

# Extras 151

## Chapter 151 Meeting With Ralyks [Pt 2]

"W-what do we want...?"

Conrad found himself stuttering for a moment due to the suddenness of the question, but he quickly corrected himself.

He never expected this man to be so straightforward.

Even for an Adventurer—one whose name wasn't even well-known—he was being quite bold.

"I believe I already told your guard over there the details of my actions. I also informed him that I do not need any reward." Ralyks said very calmly.

His voice wasn't imposing, but it wasn't respectful either.

He was just terribly blunt—saying things without a filter, or regard for who he said them to.

Conrad didn't realize when he started to respect him.

"The reason you two, esteemed members of the Royal Council, would want to meet with me is because you want something." He emphasized his point and drew closer.

"So what do you want?"

Conrad felt pressure unlike anything else he had ever experienced until now.

He indeed wanted something, but the fact that Ralyks had taken the initiative meant he no longer had the advantageous ground.

It was taking him longer to articulate his intentions and present them in a way that suited the current context better.

"First of all, we'd like to thank you for your help. For finding those two for us..."

"As I explained to the guard, I was only doing a job. I was paid by a kid who happened to be desperate. I would normally not have accepted it, but since I could sense his sincerity, I decided to take the job."

The way Ralyks said it made everything seem like common sense.

He—a very capable Adventurer—just happened to be around to help a desperate boy.

However, no one could fault him.

In cases like this, a Truthseeker would be most useful, but Conrad didn't dare bring such a thing before a guest whom they owed so much to.

'He doesn't even have any reason to lie. He clearly seeks no reward with us, else he would have tried a different approach.'

This was especially why Conrad was so on edge.

'I find this too unbelievable. Does such a good-natured person really exist? Surely, he must want something!'

But, judging from how Ralyks spoke, it was certain that the script had been flipped.

It wasn't he who desired something... but the Royal Council.

In essence, they needed him.

'Well, he's not wrong.'

At this point, Conrad gave up trying to cut corners and simply decided to get to the point.

"Haaa... I understand." He made a heavy sigh.

Judging by the personality of the man before him, being as honest and open with his intentions was the best thing he could do in the current situation.

Once that settled in Conrad's mind, he decided to follow the path and see where it would lead him.

"How would you like another job, Sir Ralyks?"

The moment Conrad said this, his face completely changed from the fake smile he constantly had on.

For the first time in a while, his mask fell before a stranger, revealing his concern and desperation.

The Grandmaster knew that, just like the boy who hired him—Rey most likely—he had to be sincere.

"A job? What kind?" The dark-cloaked Adventurer asked with a deep monotone.

Nothing about his voice indicated that he had a special interest in the job being offered, but his crimson eyes glowed a tiny bit brighter.

At least, that was what Conrad thought.

"It's in the Royal Dungeon. It's a rescue mission."

"Hm?"

Conrad could sense something akin to surprise in Ralyks' tone, and he could understand why.

The Royal Dungeon was off-limits to Adventurers, so only those working for the Royal Council got access to it.

Since it was a national treasure, and contributed a large share to the Alliance's economy, it wasn't a place for private mercenaries.

... Until now.

'We're desperate. Brutus' team hasn't been rescued, and even the Rescue Team that went in hasn't returned!'

Lucielle was supposed to send some kind of message to the Royal Council once they were done with the Rescue and were on their way out.

However, so far there was nothing.

'It's been over 12 hours since they ventured in, yet we've not heard a word.'

It was more than enough to drive the Royal Council to the very brink of desperation.

The strongest in the Alliance—their Grand Mage and Head Warrior—were unaccounted for.

However, that wasn't all.

The Otherworlders—the Hero and the most capable of them all

—also shared the same fate.

The only good news they had was the return of Alicia and Billy, but those two wouldn't be enough for the task ahead.

Without the Hero, and the other immensely talented and powerful forces that were currently trapped in the Royal Dungeon, the United Human Alliance was as good as screwed.

The entire Royal Council meeting, which spanned for hours, was all about finding a solution to the issue.

In the end, the only viable option was to hire Adventurers.

By hiring only the most capable, and sending them into the Royal Dungeon, there was a chance to save the ones trapped within.

However, there were a lot of disadvantages and dangers associated with this plan.

The most glaring issue was the simple fact that Adventurers could not be trusted when it came to National Matters.

It was possible they would only take on the Quest for personal gain and quit half-way once things got too difficult.

They could also steal resources from the Royal Dungeon and bail on the real mission.

The Adventurers could also kill the Monsters meant for the Otherworlders to grow, thus removing tons of EXP from the board.

A bunch of other factors made this plan's efficacy doubtful.

Then, among the myriads of disadvantages, there was the very obvious problem of competence.

Even if they risked it all and put their trust in the most capable and honorable Adventurers...

... Could they reach the 99th Floor on time?!

Was it possible for the Adventurers to rescue the Hero and the other valuable assets to the Alliance before it was too late?

That question remained unanswered.

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### **Chapter 152 Meeting With Ralyks [Pt 3]**

'Right now, we need competent and trustworthy Adventurers who can be guaranteed to complete this mission.'

Conrad's eyes met Ralyks' crimson irises as he had this thought.

'He seems like a good fit to add to that equation.'

If they had him on their side—a powerful man who could be moved by sincerity—then there was hope to get even more Adventurers on board.

'Billy and Alicia won't recover on time, but if they do... then maybe we could enlist their help too.'

Conrad considered his last lines of thought and wondered if it was indeed the smartest choice.

What if the mission failed again?

Was it not better to conserve the Otherworlders they had left, rather than send them to their obvious doom?

Thinking logically about the current situation, wasn't it an impossible task they were about to give the Adventurers?

'If Lucielle, Brutus, Hero Adonis, and the other Otherworlders from Alpha Class could not make it... can we really say any other group has a chance?'

The answer was an obvious "NO!"

Despite this, Conrad didn't know why he was still clinging to a hope that maybe he was wrong.

Maybe there was a sliver of a chance that the problem would be solved.

After all, if it wasn't... then the end of humanity was certain!

"Tell me more about this job." Ralyks' voice woke Conrad from his troubling thoughts.

His eyes darted around, registering the pure white atmosphere, before eventually settling his gaze on the man of darkness.

"Well, the thing is—"

"Tell me everything." Conrad felt some kind of chill in his body the moment he heard that.

He knew he wasn't obligated to tell this Adventurer the details of National Affairs. He couldn't divulge some secrets to him.

However, Conrad didn't know when he began to open his lips and explain their desperate predicament.

... And how badly they needed someone to help.

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"I see."

Despite Ralyks—no, Rey—saying this so calmly, his thoughts were a jumbled mess

'What the hell? They haven't returned yet?!'

Rey was currently in his tough-guy disguise, but he was truly freaking out on the inside.

'They haven't even sent a message confirming the rescue? What could be going on down there?'

He was confused, to say the least.

Yes, the Royal Dungeon had incredibly powerful monsters inside its walls.

But Rey knew full well that they weren't going to be too much trouble for Adonis and his squad.

'The last Floors of a Dungeon usually contain A-Tier Monsters, right?' Rey learned all of this in the Royal Library.

Mankind had conquered quite a few Dungeons in the past, and never before had the monsters within them exceeded A-Tier.

