

# Extras 291

## Chapter 291 Group Conversation

Just as Ralyks told the team, he left them alone so he could patrol the area.

As a result, all nine Otherworlders—as well as Alicia's Rabbit—were left in the well-lit cave.

For a few moments, there was silence in the place.

No one said a word.

Rey looked around and saw the gloomy faces of everyone around him. He couldn't help but feel a little guilty.

'I didn't think things would get as intense as this.'

To be honest, he already knew all of this would happen since it was orchestrated by Ater.

"I'm really sorry, guys. I thought, for sure, that tied them up good. I didn't think any of them would escape like that..."

Justin was the one who broke the silence with his apology.

Adonis was the first to respond with the comforting words: "We all make mistakes."

Then, others said similar stuff. Things like;

"It's fine. As long as no one got hurt."

"That was a close call. Glad you're fine."

"It's as Sir Ralyks said... mistakes are inevitable."

Most people had their expressions darkened the moment his name was mentioned, and it was for an obvious reason.

Rey watched all of this, and while he nodded in agreement with everything that was being said, his thoughts flowed in a completely different direction.

'Ater purposely cut the strings at specific areas so that the Centipede could escape. He must have known Clark would do what he did, and everything else played out right as he wanted it to...'

In all honesty, Rey didn't completely get the full scope of Ater's plan, since he had requested for it to be simplified for him to understand.

Still, he knew the major gist of it.

'His goal here is to cause some tension. That sort of thing exposes some things about people...'

For example, it revealed the kind of person Clark was, and even broke him down into a crybaby.

Someone like Justin, who was usually all fun and jokes, actually stood up to Ralyks when even Adonis couldn't say a word.

Justin's current expression was also nothing like how he usually acted.

This time, he seemed a lot more brooding.

'He acts childish most of the time, but he's really effective in his role. The reason he didn't bother with [Perception], and even deactivated his [Stealth] is probably because he knew he did his job well.'

Ater managed to gaslight Justin, as well as everyone else in the room, to believe a false scenario that he made up.

'I shouldn't disrupt the flow and simply see how this ends.'

"I'm also really sorry, everyone." At this point, Clark was already recovered from his little outburst, so he spoke up.

"I shouldn't have left the formation like that. I disrupted... ruined everything."

Rey couldn't help but feel bad for Clark. Based on his Alignment and additional information, it was clear that the guy simply wanted to help.

That was all he wanted...

'He has a Hero Complex. If Adonis didn't snag that Hero Class, I'm sure Clark would have done so.'

Ater must have figured all of this out, even without [Absolute Appraisal], and created a scenario that would force Clark to act.

It was a pretty intelligent move.

'But it's also coldhearted. I'm beginning to regret going down this route.'

His initial thought was to simply use his [Absolute Mental Control] to pry everything he wanted out of his classmates, but that seemed extremely unethical and a breach of their privacy.

As a result, he decided to organically orchestrate a scenario that would help him learn more about them.

Unfortunately for him, Ater came up with this.

'This feels just as unethical. But, it's already started, so there's no point in stopping now.' Rey's thoughts trailed as he stared at Clark.

"I was never able to do much to help those around me back home, so... when I got to this world and received these powers, I just..." He stopped and sighed.

Everyone could get where he was coming from.

This world, despite its dangers, had given them an opportunity that didn't exist in normal reality.

They were special—having powers that many could only dream of.

With those powers, it seemed Clark thought he could finally help the people around him.

'Is that why he chose the classic superhero build? I guess it all makes sense now.' Rey smiled to himself.

"I understand where you're coming from, Clark. I'm right here with you." Adonis smiled, touching Clark on the shoulder.

He had his usual heroic expression on, one that won over anyone who gazed upon it.

Even Rey felt he wasn't immune to it.

"You don't have to deal with this alone, you know? Just as you want to help us, we want to help you too."

"Thanks, man."

Clark and Adonis hugged, and out of nowhere, Justin began to clap and cheer.

'What the—?' Rey thought it was weird as hell, but somehow, everyone began to follow Justin's lead.

They all clapped and cheered for the emotional display that could best be described as cringe.

With everyone smiling and cheering, Rey also ensured he was doing his best not to be left out. He stole a glance at Alicia and found her eyes to be moist.

'Now I feel bad for not being in the moment.'

Rey wondered if the situation would have been any different if he didn't know anything beforehand.

He still couldn't imagine being moved.

The only one who didn't seem to be concerned by what was going on was Snow. She was simply looking at everything with a blank face, and Rey suddenly began to feel a sense of camaraderie with the Beast.

He didn't consider the possibility that perhaps everyone was normal and he had become more Beast-like than he realized.

He simply went with the flow and cheered.

'I guess this is what Ater meant by all of this being beneficial for everyone.'

If that was the case, then he had no complaints.

~FWOOSH!~

A sudden darkness swirled at the center of the group, and Ralyks appeared before them.

The claps and cheers instantly died down, and a sense of dread immediately took over.

"Break is over. Time to advance."

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## **Chapter 292 Splitting Up**

"You will all be splitting up now."

The sudden announcement caused an uproar among the Otherworlders, but Ralyks explained the reasons behind his decision.

"The Centipedes have burrowed several tunnel-like openings throughout this Floor, and as a result of this, the path ahead separates into multiple corridors."

