense gaze of the girl who was walking beside him.

He had noticed it when Yuri took a few steps back, and that made him even more anxious.

'Is she planning something? I thought I already showed her and Aldred that I am a force to be reckoned with. Did I not do enough?'

Rey's thoughts were in shambles, but he made sure to maintain his guard.

'Now that I'm only carrying these three, the drain on my Mana has reduced tremendously.'

His Mana Recovery Skill was even slowly increasing his Mana. Still, it hadn't reached the point where he could comfortably use his Skills.

'Stat-wise, I'm not sure who's stronger...'

He couldn't afford to use [Absolute Appraisal] since his Mana Level was so low.

'I guess, if push comes to shove, I'll just escape with Alicia. I should be able to do that much at least...'

As he thought of this, he remembered the System's instruction to save Esme, and he also remembered how important Billy was to the grand scheme of things.

'He's an asshole, but he's still an Otherworlder.'

Once Rey settled on these thoughts, he realized that he couldn't really afford to leave anyone behind.

As a result, he could only sigh and hope the worst didn't happen.

'This will soon be over anyway.'

Aldred soon caught up to Rey and Yuri, confirming that the workers of the KariBlanc Group had already begun the transportation.

Once Rey asked about the means of payment, Aldred shrugged it off as unnecessary.

"It's still within the Capital anyway. There's no need for someone like you to bother with that."

Rey wondered if this was yet another way Aldred was using to make him feel indebted to the KariBlanc Group, but he didn't really care.

He wasn't one to say no to a freebie.

Besides, since he intended to let go of the Black Market lifestyle soon, he knew that the man's efforts were in vain.

The trio walked in silence until they reached the KariBlanc Group's main building.

Rey was greeted with the same respect as always, and they didn't waste any time before reaching the room that he was looking forward to.

—The VIP Section of the KariBlanc Store.

"I'll have this. And this. This too."

Rey stood as he instructed the gentleman who was helping him pick whatever item he selected, placing them in his cart.

He had chosen ten items thus far, and he didn't plan on stopping.

'There's no need to hold back now...' Rey's thoughts trailed as he kept choosing.

'I probably won't have this chance again, so it's best to make the best of it now.'

He had a discount with the KariBlanc Group, and he had their goodwill as well.

'I also have thousands of platinum coins, so money isn't the problem.'

Now was the time—more than ever before—to get as many goods as he wanted.

'Considering the fact that I'll be kissing this life goodbye, I might as well enjoy the most of it.'

Of course, Rey knew he couldn't spend all his money here,

He didn't even think it was possible for him to do so. However, he also knew that holding on to his money without properly using it was stupid.

'I realized it when I fought Evals, and even before then...'

Having Enchanted Items was necessary for his growth.

'Right now, I'm very strong. But that's only because of my Skills.'

Skills heavily depended on Stats to function, and while his Stats weren't particularly low, they weren't on the high side either.

At least, according to Rey.

'Most of my Skills require Mana, but I'm too limited in that aspect to freely utilize them.'

Then, there were the Buff Skills, which added or multiplied the current Stats he had.

If he had higher Stats, Rey was sure the effects would stack.

'Even Skills like [Combat Application], [Super Strength], etc. can only do as much as my 'Combat Ability' Stat allows them to.'

In conclusion, he had to get Items to improve his ability.

'And that includes good weapons too...'

After seeing Noah's weapon, Trisha's blade, and heck... even Yuri's sword, he knew he had to get his own.

'Let's not talk about Adonis' Divine Sword...'

Rey knew he had the same Skill that could allow him to have the same weapon, but he also knew how careless it would be to use it.

'The Divine Sword can only be wielded by the Hero. If I use it, it might raise a lot of eyebrows...'

Rey wasn't even sure he could use it since he hadn't utilized the Skill before.

It was too powerful—hence, it drained too much Mana.

As he picked more items, Rey fell into another line of thought.

'I wonder how we were all able to use our Exclusive Skills so easily when we were first summoned.'

Everyone was in Level 1, and their Stats were pretty bad when they were first summoned. They shouldn't have been capable of utilizing their Skills—especially the stronger ones.

'And yet everyone did. How...?'

Rey's [Doppel] Skill didn't cost Mana to use, so he was safe. In fact, his was more like a Passive Skill.

But he knew that others actively required Mana—more Mana than they would have had back then—to use their Skills.