'Sure, the difficulty of the Monster—especially the Boss—depends on their Skill-sets and the kinds of abilities they have. Terrain plays a huge factor too, but still... they never exceed that limit.'

From what Rey had observed in the Royal Dungeon, it pretty much followed the expected patterns of a Dungeon, so he couldn't chalk it up as an Irregular.

That was why he had so much confidence in Adonis and his team.

An A-Tier Boss might have been too difficult for Brutus to face alone, but if Lucielle, Adonis, and all his Alpha Class classmates ganged up on the thing, there was no way they weren't going to win.

So... how was this possible?

'Something must have gone wrong somewhere. It's definitely serious!'

Rey thought about Adonis, and how he had assured him he wasn't going to lose.

'He seemed a bit tense, but I'm sure he also knew what he was going to do.'

The only reason this could have happened was an unprecedented variable.

Something no one knew about.

'Could this be the mastermind's work? I can't let them get away with this again!'

Rey felt impatient as he sat before Conrad and Knox, as well as the Head Guard.

He wanted to rush out of the room and venture into the Royal Dungeon as quickly as he could.

However, he controlled his emotions.

'As expected, Conrad didn't reveal their identities as Otherworlders, but he told me everything else.'

Right now, all Ralyks knew was that the Alliance's most powerful force was inside the Royal Dungeon and needed saving.

A simply transparent position to have.

'So how should I respond?'

Rey's original plan was to build a reputation within the Royal Estate and leech on them instead of the Black Market.

If he could establish a proper connection with them, then it would be perfect.

However, all of that had to be put on hold due to the current situation.

'If everyone relevant to the Alliance is in danger because of what's going on in the Royal Dungeon, then there's really no time.'

Brutus' life was already in danger before Lucielle and Adonis decided to venture in to save him.

If this incident wasn't resolved as fast as possible, then everyone within the Dungeon could just as well lose their lives.

'I have to hurry!'

"I understand the situation. So, you'd like to hire me to go in and rescue them, right?" He spoke in his usual Ralyks tone.

Rey could see Conrad and everyone else express slight hesitation as he said this.

'What? Did I say something wrong?'

"We were thinking of hiring you alongside the top Adventurers in the Adventurer City to—"

"There's no need." Rey sharply interrupted them, his tone much firmer than normal.

'There's no time for that!'

Rey had studied the map of the United Human Alliance to a considerable extent, so he knew how vast the entire Nation was.

'They occupy a little less than two-third of the Western Continent, and while the rest of the one-third is the battlefield right now, there's still a lot of unexplored lands there.'

Out of all the cities and towns that existed under their banner, the Adventurer City wasn't very close to the Royal Capital at all.

In fact, it was considerably closer to the current battlefield.

'It will take too much time trying to contact the Adventurers. Even if they do succeed in that, there's no guarantee that the Adventurers would agree. Even if the Adventurers agree, it'll take too long for them to arrive here...'

And this was only scratching the surface of Rey's worries.

'I doubt the Adventurers would be able to do anything about whatever is holding Adonis and everyone else in the Dungeon.'

Adventurers were incredibly powerful, but if they were that strong, then there would be no need to summon Otherworlders to begin with.

The Alliance faced a precarious situation with the Dragons, and the presence of Adventurers didn't change that fact.

'We can't wait that long for Adventurers, especially when they won't be much good.'

That was Rey's current position, and he knew Conrad should have thought as much.

'He probably doesn't see any other alternative at the moment.'

Rey found himself smiling a little.

"I will accept your job. But I don't need any Adventurer to come with me. I'm fine by myself." He declared.

"W-WHAT?!"

The instant he said this, Rey could see shocked expressions radiate all over the faces of the men in the room.

He expected this. Still...

"This is the best option!"

"I do not require any reward. I only seek this challenge that seems to lurk in the dark." He rose to his feet, not giving Conrad or the other two any chance to process his words.

"B-but, Sir Ralyks—!"

"What's the problem? I don't see an issue with this arrangement..."

As Rey said this, he could see the shocked, dazed, and downright confused expressions on the faces of those who watched him.

He couldn't help but smile even more.

'They'd never look at me this way if I was Rey and not Ralyks...'

In a way, he found that amusing.

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### **Chapter 153 Going Solo**

Conrad was stunned—no, beyond stunned.

He had never seen such a man in his entire life. This Adventurer had just said the bravest or the dumbest thing ever uttered in the world.

Conrad hoped it was the former, and not the latter.

'He wishes... to challenge the Dungeon alone?'

It was so absurd that the Grandmaster couldn't blurt it out.

"You can go ahead with your original plan of calling on Adventurers if you like. I won't stop you from making backup plans too."

As Ralyks said this, he began to move towards the entrance/exit of the reception.

"But I'll tell you now... it is all going to be pointless."

Conrad didn't know the kind of expression the man before him was making, but something told him it was a broad smile.

One that oozed nothing short of confidence.

"I'll be going in alone. And I'm going to rescue your people."

There was no uncertainty in his words. It was as if he could already see the future.

Conrad found his heart racing as he listened—as if he was a child listening to a fairy-tale, hoping desperately that it was all true.

He truly wanted to believe!

"H-how long... do you think... it'll... take...?" Before Conrad realized it, he stood to his feet and blurted out a question.

Knox and the Head Guard quickly glanced at him in shock, giving him faces that made it seem like he was insane,

Conrad knew he was behaving crazy, though.

Asking a question like that meant he was entertaining the possibility of such a thing being possible.

He—Grandmaster of the Royal Council—was granting credence to the illogical ramblings of a total stranger.

Conrad didn't care, though.

He only stared at the one called Ralyks and waited for his answer.

"It shouldn't take long. Before dawn tomorrow... you will see your subordinates."

With trembling lips and blinking eyes, Conrad took in the impossible promise and burned it into his mind.

"Alright. We'll be waiting for you."

Ralyks nodded and took his leave, refusing to say any more.

As soon as he left the room, Conrad collapsed back on the sofa and heaved a heavy sigh.

He didn't realize how much pressure had filled the room until Ralyks left.

His racing heart kept pounding in his chest, and his body wouldn't stop trembling.

"Conrad, surely you aren't taking that man's words seriously! There's no way he can do that!"

Even the Head Guard—who didn't say anything due to the inescapable chains of hierarchy—agreed with Knox's words,

Normally, Conrad would have done so.

In fact, if any of his colleagues had done what he did, he would have chastised them and sought out a more rational solution.

But they were currently out of those.

There was no way out; no logical way to turn the situation around.

"Right now, the fate of the entire Nation is in that man's hands..." Conrad whispered as he closed his tired eyes.

He felt tired, yet a wave of relief hit him.

Somehow—despite not knowing why—he felt like everything would work out somehow.

He knew the two men who shared the same room with him didn't agree, but he hoped that when dawn arrived, they would see it with their own eyes—

"We can only put our trust in Ralyks."

—The unknown power of the man shrouded in darkness.



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Rey inhaled deeply as he left the Royal Estate and ascended into the air.

'Looks like I have my work cut out for me...' His thoughts trailed as he became a blur.

He glided through the sky, his gaze fixed on the path ahead.