'That's a lie.' Rey smiled internally as he silently watched Ater.

Rey knew he was lying due to their Bond, but from a normal standpoint he could see how the story could sound convincing.

In the first place, Ralyks had no motive to lie to any of the Otherworlders, so they were predisposed to believing everything he said.

Also, since he was stronger, smarter, and more experienced than all of them, they had to take him at his word.

Plus, he mixed in certain truths with lies.

It was already obvious that they all ate up the lies he fed them, and that allowed him to proceed without much need to explain himself.

"Considering their numbers, and how they'll drastically reduce if they're isolated per corridor, it's safer to take them out one corridor at a time." He continued, crafting a scenario out of lies.

"But, if we all attack one corridor at a time, the process will be slower. The goal of today is to conquer three Floors, so we have to hurry."

And so, the plan was to split the entire group into three.

"There are a total of five corridors. I'll take two of them, and I'll leave the remaining three to you. Don't worry, I'll summon guardians to protect you, just in case."

Everyone shivered the moment he said that. They already knew what he meant by 'guardians.'

He was talking about his Undead Summons.

No one could complain, though. In the end, his method was the fastest way to clear the Floor. The sooner they cleared the Floor, the faster they could advance even deeper and complete their mission.

Sure, they would lose some EXP to Ralyks, but it was already part of the deal he made with the Royal Council.

It was all fair.

"Now then... for the team matchups."

The first team consisted of Eric, Clark, and Justin.

They couldn't have been more perfectly matched, considering how close the three of them were.

Everyone knew them to be inseparable for the most part.

The second team had Belle, Alicia, and Trisha as teammates.

It wasn't strange to see all the girls centered in a single group, but there were no complaints from anyone. It was just strange, considering the fact that they were from totally different social circles.

As for the final team, it consisted of Rey, Adonis, and Billy.

Adonis' smile, Billy's awkward silence, and Rey's unassuming expression, showed this team to be the most balanced of the bunch.

"Now then... Come Forth."

Once again, just like last time, Ralyks—or rather, Ater—summoned ten Undead creatures.

He assigned one per group, and he told the other two to take on the remaining two corridors while he would supervise everything.

The last five were going to pick up Monster Cores and mine whatever they could—just like the previous day.

With everything set, the teams advanced and prepared for their time apart from everyone else.

Strangely enough, despite the chills running down their bodies as a result of the Undead that served as their escorts, they didn't feel any sense of dread at all.

They simply kept moving forward.

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[Moments Later]

"... And that's why I chose the Assassin Class!"

Eric and Clark began to laugh as they walked down the eerily large corridor.

There were many tunnels that led in and out of the corridor, and while the three boys were initially very cautious when they started their journeys, they eventually lowered their guard.

Justin still had his [Perception] Skill active, and the other two were passively looking out for an enemy, but for the most part, they were just talking.

When Eric mentioned how they were supposed to be on proper lookout, Justin pointed to their Undead guardian—a Skeleton who wore full-plated dark armor—and said the guy would definitely protect them.

"Besides, even if we screw up... it's totally normal, right? Sir Ralyks will surely protect us!"

This easygoing comment made the other two boys laugh, but also ease up.

Before long, they became invested in their conversation.

They broached topics that no one really tried to discuss after arriving in H'Trae.

"Hey, do you guys miss your life on Earth sometimes?"

The one who asked this was, surprisingly, Justin.

He no longer had his playful smile on, but instead he wore a slight grimace.

"The truth is... I have a girl back home. I've liked her since we were kids, and we only started dating a month before the whole Summoning happened."

Justin's clenched fists and the way he narrowed his eyes in pain showed just how serious everything he said was.

"I try to be all laughs and jokes to forget about it, but sometimes... I want to go back. I want to go back so badly, guys."

Sure, it was cool to have powers and be on a quest to save the world.

But Justin just wanted to see the ones he cared about again, and he wasn't sure he would ever be able to.

"I just... I can't even start thinking about my single dad and everyone else I left back home. Is it the same for you guys? Am I the only one who feels this way?"

Justin looked at the two who walked alongside him. Their lips were shut in silence, and Eric especially had a guilty expression on his face.

"Sorry for bumming you guys like this. Sometimes, it just gets too much, you know?"

Justin rubbed his eyes despite hardly any tears coming out. He must have held them in pretty well.

"Forget about it, haha! I just—"

"I don't want to go back." Eric's voice echoed within the corridor.

It sounded almost confrontational, the exact opposite of Justin's earlier words.

"Earth... and my life there, I've already thrown all of those away."

Both Justin and Clark looked at Eric with surprise, watching as he tilted his glasses and looked away into the distance.

"This world of Magic feels more like home to me than Earth ever did." Leaking out a small smile, he turned to the two.

"Sorry, Justin. But I don't have anyone back home like you do."

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## **Chapter 293 Confessions [Pt 1]**

Eric had always held a fascination for Magic.

Even back on Earth, he was someone who delved deep into things like mysticism and other forms of paranormal activities—all so he could find some proof of any supernatural force.

The reason for this insatiable hunger of his wasn't innate.

It had a cause.

"Both of my parents died in a car crash. I live with my aunt and uncle. They're not bad people, but..."

Eric didn't love them.

He didn't feel any sense of attachment towards those people—not like he felt for his parents.

Plus, they had kids of their own.

