

# Extra 21

## Chapter 21: The Royal Refinery

The surrounding of the Royal Dungeon was left bare.

No house was constructed close to it, and the nearest building was at least a few hundred meters away.

Anyone could see the reason why.

The Royal Dungeon was dangerous for regular people, and while the entire establishment had strong, powerful walls around it, residents of the city still had to keep their distance.

There was also the fact that refining the Minerals was a loud and inconvenient activity that would bother those living too close to the structures put in place.

Due to all of these factors, Rey knew he had to sneak in through very inconspicuous means.

There was an invisible energy dome that surrounded the entire compound, so he couldn't use his bird form to dive inside.

The reason for the barrier wasn't due to security, else the Royal Estate would have it too.

Instead, it was to prevent too much noise and air pollution from spreading to the rest of the city.

Refining Minerals was inevitably going to end up with tons of pollution as a result of the processes involved.

To prevent the Capital from suffering any adverse effects, the barrier was established.

It took Mana Crystals to sustain barriers of such Magnitude, and the Crystals had to be changed frequently, so it wasn't sustainable to constantly use the barrier.

'They only use it during production and refining. Afterwards, they turn off the barrier to save energy. If I wait until it's late, I should be able to enter—no big deal.'

Unfortunately, Rey didn't have all the time in the world.

The sooner he entered, the more time he would have to properly train and practice his Skills.

As a result, he decided to use the most reasonable option at his disposal.

~GLOP!~

He found a place to hide with [Stealth] and transformed his body to a new identity.

Afterward, he walked towards the main gate.

'Keep a confident front. You've got this!' Rey told himself as he kept marching forward.

Once he neared the front gate and the soldiers stationed there saw him, their eyes instantly popped out in surprise.

"H-Head Warrior!" They all yelled in shock.

Many of them had star-struck expressions on their faces. Nervousness filled the air, and shock pervaded all their demeanors.

'I guess Brutus is like a hero to them.' Rey felt his confidence strengthened.

He was currently taking on the form of one of the two strongest people in the entire Alliance, after all.

"W-what brings you here, sir?"

"Do you require our assistance for anything?"

"I love you, sir!"

So many mixed reactions filled the air as they stared at him intensely.

Rey felt a bit awkward, considering how he wasn't used to getting so much attention.

'It's as I suspected. Brutus hardly leaves the Royal Capital, so using this body won't place me in a complicated mess.'

His initial fear was that he could be asked certain things that only Brutus would know, or worse still... Brutus was already inside the compound and he would instantly be identified as an imposter.

'I made sure to confirm that Brutus was in the Royal Estate before arriving here, but it seems that was unnecessary.'

Everyone here was shocked to see him, which meant he hadn't made an appearance here in a while.

And more importantly, he wasn't going to do it anytime soon.

'I'll deal with that when the situation comes. For now, I should handle this.'

"It's been a while since I came here. I only want to have a look around..."

Speaking in Brutus' deep voice felt good to Rey for some reason, but he composed himself.

"In that case, we better inform—!"

"... Alone."

Once he said this, narrowing his brows in a knowing fashion, the skins of the guards jumped instantly.

"A-ah! Understood!"

Apparently, that was all he had to say to be granted access inside.

"H-here! Please wear these, sir."

One one hand was a special filter mask, and Rey instantly realized what it was for.

'The insides are very stuffy, so this prevents overexposure to the air poisoning.'

The mask had goggles attached to it, so his eyes were also safe from irritation.

The second item was a pair of Earplugs.

'It won't completely cancel the noise, but it blocks off most of the grinding and overbearing sound that pervades this establishment.'

Rey wore everything in a hurry, and after he was done, they opened the very thick and heavy doors for him to enter.

He swiftly entered, and they closed the doors instantly.

'Ahh... I see what happened now.' Rey smiled in his Brutus form.

The gates didn't use Energy Barriers, so they had to swiftly close the doors before too much of the noise and polluted air seeped out.

'I felt something while entering, though, so they must have some filter that prevents most of it from leaking out immediately.'

In any case, the entire structure was built very effectively, and now that Rey witnessed its interior, he confirmed that was the case.

So many large buildings and silos decorated the vast compound, and workers were walking in multiple directions, working their asses off.

No one really noticed him, since he was wearing a mask and goggles, and frankly everyone was too busy to pay him much mind.

'Second phase complete. Now for the final stage...'

It didn't take Rey too long to spot the entrance to the Royal Dungeon from where he stood.

A troop of Miners were charging in with their bags behind them and masks on their faces.

They had uniformed overalls that covered their bodies, so it was difficult to distinguish one from the other.

'Alright! Here goes!'

With a mischievous smile, Rey used [Stealth] and ran to join the ranks of miners, using his [Mimic] Skill to replicate their uniforms.

He instantly became one of them and went in as easily as they did.

Before long, he was able to enter the Dungeon's gaping mouth.

'Hehehe! So far, so good!'

## **Chapter 22: The Sixth Floor**

~Tit~

~Tat~

Footsteps echoed within the massive cave-like structure, with a troop of workers trailing together in a straight line.

They had their equipment in their grasp, and a large backpack behind them, there they were to place the minerals they were able to mine.

~Tit~

~Tat~

As they proceeded, the workers began to get fewer. That was because some had already left for their stations.

Every worker had their respective work areas for the day, so as to ensure the distribution of labor and harvesting of resources was well evened out.

As for the area of mining, it was restricted to the first to fifth floors of the Dungeon.

Anything beyond that was considered 'Dangerous Territory' by the establishment.

As a result, the resources in the first-fifth floors were already thinning out.

However, unless they were absolutely certain that they had been exhausted, no one in their right mind would move to a more dangerous zone for profit.

Besides, the Royal Palace had already issued an announcement that they would soon be sending a team to venture deeper into the Dungeon.

Once the team paved the way for them, they could finally harvest more Minerals.

At least, that was the hope.

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'Alright. I've found the entrance to the 6th Floor.'

Rey smiled as he noticed a tightly shut gate.

He was currently using [Stealth], so no one noticed his presence within the room.

Not only that, but all the workers were already too busy in their designated spots to care about him.

The entrance was also further away from the designated workplace of anyone, so he couldn't be seen even if he decided to undo [Stealth].

'I better keep it on, though...' He decided.

The entrance was like a grandiose basement door—with two gates tightly shut that it felt like they had merged together.

The gates had a dull golden color, with tiny glitters here and there. Try surmised that it must have once been a very pretty structure, but its luster had been ruined by dirt and grime.

'From what I noticed about the first five floors, each floor is quite deep and extensive—like a cave.'

The mere fact that such an elaborate structure could exist without caving in meant it had very strong materials making up its building.

'I was able to study the design that architects and Dungeon Experts made on the Royal Dungeon—at least, up to the sixth floor or so.'

For the survey, they had done an elaborate search and schematics check on the entire Dungeon, and what they found was surprising.

Structure-wise, the Royal Dungeon should have caved in already, considering it's architecture was flawed, and it was estimated to have over 50 Floors just based on the topography.

'The most likely reason it hasn't done so yet, other than its powerful components... is Magic.'

The origin of Dungeons was still a mystery, but for the longest time the people of H'Trae believed it formed naturally.