'Alicia summoned something back then, but when we were doing practical training, she said she doesn't have enough Mana to use her [Divine Beast Summon] Skill...'

It made no sense, so there clearly had to be a discrepancy somewhere.

'Does it have something to do with the fact that we were just coming from that Domain of God or something?'

Perhaps they were overflowing with Mana or something when they first arrived.

'Or did we have like a one-time free use on each of our Skills? Maybe that's it...'

Either way, Rey recognized that without such a convenient mechanism, he wouldn't have been able to get all of his classmates' Skills so easily.

'Well, that's all in the past.' Rey smiled as he pointed at yet another Enchanted Item he desired.

'It's about time I focused on the future.'

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Chapter 147 Concluded Business

"That will be all."

As Rey—or one could say Ralyks—stood before the counter, once again taking in the fanciness that surrounded him,

Of course, Aldred was right next to him, so he couldn't properly enjoy the pristine ambiance of the store.

'At least Yuri isn't here...'

The very disturbing girl had gone back to her 'post', and so she wasn't going to be a bother to him anymore.

'Now then... how much have I spent so far?'

Rey stood as all his goods were calculated before his very eyes.

He bought about fifty Enchanted Items, and then hundreds of potions, so he imagined his total expenditure to be in the hundreds—if not thousands—of Platinum Coins.

However, what he heard next shocked him.

"Two hundred and ninety-five Platinum Coins in total...?"

He was downright surprised once the total price was mentioned to him.

'Is this the power of a discount?' Rey wondered to himself as he stared at the smiling lady behind the counter.

He unconsciously glanced at Aldred, and his smiling expression didn't change in the slightest.

It was almost as if this was the most natural conclusion that could be arrived at.

'Well... I mean, if this is how it is, then... who am I to say no?'

Rey accepted the discounted Items with a smile on his face, paying with ease.

He utilized his [Inventory] for the transaction and also for storing all the Items he got.

All of them couldn't simply fit into one box in the storage space he had, so he had to divide them up in different sacks so as to maximize space.

In the end, everything took about five slots of his [Inventory].

"Thank you for your patronage, Sir!" The lady behind the counter smiled as she bowed her head.

"It's nothing."

Rey walked away from the pristine room, stealing one final glance at it as he recognized the fact that he might never see it again,

"Huu..." Right now, he was exhausted in almost every degree.

There was only one thing he wanted at this point.

'Time to go home.'

A hundred Mana Recovery Potions.

A hundred Healing Potions

Fifty-one Enchanted Items.

Rey had purchased a total of two hundred and fifty-one Items from the KariBlanc VIP Store, yet it hardly made a dent in his total savings.

'This is insane... right?'

As Rey walked back to the surface, his surroundings filled with the chattering of the locals, he couldn't help but have these thoughts.

The sun was setting in the distance, and he could spot a bunch of people closing shop already.

He could also see some shops opening up for what was considered the 'Night Market.'

The evening breeze felt refreshing; far more so than the stifling air of the Black Market. Rather than the smell of blood, gore and disgusting urine, Rey took in the scent of spices and local food.

He felt hungry, but he restrained himself from overindulging.

After all, he knew he was in trouble.

'I missed the designated rendezvous time. It's possible that they're worried about me...'

He had the Royal Badge, so they could most likely track him.

However, every competent Mage who could use such Magic had gone on the mission with Adonis,

It was pretty late, so they should have returned, but they were bound to be very tired.

'I better return to the Royal Capital as soon as possible.'

He glanced around and noticed that no one was looking in his direction.

That was because of one reason and one reason alone.

He was currently using [Stealth] and [Camouflage].

No one could possibly see him.

But, Rey wasn't alone, was he? He had three people he was currently responsible for.

Billy, Alicia, and Esme. These three were currently being held by Rey on both sides.

Since Billy weighed the most, and he was a guy, Rey carried him on his left side. Esme and Alicia were on his right.

Since they were all touching him so closely, and weren't a part of any larger extension, his [Stealth] and [Camouflage] Skills extended to them.

If that wasn't the case, everyone would just see three people floating, not knowing how that came to be.

Rey glanced at the gleaming white ring that shone on Alicia's fingers and smiled.

He had returned it to her the moment they left the Black Market.

One would think that, with so much baggage that Rey carried, he would be bumping into so many people.

However, he had also thought of that and came up with a pretty simple solution.

[Flight].

Rey was currently flying above the populace while activating his other Skills to make sure he—as well as his baggage —

couldn't be detected.