Eric felt it would even be a burden off their shoulders if he was no longer their responsibility. That was his own way of repaying them.

"Bottom line is that I don't miss Earth and I don't want to return." Eric furrowed his brow with resolve and calmly stated all of this.

"Oh wow. I didn't know that happened to your folks. My condolences, man." Justin murmured, his face crestfallen.

"There's no need to feel bad about it. I also didn't know about your situation. I find it respectable that you want to see the people you love again."

With Eric and Justin smiling at each other, Clark decided it was his turn to speak up.

"To be honest, I have a friend that is being domestically abused at home. I want to help him so badly, but I'm so powerless. In an attempt to research more on the subject, I entered this rabbit hole of cases and instances... and there's so much of it going on." As he spoke, he clenched his fist and displayed anger.

"Why does there have to be so much injustice in the world? Why do the bad guys get away with their crimes? Why... why can't I do anything to help?"

In the end, there was nothing Clark could do about his friend's situation.

"Somehow, I want to go back to Earth... at least if I get to keep these powers. I want to help my friend and others who need help. To stop the strong from bullying the weak..." Justin and Eric smiled as they nodded at Clark.

His ideal was something they couldn't help but appreciate and agree with.

"Power is meant to be used for good. That's what I believe. Whether it's the Dragons of this world, or those evil scum back on Earth... I want to stop them with the strength I've been given."

"What if you were going to lose your powers if you went back to Earth?" Eric asked, flexing his glasses once more.

"Would you choose to do so?"

Upon hearing the question, Clark had a grimace on. His face contained nothing shock of hesitation.

"I... I don't know. I just want to help, so... I don't know."

Eric and Justin knew better than to pressure him about his ideals any longer.

"You know what I think? I think there has to be a way to use the Summoning Magic that was used to summon us to bring those we love to this side." Eric changed the topic and gave a wide smile.

"We could bring your friend who is being abused, as well as your girl and parents."

Eric looked at Clark and Justin respectively. His eyes showed he was serious despite smiling about it. freew ebno v el

"If we were able to arrive here, then others should as well. I'd rather study the Magic of this place and figure out how to do all of that than to simply return to Earth and risk my powers being removed."

Everyone could relate to what Eric was saying, however, that didn't make his own suggestions absolute.

"Well... it's going to be a while before that plan of yours becomes viable." Justin chuckled at Eric, slapping his back.

"Gah!" The boy yelped a little as he stumbled forward, causing Justin to quickly apologize.

"We first have to rid this world of Dragons, right? Let's stick to that first."

Justin and Eric nodded at Clark's words, implying agreement.

For a moment, the three boys practiced silence and smiled at each other. In a strange sense, this entire walk with just three of them had given them the chance to grow a lot closer than they could have imagined.

It was almost like everything had naturally led to this point.

"I hate to interrupt what's going on here right now, but we have company, guys." Justin commented as he swiftly poured his attention forward.

His [Perception] kicked in at just the right moment, alerting him of the danger up ahead.

His friends swiftly took their position and cautiously prepared for the attack they would face.

The Undead Summon behind them already had its blade sheathed, and its hollow sockets began to brim with bright purple sparks.

It was obviously preparing for combat.

"Guess we'll talk more later." Justin chuckled. "For now... we gotta kill some bugs."

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[Meanwhile]

~SQUISH!~

"This is the last one." Trisha said as she violently pierced the Centipede Monster that stood before her.

The thing wiggled a little, but once she added a layer of her [Greater Lightning Magic] to the mix, it became deeply cooked and stopped moving altogether.

"Whew!" She rubbed her forehead, feeling sweat slightly gathering there.

As the smell of roasted Centipede entered her nose, Trisha looked at the trail of corpses that she had caused, smiling softly to herself.

"I'm done on my end."

"Me too."

She turned to her fellow females, only to see the Centipede corpses that lay at their feet.

Compared to theirs—especially Alicia's—hers was but a small pile.

'Both of them have at least three times more...' Her thoughts trailed as she left her own heap and reunited with her group.

Of course, Trisha understood that Belle had a more superior ranged set of abilities, and Alicia had her Familiar to assist her.

Plus, her skill-set couldn't properly shine given the kind of enemies that they were fighting.

With all of those in mind, Trisha shrugged off her earlier thoughts and rendezvoused with the girls.

'It is what it is...'

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## Chapter 294 Confessions [Pt 2]

As the girls gathered together, they looked at their other team member—the Undead Summon.

This one was an Archer, and while it was lightly equipped, most likely for speed, its abilities had managed to surprise every girl who watched it.

The Undead covered all their blind spots and ensured they never got attacked while dealing their damage.

Its role as a Support was perfect.

"Kwii... Kwii!" Snow hopped closer to Alicia, brushing past the other girls.

Of course, everyone had to recognize how cute her actions were, despite the fact that she shunned the rest of them.

"Am I the only one who feels like Snow doesn't like me?" Belle broke the silence with a somewhat innocent grin.

"Haha! You're not." Trisha responded, sheathing her blade.

Upon hearing this, Alicia instantly responded with a panicky tone.

"No, that's not it at all! She's just frustrated since she isn't able to properly hunt in this place." Her protests were greeted by surprise.

"Really?"

"Yeah! It's why Snow contributes very minimally to the Raid."