Free to roam the sky as he pleased, he increased his pace, causing the pressure of the wind to cause his dark hair to dance.

Despite all this, Rey remained unaffected.

He glanced beside him to see the young girl who was in a bubble beside him.

She was still unconscious, but she still floated beside Rey as he advanced with his remarkable speed.

The only reason she could do so was due to the bubble of air that surrounded her.

'Wind Magic can be pretty useful.'

Rey returned his gaze forward and spotted the Royal Dungeon just up ahead thanks to [Farsight].

Esme—the Half Elf girl beside him—was currently being protected by his Magic, and she had been beside him throughout his stay in the Royal Estate.

Since he used [Projection] to make it appear as if she wasn't there, no one had suspected him the slightest bit.

Everyone who remained in the Royal Estate was weaker than Rey, and he already knew that much.

The stronger ones went with Adonis, or were currently fighting at the forefront of the battlefield.

The stronger ones went with Adonis, or were currently fighting at the forefront of the battlefield.

Even if he was found out, he could easily tell them that Esme was someone related to him, and they wouldn't give him any further issues.

After all, he was the hero who saved tons of potential slaves from captivity and toppled down a slavery empire all by himself.

He also didn't ask for any compensation, and was considered by all who met him to be strong.

Who would dare challenge his unverifiable words?

No one!

'I would have liked to clean her up a little, but there's no time for that yet.'

Rey had already used [Absolute Appraisal] on her right before they started flying, and he could see that she wasn't in any critical condition.

Back then he temporarily placed the ring in her fingers to fool Aldred, she had healed up considerably.

Her life was in no danger at all.

'Since I can't just drop her off anywhere, I just have to take her with me.'

Esme could wake up at any time, and since she knew his identity, Rey figured it was better to keep her close to him.

18:24

'Now that I'm looking at her from this angle, she looks kind of prett—what are you thinking about, Rey? Now isn't the time!'

Rey shook his head and decided to increase his pace and focus on the task at hand.

His classmates, the only hope of the world, were in danger.

'I have to help them!'

Rey still had no idea what the problem was, but he only had one thought as he began his descent.

'Hang in there. I'm on my way!'

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## **Chapter 154 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 1]**

[Earlier That Day]

"It seems we're all ready."

As the sun slowly rose in the horizon, Adonis' blond hair swayed with every instance his lips moved.

His handsome face greeted everyone who stood before him, and even the equally beautiful Grand Mage who was beside him gave him all her attention.

Right now, all fifty of the Knights and Mages that the United Human Alliance could offer stood before him.

Also standing in front of them were the five Otherworlders who volunteered for this dangerous expedition.

The determined expressions on their faces made Adonis smile a little.

He had said all that needed to be said, and they were already briefed by Lucielle, so there was no longer any need to keep the mission waiting.

"We depart now!"

~VWUUUSHH!~

A wormhole was opened right behind Adonis the moment he made this declaration.

It shone with multiple colors, and it came from a cube-like item that Lucielle held in her unoccupied left hand.

Her right hand had a staff on, and she was currently outfitted in a pure white and red military outfit befitting of a Grand Mage.

She had a cap on—the kind a sailor or a royal emissary would have—and gold buttons and linings decorated her red and white attire.

Her crimson eyes glimmered brightly as the box in her grasp began to vanish once the portal it created stabilized.

This Enchanted Item was called 'The Gateway' and it was a one-time use Item.

It could open the doorway to anywhere that they could pinpoint, as long as it was an actual location.

Since Lucielle already detected Brutus in the lowest Floor—the 99th Floor—of the Dungeon, this Item had just created a portal that led to that very place.

It wasn't a one-sided portal, though, so they had to hurry if they wanted to gain the upper hand.

"Let's go!"

In response to Adonis' orders, the men and women began marching closer to the portal.

As the Hero, Adonis bravely stepped into the portal first, and the rest trailed after him.

Lucielle was the last to enter, and as soon as she did, the portal collapsed.

One of the conditions of use when it came to 'The Gateway' was once its user entered the portal it made, the spatial rift would close, so no one was surprised by this.

In fact, if this was the only condition, then a random person could have been the one to activate it, allowing everyone to venture in and out without any need to ascend the Floors to escape.

Unfortunately, that couldn't be done.

For one, 'The Gateway' was an incredibly powerful device that could only be used by a powerful Mage who had a high level of Magic Mastery.

In essence, Lucielle.

Yet another problem with this device was the duration of the spatial rift.

Even if Lucielle decided to stay behind, letting Adonis and the rest venture in to save their ally, the rift would close after two to three minutes.

Spatial Magic consumed a lot of Mana, and it couldn't possibly be maintained for too long.

If they bet on the chance that Adonis and the rest could save their allies within that time, it was possible that the portal would close before this happened, leaving Lucielle outside.

Needless to say, that would be tragic.

Even though Adonis had the most power and the greatest potential of all, Lucielle was currently the most skilled and experienced member of the entire team, so having her absent in the mission would be a huge detriment.

They needed Lucielle's versatile skill-set. She was perhaps the most important factor in the entire mission.

... Except Adonis, of course.

Once the group had all entered the Dungeon, the portal closed up, leaving mere sparks of remnant Mana floating in the air.

But even those only lasted a second before vanishing entirely, leaving the group of fifty-seven stranded in a world unlike any other.

"W-whoa...!"

A few gasps echoed in the air as the people looked around them to get a grasp of their surroundings.

None of the Otherworlders had been to an actual Dungeon before, so the looks of awe and wonder mostly came from them.

However, even among the Knights and Mages, the expressions of inevitable surprise filled their eyes.

None of them had ever ventured this deep into a Dungeon before, so it was only natural.

After all, there was no way anyone could remain unimpressed by the expanse that welcomed them.

The 99th Floor of the Royal Dungeon was—in simple words—like a world of crystals.

The entire area was covered in shimmering minerals of the finest quality, and in huge proportions.

They glowed like the most precious of stones, and no luminous stone or chandelier could compare to their beautiful radiance.

The very ground was made up of the stuff, and throughout the walls and extremely high and pointed ceilings... everything was filled with the purest kinds of Mana Crystals.

Even Lucielle was distracted for a moment as she took in the sight before her.

This place was a gold mine of resources!

With this quality and quantity of Mana Crystals, the Alliance would never run out of Magic Energy for a very long time.

They could make more Enchanted Items and fuel more of their Magic Weapons.

Potions and Alchemical concoctions would finally be mass-produced.

They could even somewhat tilt the current tides of battle in their favor.

The possibilities were endless!

"Let's focus on the task at hand." As Adonis spoke, the "ooohs" and "aahhhs" ceased.

His serious tone made everyone remember the weight of responsibility that rested on their shoulders.

However, almost as soon as Adonis said this, even he became distracted by something.

"T-that—?!"

A couple hundred meters from where he and everyone else stood... there stood countless piles of crimson stones.

These weren't mere stones, though.

"The Monster Cores..." Adonis whispered, his eyes widening in sheer disbelief.

He could recognize those piles anywhere.

'H-how are they... here?'

Before Adonis could conclude his line of thought, though, a voice echoed in the massive expanse.

"B-Brutus! There he is!"

Yet another distance from them—much further than the piles of Monster Cores—there was an almost naked man.