It was only until recently that they began to realize it couldn't have formed naturally, else it would have collapsed.

This gave birth to a new leading theory;

Dungeons were made by people—or at least, some form of intelligent life.

"I suppose that theory holds up. Ah... I'm getting sidetracked." Rey murmured to himself and looked at the gates.

From what he was seeing, no one was going to interrupt and disturb him if he trained in the sixth floor or anything below.

'At least, not anytime soon.'

With that in mind, Rey reached out for the gate's entrance and touched it.

As the cool surface tingled his fingers, he analyzed its structure.

'It's very thick. The materials are sturdy too. I see why they're confident that no monster will make it up here.'

With a smile, Rey undid his [Stealth] and activated yet another Skill.

'[Phase]'

The moment he did that, his hand began to sink into the gate of gold and iron. His body soon followed as he thrust every part of himself inside.

'Now then... let's see what awaits me!'

He fell downward, now crashing from the ceiling of the Sixth Floor downward.

"Oof!" He landed with his buttocks, feeling the sting permeate his body in no time.

'Ow... ow... that hurts!'

Rey soon gained his vision and looked upward.

'Damn. Looks like I fell from quite the distance.' He smiled nervously.

The distance from the ground and ceiling was at least fifteen meters, and he had just fallen from that height without any Active Skills working.

'I guess my base Stats are pretty good.'

That wasn't to say he didn't feel sore all over, but the pain soon disappeared once he rose to his feet and stretched his body.

'The disadvantage with [Phase] is that I can't see or even sense anything while I'm currently intangible.'

'That makes it highly difficult to use in combat.'

It was also why he didn't use it to escape the walls of the Royal Estate.

If he had done so, he could have been caught the moment he stepped foot outside.

'It also takes a considerable amount of Mana, so I had to even undo Stealth to use it.'

There were other Buff Skills he could use to supplement his Mana, but they were too flashy.

Plus, since he hadn't used most of the Skills in his arsenal, he decided to hold off on them until he had the chance to fully explore them.

'That aside, I'm here now.' Rey smiled to himself.

From what he could see in the sixth floor, there were no monsters present.

It was extremely dark, but thankfully, there were luminous stones that decorated the walls that surrounded him.

'It's wide enough for twenty men to walk side by side comfortably.' He noticed.

The ceiling was also far from the ground, which solidified Rey's perception of the place being perfect for his purposes.

'I'm guessing I'll encounter monsters if I go any further...'

He considered just doing his training close to the entrance of the sixth floor, but quickly decided against it.

'If the monsters detect my usage of Mana, it's possible that they could get drawn to me.'

It would suck if he was interrupted when he was in the middle of training.

Plus, Rey didn't feel the most comfortable training so close to the entrance.

'I know the workers won't be able to detect me even if I stay close to the entrance due to how far up the entrance is and how thick the surface is, but still...'

What if they finally decided to explore the Dungeon while he was still training?

That meant he would be the first face they would see.

'At least if I train further in, I can have some time to escape if I notice they are venturing into the 6th Floor.'

With those thoughts in his head, Rey clapped his hands together.

"Welp! That settles it!"

He took measured steps forward and began to advance into the Floor.

"Might as well get rid of all encumbrances."

### **Chapter 23: First Encounter With Monsters**

"SKRRRRR...!"

"KRRRIIIII!!!"

Rey was stopped dead in his tracks as he encountered two middle-sized critters almost as soon as he began his journey.

These beasts resembled wild jackals, but they were walking on two feet.

'Bipedal, huh? And from those features... they're kobolds, aren't they?'

The Kobolds were as tall as an average child—about a meter tall.

They had no weapons, but their sharp claws and drooling and gaping mouths showed they had more than enough tools to be predators.

Their grimy skins were covered in scales, and they stared hungrily at Rey with their bloodshot eyes.

"I didn't think I would run into any opposition so soon. But I guess here we are."

"GRRRRRRRRRR....!!!"

Rey could see that they were cautious of him—perhaps due to instinct.

However, they also seemed to ignore that sensible part of themselves.

'Too hungry perhaps?' He mused.

Either way, even if they were to leave him alone, he never intended to let them go.

"You guys are nuisances to me. In order to enjoy my training in peace, I better get rid of all of you."

Rey thought of it like a renovation.

"This could also serve as some form of training for me."

~WHOOOSHH!~

The two Kobolds lunged at Rey with gaping jaws and outstretched hands.

They were clearly aiming to rip him to shreds in one fell swoop, and their merciless gazes did not betray their motive.

"Fire Spell: Flame Wall"

~VWUUUUMM!~

In an instant, flames roared in front of Rey, shielding him from the imminent onslaught.

"KIYAAAAA!!!"

The screams of the Kobolds echoed in Rey's ears as he smelled something roasting.

'I guess they weren't fast enough to stop advancing.'

Considering they were in midair when he activated the Spell, Rey realized it would have been difficult even if they were fast enough.

"Their durability isn't too high as well since the fire instantly killed them." He mumbled.

He currently had the [Grand Fire Magic] Skill, which was an A-Tier Skill.

As a result, his flames were quite powerful.

'My [Magic Application] Skill and [Grand Magic Mastery] also allows me to be able to properly use Magic despite no training, and without chanting it fully.'

In essence, all he had to do was learn the right Spells and practice their effects.

'And I'm good to go!'

It felt like he was cheating at this point, but Rey knew that wasn't the case.

He still had one major problem that served as a limiter to him.

'My Mana Level... it's quite low.'

Just that single Spell of his had cost him almost half of his base Mana.

'I only have 7 Mana Points left out of my current 12 total.'

Using A-Tier Skills cost more Mana, even if they were used in a limited fashion.

'Well, to be fair, I was using multiple Skills at the same time.'

Rey didn't allow himself to be distracted by this, though.

Once the Flame Wall fell and dissipated, he was able to see what was left of the Kobolds—ashes and two glistening stones.

"Ah, a Monster Core." Rey smiled as he looked at the red crystal-like objects.

"[Inventory]."

A large screen appeared in front of him instantly, with many boxes displayed on the screen.

A few of the boxes had things within them—like the face mask and ear plugs.

"Let's add these two." He smiled.

Rey had been tempted to take some of the luminous stones and Mana Stones he was seeing, but he decided against it.

This was a National Treasure, and doing something like that would be equal to stealing.

'At least, for these Kobolds... I killed them.'

They were his prey.

'My conscience won't allow me to steal from a Nation that is already struggling.'

With those thoughts consuming his thoughts, Rey decided to keep moving forward.

'Let's see how far my base Mana can take me without any Buffs.'

He stepped over the dissipating ashes of the Kobolds and advanced deeper into the Dungeon's embrace.

It got dark at a point, so Rey decided to use a Spell he learned from the Grand Mage herself.

"Fire Brid."

Instantly, a flame ball appeared atop his palm. It wasn't as large or as powerful as Lucielle's own, but it was enough to shine light on his surroundings.



"GRRRRRRRR..."

"KRRRRRIIIII..."

"KUUUURRRRR..."

Rey soon began to hear more grumbles and rumbles around him.

'Well, I guess it's time for another round.'