When she first got Snow, the goal was to Level her Up as fast as possible so that she could become an indispensable asset to the team.

However, after not being able to properly Level Up even once since they started the entire Raid, it was clear that the standards for a grand Beast to advance to the next Level was different from theirs.

Snow needed more powerful prey. Right now, however, she wasn't getting that.

As such, her role was reduced to playing the supporter or Alicia's defender.

'I'm sure she'll play a more active role once we go further down the Floors.'

For now, though, Snow was pretty much on standby.

"She did help me stun enemies so I can kill them, though. I guess that counts as helping." Alicia laughed.

"That's totally helping!" Trisha interjected.

"Yup! Totally agree!"

The three girls laughed at each other and one another, causing the previously awkward atmosphere to soften up between them.

"We should start advancing." Alicia said, pointing at the Archer, who was already in front and patiently waiting for them.

"Ah, yes... let's go!" Trisha smiled, running behind Alicia as they made their way forward.

The only one not moving was Belle.

Her narrowed eyes showed something akin to rage—perhaps frustration.

'Anytime I try to use [Grand Charm] on those two, that Undead looks at me with an intense aura. Is it aware... of my abilities?'

Belle gulped a little and clenched her teeth in even more annoyance.

When the group division happened, and she ended up with these two, she had her plans to enact.

'I was going to use [Grand Charm] to make them weaken the Monsters while I finish them off.'

As a result, she would gain a much higher Level than the two of them.

Unfortunately, things didn't go according to plan.

Not only that, but Alicia even managed to rake in more kills than her thanks to the aid of her Grand Summon.

It all ended up being a mess.

'And it's not only because of the Undead...' Belle stole a glance at the rabbit who hopped right beside Alicia.

'She says the thing is only in a bad mood due to not being able to fight, but I don't believe that.'

The rabbit was clearly wary of her, and Belle could tell due to how she treated her.

'Maybe I should—'

As soon as she had the thought, Snow turned back and gave Belle a dangerous look.

It was almost like a warning—telling Belle not to even try anything she would regret.

'Eeep!' It caused Belle's heart to skip a little.

The rabbit then gave a smug smile and returned her gaze forward. Her actions couldn't have annoyed Belle any more than they did.

'That stupid thing! Is it threatening me?!' She pressed her fingers on her palms so much that they whitened.

As she gritted her teeth and glared at the rabbit, she suddenly heard two voices.

"Belle, come on!"

"We have a lot of ground to cover!"

Alicia and Trisha called out to her, and almost as if her previous expression was merely an illusion, Belle flashed her innocent smile.

"A-ah, sorry! I guess I spaced out!"

She chuckled nervously and jogged to her female allies.

"Jeez... you have to be careful next time."

"You can't be so vulnerable in a Dungeon."

The two girls seemed genuinely concerned about her, but Belle wasn't buying it.

She simply kept up her facade and walked with everyone—

knowing fully well that the gaze of the Undead Archer and the Grand Summon would never leave her.

It was too stifling.

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"Mind if I tell you guys a little secret of mine?"

After battling another round of Monsters, Trisha spoke up and looked at the two others who neared her.

"Yeah, sure."

"Spill."

Trisha smiled, almost blushing as she looked very mortified by what she was about to say.

"I've always sort of been jealous of the both of you."

As soon as she said this, both Alicia and Belle expressed surprise—no, downright bewilderment.

Her confession came out of the blue.

"What? Really? Why?"

Trisha chuckled at the question, looking at the two as if they were being silly by asking her that.

"Seriously? I mean looking at things from my perspective, there's a lot to be jealous of." Trisha shrugged.

"The both of you are so pretty and social. Plus, you are pretty popular with the guys. For me... it's a bit different."

Compared to the prim and proper girls before her, Trisha was a rough outlier.

She was a tomboy who had well-trained muscles.

It was already obvious who the guys would prefer among the three of them.

"The worst part is... when we arrived in this new world, I thought to myself, 'This is it! My moment to shine had come!'"

All those times she spent training, instead of taking care of her skin or socializing like the rest of her peers... she would be rewarded for them in this place.

"But... I was wrong." Trisha leaked out a sad smile as she looked at the two ladies before her.

"Even when it came to power, the both of you still came out superior."

Trisha highly doubted that either of the girls had trained for even a day before their arrival at H'Trae.

Yet... YET...!

"I couldn't beat you in strength either."

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## Chapter 295 Confessions [Pt 3]

"Be strong. Stay strong."

That was Trisha's family motto, and for all her life, she abided by those principles.

Her father was a well-respected Martial Artist in the community, and he even used to have a dojo before retiring.

Despite her being the only child of the family, her parents treated her with love and didn't try to turn her into a boy.

However, she could see it in her father's eyes—the desire he had for an heir.

Someone to carry on their family's legacy.

"Father, I want to learn Martial Arts!"

In the end, she was the one who thrust herself in the world she became immersed in for most of her life.

Everything she did after that revolved around training, learning, trying her hardest to be strong.

It was difficult, but she comforted herself with the happiness of her father.

... With the success of her family.

Even now, Trisha had no real regrets. She still desired to be strong and every day, she strives to reach even more of the unattainable height that was the Martial Peak.

She couldn't blame her father for this path.

Everything she was, and all she had become... Trisha chose it of her own accord.

Which was why she began to crumble when she looked around her and found out a truth she couldn't see before.