'It's possible that someone with a detection ability could notice us, but right now I'm too tired.' Rey thought as he gazed below him.

Hundreds of people went about their business, and it seemed like no one really gave a crap to look upward, talkless of detecting him.

With all these thoughts combined, Rey decided not to bother about the people and simply focus on getting home.

And that was exactly what he did!

'Now then... let me set my plan into motion!'

The Investigation squad were already returning to the Royal Estate after a very long, yet unproductive day.

They had done their best, but nothing fruitful came of it.

They weren't able to find traces of Alica and Billy, and they were nowhere close to getting close to the Black Market, talkless of the Slave Trade hub.

They had achieved nothing!

As they took heavy steps, their feet trampling on the pristine tiles that decorated the entry to the Royal Estate's Gates, they noticed a commotion.

"H-huh...?"

"What's that?"

"A-are those...?!"

Right before their eyes, a small distance from the group, was a dark cloaked gentleman who was backing them.

He was surrounded by guards, but not in a particularly hostile fashion. It was simply because of the two individuals that lay at his feet.

The very Otherworlders they had been searching for all day—

Alicia and Billy!

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Chapter 148 The Adventurer Ralyks

"W-who...?"

"H-how...?"

"T-this is...!"

A mixture of confusion and relief could be seen on the faces of every guard as they looked at the two unconscious teenagers on the floor.

Their disheveled hair and unkempt attires didn't remove an iota from their identity.

These were the Otherworlders!

The Head Guard, who was just in as much shock and awe as his subordinates knew he had to pull himself together.

Their actions were not befitting of the guards of the esteemed Royal Estate!

"I-If I may ask, Sir..." The Head Guard shifted his gaze from the two saviors of the world, and placed it on the dark-cloaked man who brought them.

He was dressed like the night itself—with a pitch-black hooded cloak, an obsidian mask that had a skull-like design, and his inner attires also echoing nothing but darkness.

He seemed like a shady man, but what kind of shady individual would do something like this?

"... Please, who are you?"

As the Head Guard said this, he gulped.

He was a great fighter, and he had been trained by the Head Warrior Brutus himself, but even he wasn't too confident about fighting the man before him.

Something about his vibe exuded strength, and an aura of darkness seemed to shroud his mysterious persona.

The Head Knight felt it was just his imagination, but he could also smell the stench of blood on him.

This had to be a testament of his power.

Still, despite the sheer tension that the masked man caused around him, his deep voice was calm and soothing.

"My name is Ralyks. I am an Adventurer, and I just happened to be in the Capital."

His words were simple, but they were so vague that no one present knew what to make of them.

Fortunately, he elaborated.

"A certain boy requested my assistance for this mission. He told me all he had was a single Gold Coin, and that if I wanted more, I should complete the mission and come to the Royal Estate for a bigger reward."

As the man called Ralyks said this, more men approached him from behind.

They belonged to the Undercover Investigation Unit that had gone out since early in the morning.

Their weary faces seemed to be breaking into relief, but they weren't out of the woods just yet.

"T-this boy.... What was his name?"

The leader of the Investigation Unit asked as he moved closer, only to stop the moment he felt the intimidating pressure of the mysterious Ralyks.

"I believe he called himself... Rey."

The moment Ralyks said this, the members of the Investigation Unit broke into a look of relief, but the leader still appeared concerned.

"When was the last time you saw him? He was meant to rendezvous with us, but he never showed up."

In response to this, Ralyks shrugged slightly—almost as if he couldn't care less.

"I placed a tracker on him, just in case I needed to find him, and from what I can see... he's not in any trouble."

It was only at this moment that the leader sighed in relief.

"He's probably still searching for these two. He told me he'd continue working on his end, so we'd cover more ground."

The members of the Investigation Unit all leaked out smiles, thinking about their adorable Extra saying something like that.

"Quite an energetic one, wouldn't you say?" Ralyks said, almost in a chuckle.

Both the guards and the members of the investigation unit all nodded, some chuckling in agreement with his words.

"Could we perhaps settle the details indoors? It feels a bit clumsy having this sort of commotion outside the gates of the Royal Estate." The Head Guard asked, a bead of sweat dripping down his forehead.

He had a friendly smile on, even though he was going for a firm facade.

"I-Indeed! We'd need to discuss at greater length on the matter. I'm certain the members of the Royal Council would like to meet with you and reward you for your effort—!"