With his heightened senses, he was able to sense the swift movements of the monsters that had somehow managed to surround him.

While the Brid was enough to light his immediate surroundings, the monsters were smart enough to lurk in the shadows.

Rey presumed they were waiting for him to let down his guard so they could strike.

'That's not gonna happen, though.' He let out a sure grin.

"I've pretty much figured out their number and positions."

The flames on his palm cast a shadow on his face and caused an ember glow to radiate from his eyes.

He was feeling very excited for some reason.

"Why don't we try this..."

Raising his hand slightly, he cast his next Spell.

"Fire Magic: Flame Arrows."

His Skills worked in conjunction with the Spell to generate his desired amount of arrows.

~WHOOOSH!!~

All five arrows found their targets in one swift motion, searing through the air and piercing the flesh of their prey.

"KUAAARRERHHHHHH!!!"

Disgusting sounds of beasts wailing filled the air, as well as a sizzling sound from the flame's impact upon flesh.

The smell of burning meat filled the air and tickled Rey's nose, but he remained calm.

After all...

"KURAAAAA!!!"

... He wasn't sure their wounds were fatal.

Three creatures lunged at him, not concerned about being seen in the light any longer.

"I heard that wounded animals are the most dangerous..." Rey smiled as he watched them rush towards him.

Their desperate and pained expressions fueled their launch towards him.

They seemed to personify primal rage, but even that did not move Rey in the slightest.

Right here... right now... he was in absolute control.

~WHOOSH!~

He threw his Brid—the flickering flames on his palm—towards one of the creatures, killing it instantly.

The remaining two were suddenly stopped midair by the crushing grip of Rey's hands.

"You guys don't seem dangerous to me."

Warm blood dripped on his skin as he pressed his fingers on the throat of the struggling creatures.

They seemed so fragile as they squirmed under his grip.

~SQUISH!~

In no time at all, he eliminated the two, causing them to fall to the ground.

"I should burn them up. They'll be a bother if they're left to rot."

While this was a fantasy world that had Classes and Skills, as well as a System, it wasn't a game.

It was real life.

If a creature died, they would begin to decompose. Rey didn't want to imagine the kind of smell these things would give off if they were left alone.

~WHOOSH!~

Rey properly burned the corpses of the creatures and took their Monster Core.

Once he was done with the process, he found himself looking ahead.

"More are waiting for me, huh...?"

Despite that realization, nothing like fear tugged at his heart.

Instead, it was excitement.

"Let's do this."

## **Chapter 24: The Boss Kobold**

"Fire Brid."

~VWUM!~

"Flame Wall."

~FWUUSH!~

"Flame Arrows."

~WHOOSH!!~

Rey advanced as he utilized the only three Fire Spells he could properly use.

The other Spells related to Fire Magic either drained too much Mana or would not be very optimal to use in an underground structure.

'And this isn't really so bad.' Rey told himself as he traversed the cavernous space.

As he trampled atop the burned bodies of his victims, Rey felt something curious tugging at his heart.

'Why am I not really moved? Isn't it odd?'

From what he had read or learned about situations like this, most first-timers ended up being very scared or nervous when confronted with monsters.

That was why Dungeon exploration was usually done in teams.

Experienced individuals would often lead the team in order to prevent an absolute breakdown or chaos among their ranks.

'Yet here I am, completely alone, yet I'm not losing my shit...'

Rey didn't even have a passive Skill that told him he had to be calm or anything, and it wasn't like he hadn't been jumpscared a few times since he began this adventure.

But, for the majority of the time spent here, he genuinely didn't feel nervous or scared.

'Is it because I read up so much about them that seeing the real thing didn't bother me anymore?'

That couldn't be the case, considering how many scholars often froze up when confronted with the real-life manifestations of the things they studied.

Rey explored various explanations, but after everything he settled on one.

"I don't know." He sighed.

All he knew was that he was enjoying himself, and it felt good to do so.

After Rey walked further for a while longer, he finally encountered an area with a lot more Mana Crystals than the previous areas.

The stones gleamed so brightly that it made Rey's Brid obsolete.

"There's lots of energy here. I guess that means I'm close to the Boss." He grinned.

Every Dungeon floor operated practically the same way.

For every one that existed, there had to be a Boss occupying it.

The first to fifth Floor had been conquered, and the Bosses were gone. However, considering everything else hadn't been fully explored, it was only natural to think the Boss here was still alive.

'The Boss is the strongest in a Floor. So far, I've been encountering nothing but Kobolds—some stronger than others.'

The closer one got to the Boss Room, the more powerful the monsters that one would encounter tended to be.

It was pretty much the law of the Dungeon.

Let's keep advancing..."

Rey kept his guard up, ensuring he had proper attention placed in his surroundings.

'Using [Stealth] would be useless because Kobolds rely more on their sense of smell, and the Skill only affects visuals.'

It would only be a waste of Mana.

As he neared his target, he noticed the Mana Crystals around him had gotten even more.

Not only were they bigger than before, but they could be found practically littering around.

'Well, these are the nearly transparent Mana Crystals. They have the lowest quality.'

Of course, having so many of them in one spot made them extremely valuable.

Rey knew he would make a small fortune if he took them all for himself.

However... once again, he reminded himself why he wasn't doing any of that.

'Let's just focus on the task ahead.'

"KUUURRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR..."

Rey heard a grumble.

It was so loud, and merely the sound of it caused his skin to rattle.

The ground he stood on began to tremble slightly, and Rey found saliva forming at the end of his throat.

'Okay. Maybe this is a little worrying.'

Bosses usually had special space dedicated to them—Boss Rooms, as one would call it.

However, not all of them operated like this.

Some liked to stay in the open, with the rest of the mobs.

... That was the case with this one.

Rey's eyes widened as he noticed the hulking figure in front of him.

'Why didn't I detect it earlier? Does it have the Stealth Skill too?'

The Kobold Boss was much larger than the other small fries that Rey had encountered. It was at least twice as tall as Rey, with fur so black that it seemed like he was coated in the night.

His bloodshot eyes were focused on Rey, and they gleaned with primal purpose.

Rey felt like prey the more he looked into its eyes.

The Boss was currently seated, but once Rey stopped moving, he began to stand to his feet.

Its lean waist and crooked legs made its bipedal form seem more nimble than usual, and its sharp claws were at least six inches long.

"Looks like I gotta be careful with this one..." Rey mumbled as he gulped down the saliva that had formed in his throat.

"GUUUURRRRRR..."

Once the Boss had completely risen to his feet, he lifted his leg to initiate an approach.

'Okay! Once he moves, I'll—!'

~WHOOSH!~

Right before Rey's eyes, it seemed like the Boss Monster vanished.

It felt more like a blur, because the next thing that happened was the Kobold Boss was right in front of Rey, with his hand raised for a slash.

'C-crap!'

All of it happened too fast for his eyes to properly register, and now his body was still trying to process everything to properly react.

"[A-Absolute Defense]!" Rey yelled out.

In that instant, a very powerful beam of transparent light covered his immediate surroundings.

As a result...

~WHOOOOSSSHHH!!!~

... He was able to properly protect himself from the first strike of the Boss.

'What in the world was that?!' Rey thought to himself as he glared at the Kobold Boss.