He had bruises all over his body, and he shamefully hung in the air, levitating through some sort of Magic effect.

His bushy beards and disheveled hair danced thanks to the current of Magic that raised his body. Dried blood painted his bare skin, and his bulging muscles appeared helpless under the restraints of Magic.

He appeared unconscious—perhaps even dead.

Lucielle's eyes brimmed with hope as she saw him, and everyone instantly knew what they had to do.

"To the target!"

Adonis and everyone rushed to their target destination, though they all had it at the back of their mind to be on guard.

That was the plan.

But...

"Oh? This is a surprise."

... Even they could not expect what came next.

"I didn't expect you'd come this early."

Appearing behind them, in a swirling pool of bluish-purple distortions in space, was a colossal entity.

It had a thick, scaly body that glowed under the illumination of the world that surrounded it; three twisted horns on its massive head.

Wings spread behind it as its tail swept about, creating an irresistible gust of wind.

Its brimming purple eyes stared closely at the group of fifty-seven, and it gave a twisted grin.

No one needed an explanation as to what this being was.

They all knew instantly.

"N-no way...!"

"H-how can...?"

"T-this is..."

What kind of Monster had been waiting for them all along.

... A Dragon!

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## **Chapter 155 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 2]**

Terror.

That was the only word that could properly encapsulate the overwhelming emotions that flowed through everyone who stood and watched.

... Who saw the emergence of a being that transcended their understanding.

No one could move—not even Adonis.

They all just looked in fear and trepidation, perhaps hoping they would not be struck down where they stood.

This massive being—over fifteen meters in overall height—was clearly beyond their means.

It was invincible.

"Ahh... I suppose this form is too much for you. Then—"

~VWUSH!~

In a flash of purplish-blue energy, the Dragon's colossal form slowly began to shrink.

Its beastly form began to grow humanoid, until it finally condensed into an entity that could pass for a human—save for a few features.

It still had three horns protruding from its head, and its long hair shone with a bluish-black allure.

It had split pupils, like that of a beast, but its eyes were mostly human-like, glowing purple.

Its sharp teeth were hidden behind humanoid lips, and while it had a skin that vastly resembled a human's, scales appeared in multiple areas—like a portion of its face, neck, and hands.

It had wings behind it, and a tail still dancing back and forth, despite wearing what resembled an elegant blue suit made from the best of materials.

Even in this form, a twisted grin remained on his face, and so its onlookers could not be at ease.

This... this BEING was one of absolute destruction.

No one stood a chance.

"You're not going to say anything? Even after making it this far? How boring..."

The Dragon, now in the form of a pristine adult male, began to walk towards the group.

Its formal shoes clacked hard on the ground, causing an echo to permeate the world around.

"You finally caught me. You've figured it out. That should be a cause for celebration, no?"

More steps were taken.

The fifty-seven could not move back.

There was an instinctive drive that told them that any sudden movement—even the slightest hint of defiance—would lead to their inevitable deaths.

They could only swallow the saliva and wait... perhaps hope for some sort of intervention from the stronger ones.

... From Adonis and Lucielle.

"I can't say I blame you, though. This is why we Dragons can never take your kind seriously." The thing chuckled.

"You're all too pathetic. It's hilarious."

This Dragon had a look of disregard for the prey set before it.

They were nothing before his eyes.

A human's pride could only take so much after being assailed with such demeaning words, and being treated worse than an insect.

And so—

"W-we're not afraid of you!"

—Someone finally spoke up.

No one knew who it was.

Perhaps it was merely one of the many soldiers, or an Otherworlder... whoever it was didn't matter.

The important thing was that the single voice caused others to get a hold of their courage and light up the flames of resolve in their hearts.

"Y-yeah!"

"Humanity will never give up!"

"You vile beast! You'll be—!"

~SPLOOSH!~

In a single instance, as if crushed by an invisible force from above, all fifty soldiers and mages were turned into smush.

Their bodies were flattened, causing blood and their internal organs to splatter out, like jelly out of a crushed donut.

The oozing liquid painted the surroundings red, even straining the attires of those who stood beside them.

All of this... in just a moment.

"I don't believe I gave weaklings the permission to speak."

The Dragon's arrogant tone echoed as he approached once again.

Despite only a few of them speaking, he had chosen to punish a whole fifty men and women. Their lives were as insignificant to him as dust was to a man.

He simply shrugged them off.

"I spared the rest of you because you're not so weak. At the very least, I can sense it within you... most of you..." The Dragon's purple eyes flickered.

"You have very good potential. You should be worth devouring."

Unlike humans, who got their EXP from directly killing their enemies, the anatomy of Dragons demanded differently.

They had to feast on their prey.

By doing so, they got portions of their strength.

"Hehe..." The Dragon kicked his lips with its long, beast-like tongue as he gazed upon their fearful faces in amusement.

There was no mercy or compassion to be found in its eyes.

Just certain death.

However, even in the darkest moments... when despair threatens to swallow one whole... there was still a chance for something beautiful to emerge.

... Hope!

"Lucielle... go get Brutus quickly." Adonis whispered.

"W-what?"

The Grand Mage was stunned by the Hero's words, and her reaction made it clear that she wasn't expecting him to be capable of uttering words.

Not after what they had all just seen.

"Get Brutus and return to back me up." Adonis continued.

His body was trembling; anyone could see that he was unnerved by the Dragon's presence.

Still...

"The rest of you should stay put. Make any unnecessary movements and you might fall into danger."

... Adonis kept speaking.

Was it due to his conviction that the Dragon wouldn't turn him into paste due to its desire to feed on him?

Perhaps.

Or maybe... just maybe... Adonis was confident that he would be able to resist the overwhelming force that just killed fifty of his companions.

Either way, he didn't seem to be backing down.

"Did you hear me, Lucielle?"

For a moment, there was silence.

Adonis kept his gaze on the smirking thing before them, while Lucielle gazed at him with shock.



Here was a boy who had just been summoned to this world, and yet he was far more composed than she was.

She felt ashamed.

After only a few seconds, though, the Grand Mage had to pull herself together.

"Understood!" Her crimson eyes glowed as she nodded.

She bit her lip and numbed her fear with pain.

"Thank you." Adonis nodded, still not removing his gaze from the advancing creature.

"Everyone, please... stick together. And remember... don't move!"

At this point, the Dragon could no longer contain its amusement.

"Hahahahaha!" It cackled, watching as Adonis fished out orders and looked so serious.

It was akin to an adult being confronted by a toddler who sought out a fight.

There was simply no chance.

"Seems like you plan on fighting me alone, human." Purplish energy began to manifest around its body.

The very air vibrated as a result of this revelation.

"I do."

Suddenly, Adonis took a step forward.

The loud clacking of his shoes caused the Dragon's echoing approach to cease.

It was now the blond-haired boy who took steps forward.

His body was still trembling, but he did not cease in his advance.

"Right here and now... I will defeat you."

Suddenly, golden glimmers of light began to manifest around Adonis. Sparkles radiated within his eyes, hair, and all over the rest of his body.

The tremblings began to get stronger.

Many might misunderstand and think Adonis was scared—just like everyone else.

But they'd be wrong.