In this world, where her father and the entire community she grew up with, weren't present... what was the purpose of everything?

Sure, she was strong... but did that really matter here?

Her Martial Arts were rendered obsolete by Skills and Magic, and she wasn't even the best at that.

She was outshined by the pretty girls and handsome guys of the class.

It grew into heavy frustration for her.

There was only one person whom she could truly look at without hints of envy, yet had some strange kind of respect for.

That was Rey Skylar.

Somehow, she knew he was strong... yet he didn't seem like it.

He was an average boy who had some mediocre Skills, yet she knew his application of Martial Arts and his insight into abilities were beyond normal.

He was a truly special case.

Unfortunately, with Alicia already being much closer to him than she was, Trisha already realized she was fighting a losing battle.

As such, she backed off.

But... there was only so much a girl could take.

After stomaching everything for so long, Trisha felt like she would break.

Why couldn't she be as strong as everyone else?

Why wasn't she as attractive as other people?

It... just wasn't fair.

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"Wow. I didn't know you saw things that way." Alicia was the first to speak after a long moment of silence.

She had a genuinely compassionate expression on her face; one that felt completely different from pity.

"To be honest, I don't think of myself as special in any way. My beauty is all due to genetics, and I had to study very very hard to be able to pass all those exams that got me top grades..."

Of course, none of those compared to Trisha's hard work and experiences, but... Alicia hoped her own story could show her another side of things.

"My popularity wasn't always for the good. You might choose to believe this or not, but... I actually had a Karma Point of 57."

Gasps filled the air, and the two who heard looked completely flabbergasted,

"I don't believe it."

"That's not possible, right? Your Skills..."

Alicia smiled a little and shook her head.

"It's all about compatibility and luck in selection. By choosing a Skill or Class, you get a chain reaction in the mix." She sighed.

The girls still looked upon her in disbelief. There was no way they could believe such incredible news.

"I know it sounds crazy, but it's the truth. My point is that while I was popular, I wasn't well-liked by a lot of people."

Alicia went on to give examples of their life on Earth—the rumors that spread about her on multiple occasions, and how she nearly got into trouble that one time.

These were mind-shattering revelations to the girls who listened.

"In the end, I believe all those superficial things don't matter. I won't deny that I was lucky to have gotten these powers here, and that my appeal played a big role in making me popular back on Earth, but in the end..." Alicia looked at Trisha and smiled.

"... What matters most is what we choose to do with what we have, right?"

Alicia didn't know if she was passing the message across the way she wanted to, but she knew there was something else she had to say.

"Also, I really think you're pretty, Trisha." As soon as Alicia said this, Trisha blushed and stopped back in shock.

"W-what? Stop kidding!"

"I'm serious. You look really pretty. I like your whole tomboy aesthetic, and I'm sure I am not alone in that sentiment."

Trisha shook her head as if she didn't want to believe it, but Belle giggled at the whole thing, causing both girls to look at her.

"I completely agree with Alicia. You're a very fine girl, Trisha. Especially those thighs of yours. Your butt is also pretty plump."

"BELLE! That's a bit too much, don't you think?" Alicia yelled, noticing how flustered Trisha looked as a result of her assessment.

"What? I was just saying the truth." The blonde answered innocently. "Besides, we're all girls here, right? I doubt the Undead guy is listening in on our conversation."

Trisha's face appeared very very conflicted. She fidgeted a little too.

It wasn't like she hadn't heard those words from people before, but she always thought they were making snide comments or didn't mean what they said.

Seeing her fellow ladies give her those compliments really encouraged her and gave her confidence in her body.

"Thank you... the both of you." Trisha's moist eyes glistened as she looked at Belle and Alicia.

This conversation was more liberating than she imagined.

"You girls are the best!"

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## **Chapter 296 Confessions [Pt 4]**

"Wanna know what I think?"

Belle's thin, melodious voice burst forth as the girls began their walk.

Her massive boobs jiggled with the way she walked, causing both girls to get distracted by the ongoing depiction of physics on her chest.

"I believe there's more to people than meets the eye. Everyone has their fair share of secrets and insecurities."

This far, Trisha had shared hers, and even Alicia depicted how life wasn't as perfect for her as everyone thought.

The only one left with a seemingly perfect persona was Belle.

"Even I have my fair share of them. They're just too embarrassing to share." Belle blushed a little as she spoke.

"Oh? Come on, tell us!" Alicia prompted, a big smile on her face. "You're curious too, right, Trisha?"

"Me? Yes! Yes, I am!"

The two girls surrounded the shorter Belle and began to pressure her. She looked cute, like a small and innocent thing caught in the middle of bigger entities.

Belle couldn't escape.

"W-well... my chest is a good example."

The eyes of the two girls subconsciously went to her milkers, once again seeing how big they were.

They then turned to Belle for an explanation.

"It attracts too much attention! Every time, people stare at them. It can get a little... no, very uncomfortable, you know?"

Belle appeared exasperated, especially since none of the girls seemed to relate to her predicament.

"Hmm. I can definitely see that happening." Alicia rubbed her chin. "A lot of guys are scum."

Belle turned to the ebony girl in their midst and asked, "What about you, Trisha? You should have also noticed a lot of stares on your thighs and butt."

Trisha looked a bit confused, but she shook her head.