The horrid creature was already raising its hand for another volley of attacks.

'I should use a surefire Skill to quickly end thi...ss...?!'

As Rey stretched out his hand to launch a powerful Skill, he suddenly realized something.

His energy was gone!

'I-I'm out of Mana?!' His thoughts echoed in apprehension.

But how?!

The answer reflected around him, shimmering as it was about to vanish due to his current lack of energy.

'Damn! It's the [Absolute Defense]!'

Thus far, Rey had only been using 'Flame Wall' as his defensive maneuver, so he had no idea how draining the [Absolute Defense] Skill could be.

'Crap!'

As the transparent field of defense slowly vanished, and the Kobold Boss descended his sharpened claws, Rey's thoughts entered a state of disarray.

'A-ahh...!'

It was at this point that he realized the answer to the earlier question; the reason why he was so calm despite being in a Dungeon for the first time.

'I... I was certain of my victory.'

Why?

'I was strong.'

He killed all those monsters with relative ease and confirmed just how powerful he was.

Afterward, he took it all in stride. To him, it felt like nothing more than kicking evil dogs who were mere chiwawas.

They didn't pose a real threat to him.

... Until now.

'A-am I going to die?!' Rey asked himself.

His thoughts were in shambles for a moment, and he felt like so many things were happening within his at once.

'Is this... the end?!'

## **Chapter 25: Fight Or Flight**

Fight or Flight.

Those are the two responses that humans could give in a precarious situation.

Once you're rushing with adrenaline, your body automatically wishes to protect itself, so it gives you those two choices.

Fight... to survive and overcome the threat.

Or

Flight... to escape and live to fight another day.

However, there was one other response the body could give to an overwhelming stimulus of danger.

... Paralyzing stillness!

The body being unable to move despite the overpowering danger that was currently in front of you.

That was the kind of position that Rey was in.

His body refused to listen to him as he watched the Kobold Boss raise his hand and bring it down.

~SWOOOSHH!~

The sharp claws gleamed as they sliced through the air, ready to make contact with Rey's flesh and dice his skin.

At that point, despite being unable to move, Rey desperately sought out answers within himself.

'I don't want to die! I don't want to die!'

With this, his brain went into overdrive, barely giving him enough time to think before his body would be turned to mincemeat.

As the claw neared him—a mere inch from his face—a switch clicked.

"[Greater Warrior's Mantle]!"

~CLANG!~

The claw of the Boss was sent flying back as a result of the resistance it got from its target.

"G-GURR..?!" Recoiling from the failed attack, the Boss Monster glared at Rey in confusion.

That strike just now was supposed to have ended it all.

Yet... yet...

"GUUUURRRRR!!!"

... Why was its prey still alive?!

~WHOOOOM!~

Rey swiftly dashed forward, his body now gleaming with blue energy as sparks of lightning-like energy coated his body.

As he launched his body, a blur trailed after him, and he could feel the rush of wind on his face.

He was moving really fast, and he enjoyed every moment of it!

~WHOOSH!~

He was able to close his distance with the stumbling Boss, clenching his fist as he sent it towards the raging beast.

The result was inevitable.

~BOOOM!!~

The Kobold Boss was sent flying backwards, despite being twice as large as Rey.

It crashed upon the wall, shattering the Mana Crystals that were growing there.

"G-Gurrr...?!"

The Boss let out whimpers of confusion, but Rey was hardly focusing on that now.

He stared at his hands, watching as lightning danced on his skin and the blue energy coiled around his body.

It was a strange sensation.

'I feel much more powerful than before. That was really a close one.'

Rey smiled to himself in relief.

'How could I have forgotten about my Buff Category?'

Some Buff Skills didn't require Mana, since they were useful for improving one's Mana and other Stats for a limited period.

Instead, they had duration and cooldown periods, and the cooldown periods only got shorter the more adept one was at using the Skills, or how long the Skill was utilized.

'[Greater Warrior's Mantle] focuses more on defense and mobility. Since it's a B-Tier Skill, the Kobold Boss couldn't penetrate the energy armor around me.'

If it wasn't for that, he would be dead.

'I better end this quickly. I don't know when the Duration ends.'

The Kobold Boss was already getting up from its slumped state, with the Mana Crystals around it crumbling as it rose.

He made a low growl, difficult for Rey to decipher.

Inasmuch as the massive creature showed rage towards Rey, there was an element of fear... of caution.

It didn't see Rey as just prey anymore, but as a threat.

A threat that had to be eliminated!

"ROOOOAAARRRRR!!!"

The sudden roar of the Kobold Boss shook the space they occupied, causing the ground to rattle and even the ceiling to tremble.

The Boss' eyes began to glow crimson, and a red aura stuck to its body.

'It's also Buffing itself! This is bad!'

Right now, Rey had the advantage because he was buffed up. If the Boss did the same, who was to say the scales wouldn't be tilted?

'I have to hurry!'

The best way to really do that was to utilize yet another Buff.

"[Greater Mana Boost]."

With this Skill, his Mana Level shot up like crazy, and he felt himself overflowing with power.

The blue energy around his body radically increased, and so did the numerous sparks of lightning.

He was now ready.

'I didn't want to use this, but I have to be sure the Boss dies after my attack.'

That meant he couldn't be considerate or pull his punches.

"Fire Magic: Flame Explosion!" Stretching out both of his hands, Rey called out the name of his Spell.

At this point, the berserk Kobold Boss was smacking the ground, causing a quake around it.

It drooled endlessly as it snorted, both gazes fixated on Rey.

~BOOM!~

The ground around it shattered as it rushed towards Rey, both claws now having a blood-red glow about them.



Its hands were outstretched, and they had one purpose alone—dicing the opponent into a million pieces.

As for Rey, something was already forming in front of his stretched out hands.

It seemed like a swirling mass of flames, and it kept rotating at a swift rate.

~WHOOOSSSH!!~

The more it rotated, the more powerful it became, growing hotter and hotter while amplifying its mass.

The Kobold Boss grew nearer, and Rey realized he wouldn't be able to complete the process before he was attacked.

'Ah... screw it!'

The swirling bundle of flames was still forming, but Rey didn't want to take his chances.

'I've had enough of this.' He aimed his outstretched hands towards the fast approaching beast.

He just wanted it to end.

'Go!'

~WHUUUUUMMMMM!!!~

The fierce hum of the rotating flames as they shot towards the target caused the air around it to tremble.

In a blur much faster than the Kobold Boss could muster, the burst of flames landed on the designated target, causing it to roar in pain.

However, this was only the start.

'Erupt!' Rey thought with a wide grin.

And with that, the swirling flames finally expanded and revealed its true nature.

~BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

The Kobold Boss was immersed in the flames, covered from head to toe as it screamed—probably begging for mercy.

It was too late for that, though, and the caster of the Spell was not very forgiving.

Rey simply watched as his enemy roasted, having a smile of approval on his face as he witnessed the process from beginning to end.

The eruption rose in both height and width, forcing Rey to take multiple steps back not to be caught in it.

The flames rose to the ceiling, licking it with their scorching display.

Until finally... it died down.

"Haaaaa..." Rey smiled, collapsing to the ground while huffing his biggest sigh of relief yet.