Yes, he was indeed frightened by the sudden appearance of this impossible creature of untold horrors.

However, that wasn't the cause of his bodily tremors.

No... those only existed for one reason.

RAGE!

\*

## Chapter 156 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 3]

'This is bad... really bad!'

As Adonis stood before the Dragon before him, these were the initial thoughts in his mind.

'I never expected a Dragon! Not even in the worst-case scenario!'

The 99th Floor had become a Dragon's Nest.

The fact that there were no Monsters, and the Boss was pretty much nonexistent in this Floor, meant that this Dragon had gotten rid of all of them.

This place was now his domain.

'Everyone is frightened. Even Lucielle!'

Adonis couldn't blame her.

'Despite how strong she is, she's still very young. Besides, I'm sure she's never experienced a Dragon as powerful as this before...'

A three-horned Dragon!

'The battlefield should be filled with one and some two-horned Dragons.'

Those were the weaker kinds—foot soldiers and mature ones.

The three-horned Dragons and above were the real deal.

None of them could be messed with very easily, as they had the role of Commanders.

'I can't believe my first encounter with a Dragon in this timeline is a Dragon Commander.' Adonis gritted his teeth as he narrowed his eyes.

'This is really bad!'

Right now, however, he could not afford to hesitate or dwell on any other distracting thought.

His opponent was right in front of him, and his allies were right behind.

The same allies he swore he'd protect!

'Fifty are already dead. It's tragic, but... I can't let it weigh too heavily on my mind.'

Not right now!

What everyone needed from Adonis right now was action.

And he had to deliver.

~VWUUUUSSSH!~

Bright golden energies danced around him as he glared deeply at the foe he had to face.

'I'm only Level 30 now. I'm not very confident I can defeat this thing...'

Adonis knew he had to be Level 50, at the very least, to confidently assert his victory against a creature of such caliber.

At this point, he couldn't boast of such power.

'Even though I had Lucielle and the others summon Monsters for me to personally kill so I could Level Up for this mission...'

It still wasn't enough!

Despite that, Adonis knew he couldn't give up.

'I have to try!'

~BOOOOOM!~

More power rushed through him as he called upon his Skills.

[Grand Light Magic]

[Divine Sword Summon]

[Absolute Defense]

Adonis was instantly coated in what seemed to be a golden armor of sorts.

His new form radiated majesty, but also pure power.

In his hand was a sword whose beauty was beyond description, shining brightly as he brandished it.

An aura—a field of unparalleled energy—remained around him to protect him from the adversary, and shimmers of light kept swirling around him.

Adonis, at this point, looked every bit of an Angel as Seraph did.

Of course, he lacked the wings and celestial beauty she possessed.

But something about him looked holy.

Sacred.

Powerful!

"T-that is...! You are... what are you?"

\*\*\*\*\*

For the first time since its arrival, the face of the Dragon showed something other than condescension and disdain.

It showed fear—albeit subtle.

"This power... where did you get it from?!"

It was clear what the Dragon Commander was referring to as he stared at Adonis.

"How is a human wielding able to use powers in the Absolute... no... Divine Tier?!"

Everyone knew that the limit of a human in H'Trae was the A-Tier.

That was why, even the strongest in the entire United Human Alliance, had a single A-Tier Skill.

It was extremely rare—the very pinnacle of power.

This phenomenon wasn't only restricted to humans alone, though.

Most beings in this world had similar limits.

The only exceptions were the Dragons!

Dragons were known as the strongest beings in H'Trae for the very reason that they could bypass such limits and reach even the Absolute Tier—S—and beyond.

So why...

"... Why is a mere human displaying such power?!"

The Dragon appeared confused, and it genuinely was.

Even for three-horned ones such as itself, S-Tier Skills were very rare.

It only had one, which was the bare minimum for a Dragon of its caliber.

'To think my foe would have an S-Tier Skill and even an SS-Tier one...!'

It was unbelievable, to say the least.

Initially, it had desired to take its sweet time devouring its prey, but now... now it knew better.

'I'll have to kill this one fast!'

"Lucielle, NOW!" Adonis roared as he took his own step forward.

The Grand Mage took action and darted towards the prisoner—

Head Warrior Brutus—while Adonis charged forth to the Dragon.

The entire area shook as these simultaneous actions were taken, and the Dragon watched all of this with a deep frown on its face.

'Tch! I'll deal with that woman later. For now, I should focus on this human!'

Dragons had the natural ability to see how strong a person's Skill was.

They had a deep bond to Mana, and the laws of the world they lived in.

They were the closest to nature—the strongest beings to exist in this world.

They were the very pinnacle.

Seeing Adonis charge towards it, the Dragon only had one thought.

'I must destroy him!'

\*\*\*\*\*

~WHOOOSH!~

Adonis flowed, easily traversing the distance that existed between him and the enemy he had to defeat.

It didn't matter that the power he wielded now was subpar, compared to its full potential.

It didn't matter that it wasn't going to last forever, and currently knew nothing about his enemy.

It didn't even matter that he was already feeling the strain on him.

What mattered was one thing.

'Right here, right now... I MUST KILL IT!'

~BOOOOOMMM!!~

The area reverberated, trembling as Adonis finally swung his blade for the first time after reaching the very front of the Dragon.

The Divine Sword bypassed all defenses, so it could not be blocked against.

If the Dragon Commander attempted to raise a defense, it would all be over.

Adonis made sure to move his muscles as hard as he could, aiming for the head as he swung his shiny blade.

He desperately prayed to make contact.

Unfortunately...

~WHUSH!~

... His prayers were declined.

'A-ahh!'

Adonis couldn't see the Dragon Commander in front of him any longer.

Instead, an overwhelming wave of bloodlust rushed to him from behind.

It was at this moment that Adonis knew...

'H-he teleported behind me!'

... About how impossible his opponent would be.

~BOOOOOOM!!!~

A blast of destruction radiated all around the area where Adonis and the Dragon stood, causing everything around them

—the unstable ground especially—to shatter apart.

Both opponents found themselves sliding across the debris, creating distance between themselves once again.

"Haaa..." A heavy breath proceeded from Adonis' lips.

He recognized how close he had come to dying a few seconds before.

'If I didn't use Light Magic to send my body into overdrive and recoil right behind him... his attack would have connected.'

Thankfully, he was able to land in the direction closest to his friends.

'I can't let that thing get close to them!'

Dragons were very twisted creatures. His friends could be used as hostages, or even killed in the most brutal way to break his fighting spirit.

'I can't allow that!'

A massive cloud of smoke existed between them, but Adonis clenched his blade tightly and focused on sensing even the slightest change in his environment.

His enemy was one who could teleport.

'I can't be too careless!'

\*

### **Chapter 157 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 4]**

"Haha..." A voice echoed in the area behind the pile of smoke.

In a powerful gust of wind—most likely caused by the Dragon's whipped tail—the smoke cleared.

The humanoid silhouette of the Dragon emerged, and its twisted smile returned to its pale and handsome face.

"... Not bad, human."

He had an amused expression, and his cool gaze greeted Adonis' intense one.

All of the unease it displayed earlier seemed to have completely vanished—as if they never existed, to begin with.

"Your Skills are the real deal. But, it seems your Level is the issue." As the Dragon said this, a bigger smile crept up on his face.