Before the Head of the Investigation Unit completed his words, Ralyks raised his hand to interrupt.

"I do not care for all of that. I have already received my reward from the boy."

Surprise filled the faces of everyone present. They couldn't believe what they were hearing.

An Adventurer... rejecting money?!

It was unprecedented!

"Y-you mean...?"

"Indeed. That Gold Coin was enough for the job."

The military men present all exchanged glances with each other.

They considered the possibility that the Adventurer didn't know the importance of the people he had just saved. That was most likely why he wasn't being adamant about a reward.

It was the only explanation that made sense in their heads,

"I do agree that we should go inside, though." As Ralyks said this, he took a step forward.

The other Guards, who had surrounded him, found themselves stepping back.

It felt instinctive—purely natural.

"U-understood!" The Head Guard gestures for a couple of guards to pick up the two unconscious Otherworlders and take them inside.

Once they did so, moving as quickly as they could, everyone else could advance.

As they moved—Ralyks, the Investigation Unit, and a portion of the Royal Guards—a question wafted in the air.

"Did you get my earlier present? The Slave Trader and his 'merchandise'?"

The moment Ralyks asked this question, everyone froze up.

"T-that was you?!"

A slight chuckle escaped Ralyks' unseen lips as he shrugged it "T-that was you?!"

A slight chuckle escaped Ralyks' unseen lips as he shrugged it all off as if that achievement was nothing.

The guards had counted a little over a hundred victims of the Slave Trade, and a hundred or so perpetrators—with the Kingpin being present as well.

For so long, the Royal Council had been trying to quell the embers of Slave Trade that remained pervasive throughout the United Human Alliance, to no avail.

However, with the capture of Evals Redart—one of the three prominent figures in the trade—such a despicable industry had been crippled.

Hundreds, if not thousands of lives would be spared thanks to this man's capture.

And all of it was all thanks to Ralyks.

'He doesn't even see it as a big deal. Just who is this man? I've never heard of an Adventurer like him before!'

The Head Guard found himself thinking as he swallowed yet another round of saliva.

"How are they? The victims and the criminals?"

Normally, matters like this were kept confidential.

No outsider could know the inner processes of the Royal Estate, or how matters were being handled within its walls.

But this time... things were different.

The Head Guard felt as though not telling Ralyks would be somewhat wrong.

He didn't know why, but it felt almost natural to say the truth to this man.

"The victims are being treated. We'll make sure they get good nutrition and medical treatment. Once they're stable, we'll ask them some questions and try our best to return them to their homes."

Every guard or soldier present knew this was their responsibility

—the least they could do—considering the fact that they were too incompetent to prevent the capture of these victims in the first place.

"I see. And what of the criminals?" Ralyks said in his consistently calm manner.

"They'll be interrogated—especially their leader—to extract relevant information about their other business chains and the entire industry as a whole."

Ralyks nodded slowly.

It appeared that he was pleased.

Strangely enough, everyone present was happy to see that,

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Chapter 149 The Royal Council Acts

As the sun dipped in the horizon, the Royal Estate was filled with what could only be described as a mixed reaction.

The Royal Council, which had been deliberating on several affairs all day, was first of all interrupted by the news of slaves and the responsible slave traders mysteriously appearing in their front gate.

The reason they could recognize them as slaves was simply due to the tags that each person had on.

Those who didn't have tags were recognized as the lowlives of the underworld due to their Enchanted Items, or markings on their bodies that earlier investigations had deciphered to belong to a criminal mastermind known as Evals Redart.

What was most surprising was that this very Evals Redart was also among the unconscious ones that were presented at the Royal Estate's gate.

No one knew who brought them, or how they ended up there in the first place.

One moment, the entire passage was empty, and the next, it was filled with bodies.

The Royal Council was immediately alerted about this development by the Head Guard, considering how big a step towards progress this all was.

However, the mixed reactions that were given wasa—to put it very mildly—very unexpected.

Grandmaster Conrad and Lady Vida seemed immensely satisfied by the news, but the other three had somewhat cautious or even worried expressions.

Of course, no one suspected them of any malevolent intentions or thoughts, so their reactions were simply chalked down to intense surprise.

And so, while bright smiles decorated a few faces, dreary looks were plastered on the faces of others.

The Royal Council meeting didn't end yet, though. There were a bunch of issues to be addressed, after all.

They merely gave instructions to the guards and continued.

However, the second wave of news caused them to adjourn their gathering.