"Sixth Floor Subjugation... complete."

## Chapter 26: Return To The Estate

"I guess I'm still getting the hang of learning my Skills and stuff..."

As Rey mumbled those words to himself, he set his eyes on the few things that had dropped from the Boss Monster.

The crimson core was much larger than the ones Rey had collected thus far, and that wasn't the only the thing he saw.

There were a few gleaming things on the ground, and he approached them slowly.

'It's not just the Monster Core this time, huh? I guess that's what you'd expect from a higher-quality monster.'

Sharpened claws littered the floor, like a trophy left behind after the Kobold Boss' demise.

'Since this is like a game, I guess these can be referred to as Drops.'

Rey added them to his inventory and sighed in relief when he was done with everything.

'Looks like all went well...' He smiled.

He was now all alone in the Sixth Floor, and from the looks of it, only a few hours had passed since he began this entire escapade.

'Now that I think about it, that Boss Monster displayed a Skill at the end of our fight. I should have used Doppel on it.'

However, almost as soon as he had this thought, Rey realized he wasn't really missing out on anything.

'It was most likely an inferior Skill compared to the ones I have.'

When he remembered how the monster acted berserk after activating the Skill, Rey was even more convinced that it was not what he wanted.

'I think I should be fine with what I have for now.' Rey thought to himself.

'Right now, I should do my best to master the Skills at my disposal.'

If he did well in it, he could even go to the Seventh Floor or further below to test his abilities.

'Yeah. That works. I should focus on that for now.'

Rey could feel his heart race and his body tremble in anticipation.

He hadn't ever been this excited about anything else in his life. The idea of having so many Skills, and finally being able to explore them all by himself...

... They gave him so much satisfaction.

'I should probably start tomorrow, though. Right now, I need to head back.'

It took almost an hour—even with his uninterrupted flight—to travel from the Royal Estate—to the Sixth Floor.

If he used the same metric on his journey back, he would have to leave at least two hours for his travels back and forth.

'Feels like a waste, but there's no other choice. It's a shame that I don't have a long-range teleportation Skill.'

That would have made all of this much easier.

Once Rey decided on exactly what he wanted to do, he proceeded to leave the Sixth Floor.

'I'll be back tomorrow!'

\*\*\*\*\*

Using his [Flight] Skill to reach the ceiling, and his [Phase] to make it past the locked gate that separated the Floors, Rey was able to leave the Sixth Floor.

He was unable to disguise as a worker in the mines due to the regulations involving their work—since no miner was to leave their designated work area until their shift was over.

As a result, he simply chose to use [Stealth] while traversing the Floors.

Light wasn't an available commodity there, so the chances of him being caught were zero.

Plus, the miners were regular folk, so it was most unlikely that they would have any Skills that could detect him.

Right as he was about to leave the Dungeon, he once again donned his disguise as Head Warrior Brutus, wearing his mask and ear plugs.

"Haaa..."

After he left the Dungeon, the first thing he did was raise his head and look to the sky.

The evening sun was almost done setting, and it was at least 7:00 PM.

'It's pretty dark. I guess I spent more time than I realized.'

Relying on his internal clock too much was too detrimental. If he ended up wasting more time than he planned, the chances of being caught increased exponentially.

'I should bring a clock next time. My Inventory still has some space.'

Once he made that decision, he approached the gate, and the guards who guarded the interior stopped him for credentials.

"Head Warrior Brutus. Checked in approximately four hours ago. This is an unofficial visit, and I'd like to keep it that way."

The guards were all stunned—some even went as far as gawking—as they stood in the presence of the Head Warrior.

They instantly opened the gates for him, and he was able to exit.

'Now here comes the tricky part.'

Once he proceeded out of the gate, the guards who were guarding it from the outside waved and greeted him with the respect that the Head Warrior deserved.

Their gazes were fixated on him, and he was sure they would all keep looking at him while he exited.

'I'm in a hurry right now. I can't afford to walk back. But I can't turn into a bird in front of them, now can I?'

After deliberating for a while, Rey came up with the perfect solution.

'[Projection].'

It was a Skill that allowed the user to cast illusions on the target of choice.

The target would only see what the user wanted then to.

'I don't know the level of these guards, but this is pretty much my only... hold on...'

Rey's thoughts paused at that very moment.

Something wasn't right.

'How could I have forgotten!' His eyes widened as his body became stopped in motion.

'My Level... I never saw it increase.'

Usually, in games, panels like [You Have Leveled Up] would appear once a person reached a certain threshold.

But none of that appeared to Rey even once.

'I'll check it once I have reached my room. Right now, I have to hurry.'

Try quickly activated his [Projection] Skill, and based on the direction of his target's eyes, it seemed to work.

He used an illusion to show him walking in a different direction, while his real self became invisible to them.

And all the guards bought it.

'C-Tier Skills certainly have their uses!' He grinned, activating his [Mimic] Skill at that very moment.

Once he turned into a bird, Rey activated [Flight] and [Greater Warrior's Mantle] to improve his speed while he traversed the air.

~WHOOOOSSSH!!!~

Without looking back, or being distracted by anything else around him, Rey departed for the Royal Estate.

The darkened sky above him, and the many clouds that drifted in the night sky were his only company as he drifted by himself.

'Can't screw this up!' His bird eyes furrowed as he increased his speed.

~WHOOOOSH!~

\*\*\*\*\*

Rey arrived at the Royal Estate's walls in no time, and swiftly using [Stealth] while approaching it, he was able to gracefully land in one of the trimmed bushes closest to the walls.

~GLOP~

He slowly returned to his original form, glad to see that the cover of the night was able to mask his presence very well.

He could see some guards patrolling the Royal Estate, but they weren't going to give him any trouble since he was one of the 'Otherworlders,'

'I did it! I'm home free!'

Rey had been worried for a second, but everything ended up going according to plan.

"Hehehe... hehe—!"

"What are you doing there?" A sudden voice shattered his thoughts, and a presence approached him.

The voice was feminine, and so was the silhouette that now stood right beside the bush that he was hiding behind.

Her cold gaze greeted him as her brown hair swayed with the wind.

It was Alicia White.

'What the hell is she even doing out here at this time?!' Reg thought to himself, but unfortunately he was unable to ask her that.

Instead, he felt the pressure of her gaze while contemplating what to say.

"I... um..."

As Rey stuttered, Alicia narrowed her gaze on him, causing all his words to be trapped somewhere behind his throat.

'Crap! This is bad!'

Of all the people that could spot him, it had to be Alicia White—the most skeptical among all his classmates.

'What should I do?!'

## **Chapter 27: A Girl's Walk**

[Moments Earlier]

"I should start heading out now..."

Alicia closed up the book she was reading and looked around her.

As expected, she was the only one left in the Royal Library. It didn't come as a shock to her, considering that this had been the case for her for as long as they arrived in this world.

She sighed as she rose to her feet, returning the book to its rightful location.

As she did so, her eyes darted to a particular spot—the place where a particular student usually occupied when he came to the library.

'He's the only one who comes here consistently. I didn't see him today, though. I wonder what happened...'

Alicia slowly stifled her worry, shaking her head a little as she made her way out of the library.

As much as she didn't want to admit it, she had noticed his absence today.