Adonis could feel more tension wrapping around him.

"It seems I was worried for nothing, human. I don't know how you got so much power, or how you're able to use it so well, but..."

He stretched out both hands, as if welcoming an embrace.

"... You're still very weak!"

Adonis bit his lip the moment these words were uttered.

His opponent wasn't wrong.

'As expected, even though my Stats are heightened, they still don't compare to a Dragon Commander...'

Even his Skills weren't operating at optimal potential.

'My Divine Sword has 6 Forms, but right now I can only use its base state...'

And what of his [Absolute Defense]?

Well, the Skill of the Dragon felt like a hard counter to Adonis' defenses.

'To conserve Mana, I concentrated my defenses in predictable areas, but with this teleportation of his, I'd have to rethink my strategy.'

Just to be on the safer side, Adonis knew he'd have to buff up his defenses and ensure they circulated all around him.

He couldn't afford to be hit at this point.

'Lucielle isn't done yet. What's taking her so long? Could it be...?!'

Adonis instantly realized what was delaying the Grand Mage once he thought of it for a moment.

'She's undoing the Magic that is holding Brutus captive, no doubt.'

Even as a powerful Mage, she didn't hold a candle to Dragons who had more abundant Mana and better Magic abilities.

'I can't rely on her anytime soon.' He heaved a sigh and took his stance once again.

'I have to do this on my own!'

"Haha! That's the spirit, human! Come!"

~WHOOOOSH!~

The ground shattered as the very air around Adonis trembled as he took off.

Cackles of golden energy danced around him as he used both hands to draw his blade and send an energy wave flying towards the Dragon Commander.

~WHUSH!~

The being vanished, but Adonis already predicted that.

'[Light Field]!'

Spreading his Mana around him using Light Magic, Adonis detected a distortion in space very quickly and realized where his enemy was going to appear from.

He proceeded to add a [Light Cloak] and [Light Boost] to his body, making him much faster than normal.

With the power granted to him by the Divine Sword coursing through his veins, and his current usage of Light Magic, Adonis reached a new realm of speed and strength.

Yes, this wasn't sustainable.

It was taking a toll on his body at a heavy rate.

However...!

'If I don't go all out, I can't win!'

~VWOOSH!~

Once the Dragon Commander appeared where he was supposed to, Adonis was already there, his blade swung heavily in its direction.

It was inescapably close distance, one where Adonis was guaranteed to hit his target.

'DI—!'

Before Adonis' blade reached the Dragon Commander, he felt a burning sensation in his stomach, and his eyes bulged in response to the feeling.

"Puack!" Adonis spat out blood as a sharp kick implanted itself on him.

His momentum was put to a grinding halt, and an expression of both shock and confusion—mixed, of course, with pain—

radiated from his face.

'H-how did he... get past my defenses?!

Adonis had chosen these particular Skill-sets to go with his build because he was confident in both the offensive and defensive capabilities of his Skills.

He was convinced that, even with low stats, having Skills such as this would give him combined advantages in battle.

However...

"My [Absolute Space Magic] allows me to bypass defenses and reach for my target wherever they are."

As the Dragon Commander said this, Adonis could see how his feet had come through a portal right before it hit him.

The [Absolute Defense] Skill created a safe haven around Adonis that was largely impenetrable.

Adonis could make the dome larger to accommodate more people, but he couldn't make it smaller.

That was the problem.

"As long as there's space existing between you and your barrier, then I'm always going to be able to attack you."

Adonis groaned yet again as another blow was sent to his stomach, this time creating enough pressure to push him away.

"Keuk!"

As he fell and recoiled from the pain that assailed him, he stared hatefully at the Dragon Commander.

The being was just grinning at the pathetic human before him.

"My Skill is a hard counter to yours, human. You can't properly defend against me, and I can always evade your sure-hit attacks."

In essence, this wasn't just about Stats any longer.

The Dragon Commander was Adonis' natural enemy—an inevitable winner in their fight.

"Do you understand now?"

In response to the words said by the Dragon Commander, Adonis only rose to his feet and wiped off the blood that stained his lip.

Remnants of his crimson liquid had dropped to the ground, already mixed with his sweat, but Adonis ignored all of that.

He simply brandished his blade one more time.

His eyes displayed unwavering determination, and while pain circulated around his entire body—causing him to tremble—he did not have any expression of fear.

No.

He had never appeared more resolute.



His moist lips uttered words in a whisper as he prepared himself with a battle stance.

"... One more."

The Dragon Commander appeared perplexed by all this, but he would soon understand...

... Just how scary a Hero could be when protecting the ones he loved!

\*

## **Chapter 158 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 5]**

A Dragon was never meant to show up in the Royal Dungeon.

And even if it did, Adonis and his classmates never encountered one throughout the time they explored the Royal Dungeon.

Granted, they never reached the lowest Floor of the Dungeon—thanks to something that came up—but they never caught a whiff of this enemy.

Brutus was never captured by a Dragon.

A Dragon never stole the piles of Monster Cores that the HobGoblins hoarded.

A Dragon never did any of those things!

'The future has changed. I should know that by now...'

As Adonis looked at his foe, he took in deep breaths in preparation for what he was about to do.

'There's nothing I can do about the ripple effects. But, if a threat arises that threatens my friends... I have to do something!'

He gritted his teeth, tasting the remainder of his own blood in his mouth.

'Status Window.'

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Adonis Levi.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder) (Regressor)
- Class: The Hero (S-Tier)
- Level: 30 (10.73% EXP)
- Life Force: 100/300 (+150)
- Mana Level: 50/360 (+130)
- Combat Ability: 300 (+150)
- Stat Points: 0
- Skills (Exclusive): [Divine Sword Summon]. [Absolute Defense]. [Grand Light Magic]. [\$\$\$@?3\$ \$!0n]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Combat Application]. [Magic Application]. [Mana Recovery]. [Full Sense]

- Alignment: Lawful Good

[Additional Information]

Your desire to save this world has transcended the very bounds of time itself, and now you are once again on the journey to protect those you love.

Good luck!

[End Of Information]

As Adonis looked through all this, he realized the only chance he had was to rely on his Hero Privileges—at least, one of them.

[Class Information]

- Name: The Hero

- Tier: S-Tier

- Cause: You have chosen to become a true savior of the world; protector of the weak, and punisher of evil.

As such, you must never fall in battle!

[Class Privileges]

~ Gives Base Stats addition based on 50% of your current Stat

~ +30 Stat Point for every Level Up, instead of the usual +3

~ Full immunity against all natural ailments, and a perfect body at all times.

~ Natural resistance to all Negative Status Conditions, Appraisal, and any kind of Interference

~ Quick Growth: Natural Talent and Ability to Level Up faster and learn any and all kinds of abilities, given enough time.

~Limit Transcension: Innate ability to surpass your limits (once a day) at the cost of a permanent decrease in some Stat Points.

[End Of Information]

"Haaa..."

Adonis already knew what he had to do.

He was done hesitating or even resisting. Right now, this was the only chance he had.

He didn't know how many Stat Points he would lose, but he understood that if he could end things quickly, then it wouldn't be too much.

It felt like a fair bargain at this point.