... And it was none other than the report of the return of the lost Otherworlders, along with the man who found them.

"Ralyks...?" Conrad's brows twisted the moment he thought of the name once again.

He knew of the prominent Adventurers in the Adventurer City, but he had never heard of that name before.

'Is he perhaps a new face? But from what I just heard... he doesn't seem like an amateur.'

The very fact that he was the one responsible for capturing Evals Redart, and busting up the Capital's branch of Slave Trade, made him a force to be reckoned with.

Conrad felt it was absurd that he hadn't heard of the name before.

After all, the Royal Council meeting they were having prior to the interruption was centered around the most viable Adventurers.

Currently, he and one other member of the Royal Council were on their way to the guest quarters to see this mysterious benefactor of theirs.

Vida and the other two went off to see the Otherworlders who were currently receiving medical support.

The soldiers told them that their condition wasn't too dire—especially Alicia's—but they still had to see for themselves.

As a result, the Royal Council had to be split into groups.

Conrad and the man beside him—Knox—had contrasting expressions on their faces.

While the former had a relieved, but curious facade, Knox appeared more tense and worried than anything else.

"Are you alright, Knox? Ever since the first news, you've been a bit off."

"A-ah, really? Maybe. I'm not too sure myself." Knox, an older fellow with spectacles on his face and long white beards smiled.

Whenever he made expressions like this, he appeared like a wiry old man, but Conrad knew he was capable.

After all, other than Vida, Knox was the one he trusted most among the Royal Council members.

They had been close since before the United Human Alliance was formed.

In a way, this old man was like an uncle to Conrad, considering how close his father was to Knox.

'Maybe he's just stressed out. We've been having our meeting since morning, and it has gotten pretty late already...'

Knox wasn't getting any younger, so being active for so long must have taken a toll on his body.

Conrad felt for the old man, but this time their meeting couldn't be helped.

After all, it was one of utmost pertinence.

'We'll probably have to continue it later tonight or early tomorrow.'

That was how important it was.

'But first, we have to meet this Ralyks fellow. If he is indeed an Adventurer, then maybe... just maybe...!'

As Conrad had these thoughts, he couldn't see the dark expression that played on Knox's face.

It wasn't one of tiredness or weariness.

Instead, it was an expression of downright hostility.

'This man called Ralyks... how much does he know about us?!'

The Slave Trade was rendered illegal by the Royal Council, but Knox and two of his comrades had decided to support it from the shadows.

It brought them a considerable amount of revenue, and it was far more lucrative than most of the businesses one could get into in the entire Alliance.

However, with the capture of Evals Redart, one of their most best pawns within the Slave Trade industry, and the crippling of one sector of the market, Knox knew the loss that he and his colleagues would suffer.

Even with all of these negatives, none compared to what Knox and the others feared most.

'The interrogation will probably begin tomorrow. We can't allow it to happen!'

Most perpetrators of the Slave Trade didn't know too much, but Evals Redart knew too much.

'He has to be eliminated!'

Those were the thoughts on Knox's mind as he and Conrad swiftly proceeded to the Guest House. As darkness crept into the sky, and the world was deprived of sunlight, the old man's crooked face made a deep frown.

The luxurious building stood a couple more meters from them, and some of the guards that served as their entourage had gone ahead to prepare the way for Knox and Conrad.

The former's eyes gleamed with even more apprehension as he bit his lip.

'It's possible that this Ralyks will also be a problematic one.'

If that was the case, Knox knew that he and his colleagues had to nip him in the bud—and fast.

The old man had resolved within himself a long time ago...

'No matter the cost... I must succeed!'

And even now, nothing had changed.

Nothing at all.

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Chapter 150 Meeting With Ralyks [Pt 1]

'Alright...'

Grandmaster Conrad felt tense as he stood before the black mahogany door before him.

Despite the late evening breeze, he could feel a bead of sweat, or two, forming on his forehead.

Still, he calmed himself and took a good look at the building.

The Guest House wasn't very large. It was a two-story building that was a bit wider than normal in order to accommodate as many rooms as possible.

The ground floor consisted of a living room, a reception area, a kitchen, and all manner of facilities that could help guests settle in.

There was also a mini-pub in one of the building extensions.

The top floor, however, consisted only of the bedrooms.

Since their guest, Ralyks, had only come for visiting purposes, Conrad already knew where he would be.

—The Reception Area.

As the Grandmaster placed his hand on the knob, after refusing a guard to do it for him, he took a deep breath.