... The exact same way she noticed his presence every other day.

'It feels like we're sort of similar. And when we're in the library, we have this unspoken bond between us...'

Alicia quickly caught herself making these silly thoughts and nearly slapped her hand on her face.

'What the heck am I thinking about? That sounds creepy!'

As library buddies, she was just wondering where he was.

However, she wasn't going to be getting her answers.

'I can only guess. Maybe... he got tired of the library...'

Somehow, the very thought of that didn't sit well with her. She wasn't sad or anything, but she wasn't happy about it either.

Honestly, she just didn't know what to feel about it.

'I should take a stroll...' Alicia thought to herself once she got out of the library building.

She took in the fresh night breeze, allowing it to tickle her nostrils as her hair danced with the wind.

There were a lot of things to dislike about this world, but the freshness of the air and the allure of its surroundings were one of its good points.

'It's too bad they're trivial compared to the negative.' Alicia's thoughts trailed as she moved her legs and began walking.

Now was a good time for her to reflect on all the things that had been going on thus far.

She knew full well that she had been alienated from the main groups, and she could see why.

'I was so wrapped up in finding more information about this world, for the sake of the class, that I was soon tagged a bookworm.'

The repressed jealousy and dislike that so many of her classmates had were now surfacing, and she could see them for the hypocrites that they were.

'I'm not surprised, though. I already knew ever since my Skill selection with Seraph.'

That was when she found out her Karma Points were a mere 57.

'How was that even possible?' She had thought to herself.

She was the most popular girl in her class, and she had so many people who fawned around her.

But in the end, it was all fake.

'A lot of them must have really despised me. That's why I have such low Karma.'

It was only by some miracle that she was able to get her SS-Tier Skill, which granted her a free A-Tier Class and an additional free S-Tier Skill.

According to Seraph, certain Skills and Classes, if chosen, caused a chain reaction that either caused a discount for others to be selected, or gave freebies.

In essence, she had been extremely lucky in her selection.

If not, she would be stranded with only a few low-tier Skills and a subpar Class—sort of like Rey.

'I wonder what kind of Karma he had for him to be able to only avoid such a poor Class and Skill.'

His Skill wasn't too bad, but it wasn't particularly worth anything among their classmates since someone had a Skill just like his—but better.

His Class was the absolute worst, which meant his Stats were in shambles at this point.

'I thought he would want to reinforce his weakness with knowledge so he could have an edge in this new world...'

Frankly, she liked that.

She admired his consistency. Despite not spending as much time as her in the library, he showed up every day.

It was like their daily ritual.

'But it looks like... that won't be the case anymore.'

Alicia stared up at the moon and smiled, feeling its faint glow of moonlight bathe her.

A few guards were stationed about, but they minded their business and none of them disturbed her.

As such, she was able to freely enjoy her walk without any kind of interference.

"It's funny, isn't it? Even now, I keep trying to find out new information for my classmates, and they despise me more."

She had wanted to suggest the idea of the library to them from the very second day, but none of them would have responded positively.

Merely hearing about training soured their mood greatly, so she couldn't push it any further.

No one wanted this world to resemble school at all, so they didn't want to study.

That meant she had to do all of this herself.

Alicia didn't particularly mind, but she had been ostracized because of her time in the library, and now she was faced with a reality she couldn't escape.

"I have no friends. All of them are just... haaa..."

They were constantly gossiping about her past relationship with Adonis, despite it already being ages since that happened.

'We only dated for like a week, and it became such a big deal...'

They constantly badmouthed her and cast gazes on her that told her she wasn't welcome with them.

It was crazy! Despite being beautiful, intelligent, and powerful... she was being rejected by everyone around her.

'There is this one guy that talks to me. He looks at me creepily, though. I just... can't stand it.'

Alicia didn't quite know his name, but she knew he often hung around Adonis and Belle.

They were the most popular kids now, considering they were both powerful and socially likable.

Despite her being just as strong as them—perhaps with the exception of Adonis—she didn't have such recognition.

'I've given up on that at this point...' Alicia sighed as she closed her eyes.

She just had to focus on her own personal goals and her most important reason for visiting the library every single day.

'Maybe I can find a way to return home. I... I want to leave this world already.'

Bracing herself with both of her hands, a bittersweet smile formed on her face.

It felt like she was remembering a fond memory.

"Maybe I could ask Rey if we could study it together. Returning ho—"

~FSHHH~

The rustling of a bush close to Alicia caught her attention instantly, so she approached it quietly.

She didn't even realize how close to the walls she had gotten.

Once she arrived there, a gasp nearly escaped her lips.

'W-what?! Isn't that Rey?'

## **Chapter 28: There's Something About Rey**

'Isn't that Rey?!'

The boy in question was hiding behind the bushes, chuckling slightly to himself.

So many questions ran through Alicia's mind as she spotted him. She felt paralyzed, unable to move for some reason.

Perhaps it was because she had just been thinking of him aloud right before seeing him, or maybe it was due to some other reasons.

She felt downright embarrassed.

'D-did he hear any of the things I said?'

She would hope not! Especially the part where she admitted to not having any friends.

Alicia didn't know why exactly she felt it mattered whether Rey perceived her a certain way or not, but she just didn't want it to be the case.

And it was in the heat of this moment that she blurted out her thoughts.

"What are you doing here?"



By the time she heard herself, it was too late.

Her voice traveled faster than she could ever imagine, and Rey was now looking in her direction as a result of that.

'What the hell?! Why did I have to say it out loud?'

Rey's eyes met hers, and while she was slightly flustered by the whole thing, she did her best to maintain a calm demeanor.

She couldn't show any weakness.

"I... um..." As so many thoughts went on in her mind, Rey responded.

He actually replied her!

'I think this is the first time we're speaking to each other.'

It wasn't a big deal or anything, but Alicia just felt like this wasn't the right time.

She could sense hesitation in his tone, and it was clear he didn't want to speak to her.

Whatever business he had going on in the bushes seemed to be more important than talking to her.

Somehow, she found the forthrightness of his expression a little refreshing.

So far, her classmates acted hypocritically in front of her, despite being jealous backstabbers in reality.

The few who sucked up to her made her feel more uncomfortable than not.

'He's not saying anything more. Should I just walk away...?'

It didn't seem like he was being creepy or anything, and based on his reaction to her, he was so immersed in his activity that he didn't notice her coming.

Alicia's curiosity began to increase, little by little.

She wanted to know.

'Could it be...?' Her gaze shifted to the places he would have most likely been looking at if he didn't notice her.

She noticed guards on patrol, and a bunch of them stationary in a single spot, and a theory began to spring up from all those observations.

'Is he monitoring the guards? Why? Does he want to escape the Royal Estate?'

She didn't know much about Rey, but she had never thought someone would be so bold.

'I also have plans on investigating how to leave this place without detection, but I want to learn and grow strong enough to be guaranteed success.'

Right now, despite Rey having the guts to do something so extreme, Alicia felt it wasn't time for him to risk so much.

"You should be more careful. Be patient and study more..."

She didn't know when she blurted out those words

"A-ahhh..."

His voice and expression to her words confirmed her suspicion.

He was indeed trying to find a way out.