'As long as I can defeat the enemy that lies in front of me... that's all that matters!'

With that resolve, he took his stance and brandished his blade.

'Activate [Limit Transcension]!'

~BOOOOOOOOM!~

An instant surge of energy caused the very air to vibrate.

Everything around Adonis was crumbling, as if being broken down into multiple smaller particles.

The Mana Crystals that filled the ground began to dissipate and surround the Hero.

This ability, [Limit Transcension], allowed the user to get temporarily stronger by absorbing the Mana around them.

This would be converted into Stat Points which would phenomenally improve the user in every aspect of his Stats—

also increasing the effectiveness of his Skills.

And so, it was only natural for Mana Crystals to completely be absorbed by the one who stood in their presence.

... The Hero who commanded it!

"Let's try this again." Adonis whispered, opening his glowing golden eyes.

His hair was currently dancing in the air as an aura of pure golden light covered his body.

Vein-like energy markings appeared on his body as more power rushed into him.

'Let's go!'

~WHOOOOOM!~

Space itself distorted as the Hero made his first move, rushing towards his target in a blur of light.

"W-wha—?!"

Before the Dragon Commander could even react, Adonis was already in front of him.

His blade was swung, carrying with it an overwhelming power that could not be explained with mere words.

Fortunately for the Commander, his Spatial Magic activated right on time.

~WHUSH!~

He was able to vanish by a hair's breadth, appearing a considerable distance away from Adonis.

However, the moment he reappeared, he noticed a golden figure right beside him.

It was Adonis!

~SWOOOOSH!~

The blade was swung with even more ferocity, and this time, the Dragon felt it nearly reach his neck before teleporting once again.

~WHUSH!~

As soon as he teleported away, Adonis' eyes darted all around him, and he instantly spotted the next distortion in space.

His legs carried him to the location in no time, and he raised his blade for a powerful vertical strike.

Thus, once the Dragon Commander manifested, he was greeted with a strike he couldn't avoid.

~WHUUUUMMMM!!!~

He could only move back as fast as he could, but even then... the attack was bound to hit him.

And so—

~SWOOSH!~

—He sent his tail to attack Adonis right as he was about to deliver the blow.

That way, just like last time, he would disrupt the momentum.

However, there was one thing this Dragon Commander failed to recognize...

~BOOOOM!~

A bright golden ray of light blew open the sharp tail that would have skewered the approaching Hero, causing the Dragon to writhe in pain.

This gave Adonis the perfect chance to deal his attack.

~WHOOSH!~

The blade approached, distorting the fabric of space itself as it neared its victim.

"N-no...!"

The Dragon Commander could see death come its way.

If he didn't do something, he was going to die.

He would be killed by this human!

Adonis' face at that point was not one of victory or rage, but a lull that just seemed to state the brute fact of the situation.

Righteous judgment had come!

It was time for the beast of terror to experience it himself.

~SQUELCH!~

\*

## **Chapter 159 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 6]**

'Am I... am I seriously going to die here...?!'

A Dragon's instinct was one of the most powerful things to ever exist in the world of H'Trae.

They could sense just how powerful a person or Skill was. Even the energy in the air was not immune to their notice thanks to this gift.

They were immensely perceptive being.

That was precisely why The Dragon Commander's face was warped in terror.

He knew deep down... that if the blade connected to his heart, or sliced off his head... he was as good as dead!

He didn't want that!

Even as a proud Dragon, a chunk of his tail had been blown off already, and he was still recoiling from the pain.

Dragons were considered very invincible.

They hardly had the opportunity to feel something like pain.

His mind was yet to completely process the sensation, and his body hadn't yet acclimated to its sting.

Adding that to the innate fear of death, caused by the approaching blade...

"Keuk!"

... The Dragon Commander was at his wits' end.

And so, he did the only reasonable thing he could.

~VWUUSH!~

He activated his [Absolute Spatial Magic], prepared to teleport a far distance from the Hero.

Unfortunately, he wouldn't be fast enough to escape.

He knew that already.

He could use his Spatial Magic to redirect the sword that neared him, but even that was rendered impossible thanks to the warped space around the blade.

As a result...

"Tch!"

... The Dragon Commander raised one of his hands and reached for the Divine Sword.

He knew blocking was useless, as the blade would simply slice through all obstacles like butter.

However, by letting his arm be sliced off first, it would give him enough time to escape.

Also, it was merely reflex action from a Dragon that didn't want to die.

~SQUELCH!~

His arm was easily severed off, and the blade now neared his head.

Fortunately for him...

~WHUSH!~

... He finally vanished away from harm's way.

Just barely with his life intact.

\*\*\*\*\*

'Damnit! I missed!' Adonis felt his sword crack apart that it fell on.

Everything around him shook, but he ignored all of it.

He had missed the mark on his enemy. Or rather, the Dragon was able to escape faster than he could completely kill it.

'I wanted to end it with that move... damnit!'

Adonis could already feel the strain on his body as he breathed heavily.

His body was tense.

His bones rattled.

He could already feel pain slowly visiting him.

'I can't keep this up for much longer.'

Inasmuch as his entire body had been strengthened by the [Limit Transcendence] ability, he was still using more power than he could keep up with.

"Y-youu...!!"

Adonis could hear a loud bark from the new direction that his adversary appeared to.

He slowly tilted his head as he looked at the enraged beast who still donned human flesh.

Adonis was grateful that he hadn't changed back.

"You injured me? You... a human! You actually managed to wound ME?!"

Disbelief mixed with pure rage formed on his face as his bloodshot eyes focused on Adonis.

"How dare YOU!" He roared in sheer fury.

The entire room responded to his anger by trembling; with Mana Crystals even descending from the ceiling and breaking apart as a result of the cry.

"You'll regret that..."

As the Dragon Commander spoke, his severed hand began to heal up.

Even the tail that had been partially blown up by Adonis' Light Magic was already healing.

Within a few seconds, he would be good as new.

'I can't allow that!'

As Adonis thought this, he coated himself in light and rushed to the Dragon Commander.

"Y-you just don't know when to stop, do you?!" As he said this, he stretched his remaining hand towards Adonis, causing a heavy gust of wind to shoot in the air.

It felt like a powerful pressure that would send anyone flying back in an instant.

However, Adonis' [Absolute Defense] easily blocked off all the effects of his attack.

He closed the distance in a literal flash—no, maybe even a bit faster.

"Keuk!"

As Adonis prepared his blade once again, the Dragon Commander chose to flee.

Unfortunately for it, this time its horns paid the price.

~SWOOSH!~

Two of them were sliced off before he could teleport away, his screams echoing in the room as he vanished quickly.

However, Adonis was still not done!

He detected the distorted space as fast as he could, realizing it was high up in the air.

'[Light Streak]!'

With that single Spell echoing in his thoughts, his body ascended high up, a bit higher than the distortion.

Then—

"W-what?!" As soon as the Dragon appeared and noticed him, Adonis was already descending with a powerful slash.

"No...!"

A slight tilt forward caused the Dragon's life to be spared by a slight margin.

He was able to keep his head.

His wings, however... those two suffered for his carelessness.

"Guaarghh!" The Dragon screamed as he fell from his height, swiftly teleporting away.

Saliva poured out of his mouth as he groaned in desperation.