"I mean... I don't think so? I tend to be immersed in whatever I'm doing, so I don't really notice most of those things."

Besides, even if Trisha noticed people staring at her, she would think they were looking at her muscles.

She never imagined that guys were sexualizing her.

"Wow... that's crazy."

"I never thought of it that way."

Belle looked at the two girls like she couldn't believe what they were saying.

For Alica, she dressed modestly, so most of the attention she got would be her face. As for Trisha, she had insecurities with her body, so she didn't understand it when guys drooled over certain proportions that she had.

That meant Belle was all alone in this struggle.

"Haa... it is what it is, I guess." She sighed.

The girls patted her shoulders and head, and thanks to her shorter height, she couldn't possibly complain.

She was like the baby in the group.

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[Moments Later]

"Okay, okay! Last question!"

The girls had bonded more than they could have ever imagined over the course of their journey together.

It was crazy how much they had gotten to know about each other.

They knew about Alicia's cats, as well as Trisha's crushes back in High School—even Belle's incident with a teacher in the past.

Layers upon layers were exposed by the girls, and they were having a ton of fun with it.

However, they had to end the rapid-fire questions very soon.

And based on the roster, it was Belle's turn to ask the last question.

"Which guy are you most interested in at the moment?"

The question was directed at the entire group, which meant everyone was supposed to answer it.

Based on the rules of the game, they all had to say their answer at the same time. This was to ensure that no one felt too shy to speak up.

By talking over each other, it allowed all of them to blurt their answers out.

And so... the moment of truth arrived.

"Rey."

"Rey."

"Rey."

The unanimous answer was one person—much to the surprise of everyone in the group.

"E-EH...?" All three of them gasped in shock.

'Hold on... Trisha is also interested in Rey?' Belle thought to herself.

She already knew Alicia liked Rey, which was why she asked the question. She never imagined that it would be a unanimous thing.

As for Trisha, she looked at Belle in shock.

'Why would Belle... also like Rey?'

From what she noticed about the girl, she usually hung around the inseparable trio—Eric, Justin, and Clark.

Out of all of them, Trisha had thought it would at least be Justin.

'No! Adonis has to be the better choice!'

Since Trisha trained with Adonis and Billy, she noticed Belle constantly coming over to converse with Adonis and even bring him meals.

They seemed very close, but when Adonis was asked about it, he often made remarks like;

"Belle is just my friend."



Or

"She's like a sister to me!"

Or even—

"She reminds me of my little cousin back home."

Trisha didn't know about Adonis' feelings, but she had always assumed that Belle had some kind of feelings for Adonis.

... And she wasn't the only one.

'H-hold on... they both like Rey?' Alicia's thoughts were in shambles the moment she heard their answer.

When it came to Belle, Alicia always thought of her as someone who was interested in Adonis.

She made it too obvious.

As for Trisha, she had suspected her for a while, but after some time she concluded that she was just imagining things.

As Rey told her, they were just friends.

However, now that the truth had come to light, an awkward atmosphere took over the room.

No one knew what to say to the other person.

An uncomfortable silence just took over.

Until—

"KREEEEIIEEEKKKKK!!!"

~BOOOOOM!~

Several Centipede Monsters rushed from their tunnels and charged at the group.

Many who saw this sudden attack would panic and be in distress, but it was the opposite for the girls.

They were relieved by the assault.

After all, they unanimously thought it was preferable to fight Monsters than to continue with their conversation.

That last question completely killed the conversation.

Even after all the Monsters were eliminated, no one said a word to the other any longer.

They just silently marched forward.

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## **Chapter 297 Confessions [Pt 5]**

~SWISH!~

Adonis' golden blade swept through the air as he nimbly sped across the area in a cost of brilliant light.

Space around him became distorted as waves of energy flowed from his body. In a flash, he sliced up multiple Centipede Monsters and landed a finishing blow on the one wriggling at the end of the row.

~BOOOOOM!~

They all erupted, turning into chopped-up forms of bug meat, roasted by the intense radiation that Adonis' attack gave off.

"Haa..." Mist escaped his lips as he looked behind him to see the actions of his teammates.

Billy was doing fine enough.

He was using his [Grand Fire Magic] to damage the Centipedes and also trap them in a concentrated position, while utilizing his Warrior-concentrated Skills to lend heavy blows and finish them off.

None of them stood even a modicum of a chance.

As for Rey, well...

"Hiyaa!" He slashed some of the several legs of the Centipedes with his bladed arm, while also blocking their attacks.

He slowly chipped away at their strength, and right when they attacked and he blocked, he would go for a counter which involved slicing through their head, or cutting through their long torsos.

Either way, he fought in a more strategic way.

His major strength was evasion and defense, while striking at the perfect time.

Unfortunately, his method was too slow.

By the time Adonis and Billy were done with their part, he was barely getting started on his end.

As a result—

"Let me help you out, Rey."

—Adonis had to intervene.

~VWOOSH!~

In a burst of golden light, Adonis appeared right behind the cluster of Centipedes and cut down their numbers by a quarter with a single strike.

"T-thanks, Adonis!"

Thanks to their numbers going down by a considerable margin, Rey had a lot more room to breathe.

He gave more counters, and he was able to kill a lot more from his position.

And so, Adonis kept chipping at their numbers from behind while Rey did so at their front.

The event swiftly ended in the victory of the team.