'It's good to see that I'm not the only one skeptical of this whole arrangement.'

Somehow, it felt like almost all her classmates were in bed with Adonis and the United Human Alliance.

They did as they were told, no questions asked.

But Alicia didn't want to live like this. She wanted to live on her own terms.

'And I'm not the only one, it seems.' A small smile escaped her lips as she stared at Rey.

'If only he was a little stronger...'

After standing awkwardly for too long, and Rey squatting behind the bushes, Alicia decided it was best to end the conversation.

"We should head back now. It's getting late..."

Rey slowly stood up in response to her words, uttering a very low "Yeah."

Before she realized what was happening, the two of them were walking side by side, all the way to their living quarters.

She didn't even know how it happened, and the two of them didn't even say a word to each other throughout their time together.

They just awkwardly strode along.

Alicia made to open the door to the quarters when she heard a voice that startled her slightly.

"I'll keep what you said in mind."

It felt so firm that she was surprised Rey could muster such words. More and more, she was beginning to see his bold side.

"Please do. And also..." She turned and gave him a smile.

"... I didn't see you in the library today."

Alicia didn't know what exactly she expected him to say in response to what she had just said, but she kept staring at him.

It seemed he was uncomfortable again, but he struggled to speak.

"Yeah... I... will be changing my schedule." He muttered.

"I'll read at night."

Rey's hand went forward to the doorknob, which was already being held by Alicia, and for a moment both of their hands touched.

"A-ah, my apologies!"

"Sorry!"

The two of them recoiled, apologizing almost at the same instant.

The awkward atmosphere around them refused to disappear no matter what.

"I-I guess I'll see you when I see you, then!"

Alicia swiftly twisted the knob and rushed in, leaving Rey standing at the entrance.

It was probably for the best that way, since she didn't want any unnecessary attention to fall on Rey just for hanging out with her.

She rushed to her room, ignoring the few glances she got from her classmates in the living room.

Once she arrived in her room, she instantly shut the door and locked it.

"Haaa..."

It felt like she had been holding her breath for an eternity once she finally exhaled and crumbled on her bed.

'Was he always like this...? Or am I the one who has changed?'

Alicia wasn't sure anymore.

However, if there was one thing she knew for certain, it was that she had now developed an interest in Rey... and perhaps it was the same for him.

'Maybe not. Argh... why did I have to mention the whole library thing?!'

It felt like she had ruined their silent consensus.

"W-well whatever. He said he will be coming in the night, huh...?"

Alicia sighed as she closed her eyes.

"I guess I'll have to be spending more time in the library."

### **Chapter 29: A Pathetic Intrusion**

Rey just stood in front of the door, dumbfounded.

'What in the world just happened?'

For some reason, he got his heart skip a beat just now, and when he and Alicia touched hands, there was a sensation he hadn't felt before.

'This... is crazy.'

As Rey stared at his hand, he remembered what he said to him back when he was hiding in the bushes.

'She said I should be patient and study more...!' Rey narrowed his gaze as his thoughts went into overdrive.

'Does that mean she knows of my intention?'

It was all so confusing to him.

'It seems like even if she does, she doesn't mind. I mean, now that I think about it... why was she so close to the walls?'

Rey's imagination began to get the best of him, and he imagined a situation where Alicia was also trying to escape the castle walls.

If that was the case, they were comrades in this together.

Then, there was one more thing.

'She noticed my absence in the library...' Rey felt a small smile curling on his face.

He didn't know why, but the moment she mentioned his absence, his heart had skipped a beat—maybe two.

'I guess it sort of feels good not being invisible all the time.'

As Rey's smile widened even further, he reached out for the doorknob.

Then...

"Hey, Rey."

A deep, imposing voice echoed right behind him. It sounded so familiar, yet something about it felt threatening.

"Wha—?"

~THUD!~

Before Rey could respond, he was pushed against the wall by the overwhelming force of the one behind him.

He couldn't see the person responsible, thanks to his face being pressed upon the concrete, but at this point Rey could already guess.

"What were you talking to her about? What exactly are you up to, Rey?!"

The one with the ragged, imposing voice was Billy, and based on his tone alone, it was obvious that he was pissed off.

"What the hell are you—?!"

"Don't play dumb with me, Rey? You and Alicia! I saw you walk with her and talk to her. What were you two talking about? Did you make her uncomfortable? Tell me now!"

Rey felt a surge of irritation the more he heard Billy's words.

He felt like smashing his head against concrete and spitting on his battered body.

However, that would only bring about trouble.

"What the hell are you doing? You're going this far because of that?" Rey responded angrily instead.

It felt annoying that he had to take such a diplomatic position, especially after burning a bunch of monsters to crisps, but Rey endured the humiliation.

Nothing good could come out of standing out now.

'Just like Alicia said. I should be patient...'

"Just answer my—!"

"I wonder what Adonis would think if he saw you like this. The great Billy, righteous Grand Knight, is no more than a bully."

The moment he said this, Rey felt Billy's grip on him loosen slightly.

It was clear the boy was now hesitant, contemplating on whether or not his actions would have some dire consequences.

'Should I go a little further...?' Rey smiled within himself as he opened his lips while leaking out slight groans.

"I also... urgh... wonder what Alicia would think... if she saw you like this. If I tell her... what you did to me here, then..."

This was the last straw for Billy.

He swiftly let Rey go, taking a few steps back. It finally allowed the latter to stretch his stiff body and rub his itchy face.

'This bastard. He really resorted to bullying and only backed away because I threatened him with a girl...'

Rey already knew his friend was an asshole, since he abandoned him, but he never thought he would be this far gone.

'I don't really know Alicia, and I don't see us talking too often in the future, but I genuinely don't wish for her to end up with this pathetic excuse for a person.'

He gazed upon Billy's frowning face with impudence, almost as if daring him to do anything.

"You... why are you doing this, huh? You clearly know how I feel about her!"

At this point, Billy was getting jacked. Physically, he was becoming a beast thanks to all the training he was undergoing.

However, Rey could only see him as a big baby—especially when he asked his question.

This guy wasn't just pathetic, he was lower than that.

'I'm glad we're not friends anymore.'

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Rey responded with a sigh, his daring gaze still on Billy.

He had to assert that he didn't fear Billy this early on, or else he would keep getting harassed by him.

With that in mind, Rey stood his ground.

"Tch! What is this? Is it revenge because I'm no longer friends with you or anything like that? You brought it upon yourself."

Rey just listened to Billy blabbing, his eyes as empty as they would be if he was staring at a brick wall.

At some point, all Rey heard was rambling upon ramblings.

"Tch! Whatever... just stay out of my way!" With that, Billy pushed Rey aside and opened the door, entering the living room.

His fuming face soon melted into a warm smile once the students within greeted him, and he proceeded to exchange pleasantries with them.

'This guy...' Rey sighed within himself.

More than anything, he just wanted to ignore Billy and move on with his life.

'But this is the second time you've crossed me now. I'll have to ensure there isn't a third.'

To do that, Rey knew he had to do the one thing that would really get to his former best friend.

'I guess I'll see Alicia in the library tomorrow.'

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Just as was natural in school, where groups and cliques would begin to form over time, the same applies to training.