His eyes sauntered back and forth as he noticed Adonis approaching him yet again, the ferocity of his attacks seemingly unstoppable.

"Damnit! Damnit! Damn you!!"

A glow appeared within the Dragon's mouth, revealing the power that was about to surge forth.

'[Absolute Defense] will take care of that. Right now, I should focus on killing him!' Adonis thought as he increased his pace.

There was no way he would miss this opportunity to execute his prey.

With all these thoughts on his mind, however, Adonis failed to recognize one minute detail.

The Dragon Commander's gaze... was not on him.

It was on his friends!

~BOOOOOOOM!~

The Dragon's Breath was coated in deep purple, and it caused the very space around it to bend and twist.

In an instant after it was fired, the intense burst of energy reached the cluster of five students who had been still the entire time.

"NO!!!"

Even as Adonis screamed, his distraction causing him to halt his attack and lose the resolute glow he once had,

His legs changed direction as he moved towards his friends,  
But he knew, deep within himself, that he would never be able to reach them in time.  
Their fates were sealed.

\*

## **Chapter 160 The Royal Dungeon Incident [Pt 7]**

~BOOOOMMM!!!~

The purple beam of destruction swallowed the students whole, completely shrouding them from sight.

It was too late for Adonis, whose hand simply stretched out as he rushed over, to stop the inevitable outcome of the blast.

Death was certain.

"Hahaha!"

A loud laugh echoed from right behind Adonis, as the Dragon's disgusting voice echoed in his ears.

At that moment, he realized he messed up.

By allowing himself to be distracted by his friends, he turned away from the Dragon, who was already sending another attack at him.

~SQUELCH!~

Adonis felt his entire stomach tear open as a blast from the Dragon's Spatial energy ripped a hole through it.

"Puack!" Blood spurted from his lips as he collapsed on her ground, a small puddle of crimson forming underneath him.

As Adonis collapsed, his vision blurred and he felt the power he had amassed dissipate.

The pain he had been ignoring crashed into him with full impact, and he felt sheer, paralyzing agony.

His entire stomach had been torn open, and every part of his body ached considerably.

There was no worse state to currently be in.

"A-ahh... haaaa..."

As his paralyzed form remained on the cold, hard ground, a shadow appeared above him.

It belonged to none other than the Dragon—its arm and tail already healed up.

"You... I never thought a human could ever push me this far."

His horns were restored nearly instantly.

"A worthless worm like you actually landed a few blows..."

His wings spread out as they too were now fully healed.



"... That is unforgivable!" Stretching out his hand as he glared at Adonis, a purple glow began appearing on his palm.

He was preparing to launch an attack—one that would bypass Adonis' defense and kill him for good.

"As a reward for your impudence, I will grant you a quick death. Be grateful."

The purple light shone brighter, and just as it was time to strike...

"Wind Pull!"

A loud feminine voice echoed in the vast space.

~BOOOOOMMM!~

The blast was fired, causing the ground to shatter apart upon impact.

However, Adonis was nowhere to be found.

"Tch! What now...?!" The Dragon Commander groaned in frustration as he clenched his fist and gritted his teeth.

As he raised his face to look in the direction of the voice, two bright red beams of light sizzled on his skin.

'What's this?'

Before he could recover from his confusion, a sharp gust of wind caused him to be pushed back slightly, causing his balance to grow unstable.

As he tried to recover, he felt countless strings cover his body and pull him towards the ground.

'W-what's going on...?!'

He could also feel a lot of reactions in his body—signs that he was resisting a bunch of low-Tier attacks from an invisible enemy.

However, before he could say anything, a massive explosion, mixed with high-pitch noises disrupted his thoughts and senses.

~BOOOOOOMM!!~

He could feel his body descend to the ground, crashing with unstoppable fervor.

The ray of light didn't stop, and the pressure of the wind from atop him forced him to remain on the ground.

As he struggled to rise, a blast of lightning descended from above and completely shrouded his body.

~ZTTTZZZZZ!!!~

Cackles remained on his skin as smoke rose from all over his clothes and scorched body.

Still, as he tried to stand, a heavy weight caused by the wind forced him to remain on the ground.

'The hell is this?! What's going on?!'

The Dragon couldn't take anymore, so he vanished from his position.

~WHOOSH!~

His wings flapped very loudly as he appeared above the influence of the shackles that held him down and the annoying barrage of attacks that kept annoying him without end.

Once he recovered from his confusion—now perfectly composed—he looked in the only direction where the attacks were coming from.

That was when he saw them...

"How are you still alive?"

... The five that he thought were already dead.

They were currently shrouded by a Magic Barrier—one that had runic symbols on the surface of its invisible layers.

The Dragon Commander didn't need to ask his question again, though.

His eyes darted to the only one that could have done it.

'That woman...!'

His eyes shifted to a certain young lady who had flowing white hair and crimson eyes.

She was currently attending to Adonis, chugging a potion down the boy's throat which healed his injuries at a quick rate.

'Hold on. If she's there, then—!'

The Dragon's eyes widened as he saw that the human prisoner he had kept as bait for them was no longer in his previous position.

He was currently laid on the ground right next to the stubborn five teenagers who were preparing to shoot a volley of attacks at him.

'How was she able to free him so easily? Is she that skilled too?'

His gaze narrowed as he glared at the trembling little ones that still dared to defy him

'These annoying humans...'

The Dragon Commander never expected that he would be pushed this far.

In all of his relatively long life, he had never seen humans like these before.

He didn't think anyone had.

'I hate to admit it, but they're a threat.' He remembered the ongoing 'war' that the Dragons had started with the other Kingdoms.

It was nothing more than a farce for their entertainment.

The Dragons dumped the weaklings to the battlefield and forced them to become more powerful or simply die.

Their race had no use for weaklings.

For the humans and the other races, this was a serious war—

one with everything on the line.

But the Dragons honestly couldn't care less.

They already had the Northern Continent as their territory, and it was more than large enough to house them.

Everything else was either due to a conscious effort to raise strong members of their society, or to enjoy watching the weaklings suffer.

But now... now this Dragon Commander thought slightly differently.

'If there are humans like this in this world, then we should be taking things a little more seriously.'

It was a stain on the pride of Dragons to go all-out on weaklings. He knew that fully well.

That was why he didn't transform to his Dragon Form despite how hard he was pushed.

As a prideful Dragon, he probably wouldn't be able to live with the shame associated with the act.

'But now, I recognize their strength.'

If not for his obvious advantage in the fight and his higher Level, he would not have lasted a single second against the human who fought him.

The Dragon Commander had to silently admit it.

'They're strong.'

But what of it? Compared to the upper echelons of the Draconic Empire, these ones were nothing.

He was a mere Dragon Commander.

There still existed Dragon Generals, who reported directly to the Dragon Lords.

And, the being who stood at the precipice of the Dragon Lords was the invincible one.

The Dragon Emperor.

Compared to those powerful entities, he was just another weakling.

'Maybe I shouldn't overestimate them too much.'

Sure, they had pushed him this far, but it wasn't like they were winning.

No. It was inconceivable to think they would win.

"I think I've had enough of this. There's no need to devour you all any longer."

He was getting tired already.

"I'll just kill all of you and get this over with."