Their guardian Undead, a Mage-looking 'thing', merely watched them, not once having the opportunity to assist the team in their plight.

After all, they—or, a majority of them—were just that good.

They were done with their round in no time.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Thanks for the save again, Adonis." Rey beamed as they began to walk side by side.

Billy kept a considerable distance from the two and didn't utter a word, but he sometimes cast his gaze on them.

He was clearly listening in to what they were saying.

"It's nothing, Rey. You did a good job with those Monsters, though. I keep getting surprised by your incredible combat skills."

Rey scratched his head as he laughed sheepishly.

"Come on, don't patronize me."

Adonis smiled and placed his hand on Rey's shoulder. His expression looked genuine—as genuine as one could possibly be.

"I would never do that. I'm only speaking facts." His smile broadened as he took a look at several portions of Rey's well-developed body.

"You've really grown, Rey. You're a lot stronger than you were before. Your hard work is paying off, and I just want you to know that I can see that growth."

Adonis' hand tapped Rey's shoulders for a few seconds, almost the same way a big brother or an uncle would react if you told them some incredible news.

For some reason, Adonis seemed much older than he actually was.

"Thanks, man. Your hard work is also evident. You're really OP."

As soon as he made this statement, though, Adonis' bright expression darkened and he took his hand away from Rey's shoulders.

He shook his head slowly and turned away.

"No. Not really..." Adonis whispered, almost to himself.

He clenched his fist and looked at the ground in something akin to a defeated posture.

"I... still have a long way to go."

"Don't we all? We've not reached the full extent of our potential, right? So I see you growing even more."

Adonis swiftly shifted his gaze to Rey, his face holding a look of pleasant surprise.

"Unlike you, and even Billy, who are growing at an astronomical rate, I... I am just doing so at a slow pace." Rey clenched his teeth after uttering those words.

"I know I can't ever measure up to you guys. It just feels a bit... I don't know how to put it..."

Adonis' eyes glistened, almost as if they were moist. He pulled closer to Rey and hugged him.

The suddenness of his action caused shades of red to form on Rey's cheeks.

It was so embarrassing.

Even Billy had to look away from the awkward display that was happening right before his eyes.

"You're fine, Rey. You don't need to be too bothered about all of this."

His words came as a soft whisper, dancing into Rey's ears in a somewhat stimulating tone.

"I-I see..."

A bead of sweat fell from Rey's forehead as he began to look a bit uncomfortable.

Unfortunately, Adonis could not see his face at the moment.

"You've come this far already. So far, you have done great. I'm proud of you... for how far you've come."

Adonis slowly stepped back, and Rey had to plaster a smile on his face so he wouldn't seem ungrateful for the goodwill from Adonis.

"A-ahem... sorry. Just got a bit emotional there..." Adonis cleared his throat.

It seemed even he could sense how awkward he had made the entire atmosphere.

Billy, of course, kept pretending that he wasn't invested in the conversation.

"I-it's fine." Rey strained his smile.

Both of them looked at each other for a few seconds, their eyes absorbing the other's.

It seemed like a staring contest that wouldn't end.

Then—

"To be honest... neither you nor I compare to the true OP guy." Adonis took a step back and looked at the Mage-like creature who floated in the distance.

"Compared to him, I'm really nothing."

\*

## **Chapter 298 Confessions [Pt 6]**

The Undead had the appearance of Lich from legend, even having a crooked style to go with its aesthetic. However, since its face was mostly obscured, it was difficult to tell its true identity.

Adonis cast a forlorn look on the Summon, saying nothing for a moment.

It forced Rey to speak.

"You mean the Undead?"

The Hero turned to give Rey a confused look, before bursting into a pleasant laugh that made his face appear even more handsome.

"Of course not, silly. I meant Sir Ralyks."

For a second or two, silence radiated among the boys. Rey opened his lips to make an "Ohhhh..." sound as Billy slightly nodded in agreement.

"Compared to him, am I really that strong?" Adonis chuckled as he shrugged.

"I'm not even confident in beating that Undead that he summoned. Not unless I go all-out."

Rey's eyes widened in surprise. It was clear what was currently afflicting Adonis.

—Inferiority Complex.

"To be honest, Rey... I don't even feel like a capable leader any longer. Whether it comes to strength or intelligence, he's ahead of me in every facet." Adonis gave a sad smile as he looked at Rey.

"I know I shouldn't be frustrated about it. It's for the greater good of mankind, but... sometimes I just can't help but feel envious."

It was difficult imagining Adonis being envious of anyone for anything at all.

He was incredibly handsome, intelligent, powerful, and most of all... he was very kind.

Everyone looked up to him.

Yet, no one could deny that Ralyks was definitely more intelligent and powerful than any of the Otherworlders.

No one knew what he looked like, but a lot of them expected to see an incredibly handsome man for some reason.

But, if there was something Adonis had over Ralyks, it was his most attractive trait.

"You're a better person than he is." Rey declared with a straight face.

"W-what?"

Adonis looked stunned by the words he heard from Rey, but the latter didn't back down. Instead, he doubled down on his declaration.

"You're very kind, Adonis. Even back on Earth, and now here... you always put everyone into consideration and ensure we are fine."

It was now Rey's turn to place his hand on Adonis' shoulder and smile.

"It's only thanks to you that we've been able to make it this far." As Rey uttered those words, Adonis' eyes began to grow moist.