A hierarchy was soon built—both in the Beta and Alpha Group—and the rest of the students followed this pattern.

Of course, there were outliers, but for the most part, the students listened to and respected those they deemed to be superior to them.

As a result, Adonis, Billy, and Alicia became the sort of faces of the Alpha Class, and as for the Beta Squad, there were three major cliques.

One belonged to Trisha—the presumably strongest person among all the Beta students.

She was a tomboy with a fierce personality, but her bluntness made her very compelling as a leader, and so she had most of the students under her group.

The second clique mostly consisted of disgruntled individuals, and they were led by the most disgruntled of all—Adam.

"Tch... this sucks."

Adam and his group would often hang out together during breaks and even after classes.

Their day consisted mostly of complaining of how the change in the status quo sucked.

They were previously the top dogs of their class—bullies and jesters—and now, they were nothing but a ragtag group of six who felt sorry for themselves.

Adam was the most disgruntled of all.

"I used to hold as much influence as Adonis, you know? Now look at me! This Karma system sucks!"

This was Adam's mantra, and he had already said this countless times.

"YEAH!"

"ABSOLUTELY!"

"IT SUCKS!"

His group of "Yes" men supported his words, further driving him into his inner rage and frustrations.

Right now, this was all he could do.

However...

"My chance will come soon!" Adam grinned widely, his eyes narrowing in malevolent delight.

The members of his clique chuckled with him as he resolved to bide his time until he was ready to rise once more.

"None of them will see it coming!"

### **Chapter 30: Progressive Growth**

"Brutus. Lucielle. Give your report."

Within the throne-room, standing in front of the Royal Council, the two most powerful members of the United Human Alliance knelt as they spoke.

Of course, they took turns.

"The Otherworlders are advancing faster than expected." Brutus spoke first.

"Their growth rate is monstrous—and this applies for both Groups."

A month passed since the Otherworlders arrived in H'Trae.

Their schedules continued as usual, with their curriculum only getting progressively more difficult as they continued their training and classes.

The Alpha Students, after learning the basics of Spells and Chanting, were already moving on to the advanced stages.

As for the Beta Students, they had already begun to learn Chanting, and while a few had some difficulty with it, some had already gotten the hang of it.

Since their foundations were rock solid, they were able to learn much faster and easier than normal.

Other than Magic, they were also training their bodies in Martial Arts. Those with Skills that had to do with Combat Application were the fastest learners, and they excelled greatly at Martial Arts.

However, those with low affinity towards it had to struggle with the swords, daggers, spears, or whatever weapons they were utilizing.

Needless to say, even after a month of arrival, the students still had a lot to learn.

"Given about two months, we should be ready to proceed to the next phase of the plan." Lucielle added, with Brutus nodding to her proposed estimate.

They both agreed that their students were not prepared for the rigors of the conflict that existed outside the comfort of their safe haven.

However... the clock was ticking.

"There's no time left." Conrad Listrio, Grandmaster of the Royal Council spoke up.

He looked concerned, and rightfully so.

Their Nation was on the verge of collapse, and they needed help desperately.

"The timetable has been moved up. Make sure they're ready in a month."

This absurd request surprised both Lucielle and Brutus, and while they would have liked to protest, the expressions of the Royal Council made it clear that they couldn't budge on the decision.

"It pains me to do this, but... we have no other choice." Grandmaster Conrad sighed.

"Please... I know I'm asking for a lot, but please make it possible."

Once they heard their Grandmaster make such a request, using a humble tone and a strained face, Brutus and Lucielle knew they could not refuse.

"Understood!" They jointly responded.

"Thank you."

The Royal Council took turns thanking Brutus and Lucielle for their work.

However, despite the words of gratitude that filled the room, no one present was oblivious of the reality of their current predicament.

Time was running out, and sooner or later... the world's saviors would have to step into the spotlight.

For now, though, the students were to remain learners.

... Well, almost all of them.

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"Alright. So, let's see..."

Rey was standing right in front of the entrance to the Seventh Floor, his eyes fixated on the seals that were heavily put in place.

"... I think I'm all set."

For nearly two weeks, he had been coming to this place and training.

Even though he had exterminated the horde of monsters here on his very first day, he decided to remain on the sixth floor for a while.

There was a lot he hadn't quite understood about his Skills, so he purposed to learn more about them.

And now, after all this time, he finally felt he was ready.

"Status Window." He mumbled to himself.

[STATUS WINDOW]



- Name: Rey Skylar.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Commoner (F-Tier)
- Level: 9 (2.01% EXP)
- Life Force: 15
- Mana Level: 25
- Combat Ability: 30
- Stat Points: 27
- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): Nil
- Alignment: Neutral

[Additional Information]

You possess the weakest Class, but the strongest Skill. You can only be described as an 'Overpowered Weakling.'

[End Of Information]

"Hehehe..." Rey smiled as he looked at his Stats.

It wasn't bad at all—not in the slightest.

He thought back to the moment when he was worried about not being able to Level Up since he didn't get the [You Have Leveled Up] notification, but apparently, that wasn't how it worked.

Rey had indeed Leveled Up—eight times even—after completing the Sixth Floor.

He just didn't get any notification.

The reason he didn't feel stronger after his Level-Up was because his Stat Points weren't automatically distributed among his Stats, but instead kept as they were.

Rey got 3 Stat Points for every Level-Up, and he had to manually attribute Stat Points to whatever Stat he wanted to improve.

'So far, I've avoided adding Points to any of my Stats since I want them to grow more naturally...'

There were two major ways to improve Stats.

One was through rigorous training, and the other was by Leveling Up.

The first method got increasingly more difficult the higher one's Stat Points became.

As such, if a person's Combat Ability Stat was 1, it would take relatively easier methods to make it turn into 2.

However, if it was 10, a lot of training would be required to bump into 11.

Thanks to this mechanism, Rey tried his best to naturally grow his Stats before adding his Stat Points to the mix.

'But... it seems I've reached my limit. They're not increasing anymore.'

That meant he had to attribute his Stat Points now.

'Alright. I have a total of 27. I'll pour 7 into my Life Force, and the rest should go into Mana.'

Once Rey finished allocating the Stats on his Status Window, he smiled and confidently examined everything.

He remembered the time when everything was in single digits, and he felt a strong sense of satisfaction that he had made it this far.

'Adonis and the others are still in Level 1, but I bet they have Stats that are similar to mine.'

Classes greatly influenced growth rates, so he wouldn't be surprised if their Stats were in two digits.

'They should also be able to Level Up faster than me, and I'm sure they'll get more than 3 Stat Points per Level Up.'

Such was the benefit of a solid Class.

To compensate for that, he had powerful Skills. However, he had to study over time on how to best utilize them, while also being considerate about his Mana usage.

'Fortunately, I've found the perfect hack.' Rey smiled to himself.

He had tried various combinations in his time here, and by using Buff Skills, he could raise his Mana Level to the triple digits, albeit temporarily.

"With that in mind, and knowing the difficulty of the Sixth Floor, I think I'm ready for the Seventh." Rey muttered in confidence.

As he stared down the locked gate of the Dungeon Floor, his lips began to curl up.

Before he realized it, he was grinning widely.

"Let's begin!"