The pure white color of the building was dulled by the encroaching darkness, but lights generated from luminous stones made sure to banish most of it.

Conrad was also certain that the interior of the building was just as illuminated as the outside—if not more.

'... I'm ready!'

Grandmaster Conrad twisted the knob and opened the door steadily.

He was greeted by the inner beauty of the building.

Despite being very small, compared to the palace and the Otherworlders' living quarters—among other structures—within the Royal Estate, it made up for it with its charm.

The chandeliers on the ceiling glowed brilliantly, and the pure white allure of the building's walls and floors complemented the entire atmosphere.

It felt serene and pure.

"Right this way, Sir." The Head Guard interrupted Conrad's train of thought as he led him to the Reception Area.

That was where their visitor was.

Conrad strengthened his resolve and hardened his gaze as he followed behind the lively man in front of him.

He stole a gaze at Knox, and it seemed the old man was pretty tense as well.

However, compared to Conrad, who kept most of his apprehension hidden under a mask of charismatic confidence, the old man's disturbed expression was easy to see through.

'I wonder why he hasn't picked a successor yet.'

Conrad thought it was obvious that Knox wasn't as... able... as he used to be.

Rather than stressing himself with the burden of responsibility, it was better to choose one of his many children to take his place.

Conrad knew of one or two who would be perfect for the job.

'All he has to do is present one to us, and we'll review the successor before giving our verdict.'

Knowing Knox's standing in the Royal Council, if he chose a capable person, everyone would give a positive vote.

'Maybe I'll bring it up again. But first, I have to deal with this issue...'

The Reception Area was right around the corner, and the Head Guard was already standing in front of the door that led to it.

Conrad took this as a prompt to quicken his pace, but out of regard for the old man, he maintained his steady steps.

'I wonder what kind of man this Ralyks is...'

Conrad regretted not asking for details from the Head Guard—or anyone who had seen him.

He was running in blind.

A few moments later, Conrad found himself standing before the pure white entrance to the Reception Area.

It wasn't a very large room, but it was more than enough to fit in a group of ten—perhaps twenty—who desired to have a discussion.

Considering the fact that only Conrad, Knox, and the Head Guard were going to be the ones inside—along with Ralyks, of course—that meant there was more than enough space.

The Head Guard opened the door for them this time, prompting Conrad, Knox, and finally the Head Guard to proceed inside.

The interior of the Reception Area was just as beautiful as every other part of the Guest House.

It had a small chandelier on the ceiling, with pure white visuals that occupied the senses.

The comfy sofas were purely white, and the center table that separated the two sides of the 'U' shaped Sofas was also pure white.

Everything in the room was this color... except one!

'A-ahh...!'

Conrad nearly jumped as he saw the dark stain on the purity of the room.

It came in the form of a seated man.

His entire body was wrapped in darkness, and his crimson eyes glowed underneath his skull-like mask.

The man was seated comfortably, resting his back on a couch while folding his hands.

He didn't even move an inch when Conrad entered.

Normally, when someone of the Grandmaster's standing appeared before someone, they would stand and greet.

Some even went as far as bowing.

However, this figure remained in his post as if Conrad didn't even exist.

Other than the movements of his glowing eyes, it would be impossible to tell if he even saw them enter or not.

"Greetings, Adventurer. Thank you for gracing us with your presence this lovely evening."

It was around 7:30 PM already, so it was pretty much drawing closer to night.

Still, Conrad stuck to his formalities.

He and Knox sat on the sofa while the Head Guard remained standing. Both of his hands were behind him, and his rock-solid posture was a given for a guard.

"Greetings, Grandmaster. Councilman."

The fact that Ralyks addressed them by their titles made it clear that he knew who they were, and the positions they held in the entire Nation.

So why did he remain so impudent?

The answer was simple—clear for anyone in the room to see.

This man known as Ralyks was strong.

"Haha! You can just call me Conrad. My friend here is Knox." Conrad gave a light, friendly chuckle as he tried his best smile.

"I'd rather not. Now, then, shall we get to the serious matters?"

As Ralyks said this—refusing a gesture of casualness—the air in the room quickly transformed.

The influence of his presence grew even stronger as he leaned forward and sat upright.

His crimson eyes were fixated on Conrad, and it seemed like they were pulling him into them.

However, before the Grandmaster could even process what was going on, his thoughts were interrupted by an imposing question.

"What do you want?"