"We aren't following Ralyks just because he is strong, you know? It's because you endorse him."

"What are you even saying, Rey?" Adonis chuckled as he tried to dismiss the boy's words.

However, Rey placed his second hand on Adonis' other shoulder and smiled fiercely at the boy.

"The reason we stayed behind wasn't just because of Ralyks. It is because we trust you, Adonis. Our faith isn't on the Royal Council or on Ralyks... but on you."

Something like a spark began to glow from Adonis' eyes as Rey uttered those words.

"R-really...?"

A mixed look of relief and doubt played on the Hero's face. It seemed like he wanted Rey's words to be true, but he didn't want to risk believing them.

"I don't know about others, but... you're the reason I decided to stay behind. Because I trust you. I think it's the same for everyone else, at least to some level."

"I see..."

Rey patted Adonis on his shoulder, though his series of actions were weird due to the height gap between the two of them.

They both pretended not to notice the awkwardness of Rey's actions, though, and only focused on the intentions behind them.

"Besides, if you think you're weaker than Ralyks, then there's only one thing you can do... right?"

"Yeah... I can just get stronger!" Adonis clenched his raised fist.

Rey broadened his smile and nodded at him. The two stared at each other, trapped in a world where time was still.

Adonis began to look so emotional that it appeared as though he would hug Rey. The latter subtly pulled away, preventing it from happening a second time.

"A-ahem..." Rey cleared his throat as he awkwardly looked away.

Adonis merely smiled at the awkward Rey and nodded slowly.

"Thanks for your words, Rey. They mean a lot more to me than you realize."

Rey slowly turned to Adonis and shrugged, a bright smile on his face as well

"Thanks as well."

As they both chuckled, a certain someone clenched his fist and finally had the courage to utter his first words since they began their journey as a team of three.

"I'm sorry... both of you."

Billy's barely audible voice echoed within the corridor, instantly sullyng the moment between Adonis and Rey.

They both looked at Billy, who was staring at the ground with a bitter expression on his face.

"I'm sorry for all I've done. Adonis... Rey..." He slowly looked at them, tears slowly falling from his eyes.

"I know I have no excuse for how I acted, or how I treated you. I don't even expect you to forgive me or anything..."

His brows were crinkled upward and his lips trembled with emotion.

It was clear that he meant every single thing he uttered.

"I shouldn't have abandoned you as a friend and let all that power get into my head. I shouldn't have gone that far with Ali... I mean, with everything that went down."

Everything he said was greeted with silence.

"I won't ask for forgiveness or anything, but... I'll try to be better."

As those words reverberated in the air, someone began to approach him.

It was none other than the Hero.

"It's good that you've admitted your errors. It means you have properly reflected on them."

Adonis placed a hand on Billy's shoulder and smiled at him with a warm demeanor.

"I won't speak for everyone and forgive you on their behalf. However, we're still young. Mistakes are inevitable, aren't they?"

"A-Adonis..." Billy's tears began to flow more.

"What matters is learning from them and growing. I'm happy I gave you enough time to yourself so you could fully understand your actions and their consequences."

"I thought... I thought you hated me and wanted nothing to do with me any longer."

Adonis merely shook his head and cast a sympathetic smile upon the crying hunk of a boy.

"I was disappointed and reasonably upset. But I've never hated you, Billy."

\*\*\*\*\*

'Urgh...'

An air of intense emotions wafted through the air, and while the two boys seemed locked in the moment, Rey felt a little uncomfortable in their midst.

He looked at the Undead, and it was clear that all the positive energy and overflowing emotions were also too much for the cold-hearted creature.

They both just wanted it to end.

"... You can be better. Redeem yourself with actions and not words alone. For it was your action that caused this to begin with."

Once Rey returned his mind to the conversation, they were already rounding things up.

Thankfully.

"You've made a great first step, Billy. Keep it up, man. We need you now more than ever."

"Y-yes! I won't let you down!"

"This isn't about me, Billy. It's about everyone else. It's about this world."

"I-I understand."

"Let's do our best together, okay?" As Billy nodded at Adonis' wise words, the golden-haired Hero turned to Rey.

Rey swiftly returned his expression to a solemn one, and thus his eyes met the pure Hero.

"Let's all do our best. What do you say, Rey?"

It was already obvious what his answer would be.

"I haven't completely forgiven you, Billy. I don't think I can ever forget your actions, but..." He approached the duo with a bright smile on his face.

"... I don't hate you either."

To Rey, Billy wasn't even an issue worth considering.

He was just someone that existed.

'I have more important things to worry about...'

"You're necessary for this world's survival. I'm not so small-minded that I don't recognize that."

Rey struggled, but he was able to place his hand on Billy's shoulder.

Adonis placed a hand on Rey's shoulder, and Rey did the same to him as well. Billy also did the same to both of them.

At that moment, all three boys were in perfect understanding.

They needed one another for the sake of the world.

Nothing more... nothing less.

Rey was busy thinking about a bunch of things as this whole thing was going on that he failed to notice the smile Adonis gave him.

It was one of utmost gratitude.

His face clearly read "Thanks, Rey. You really help out more than you realize..."

Adonis looked at both of his teammates and closed his eyes in satisfaction.

He was truly happy.

\*

## **Chapter 299 End Of The Second Day's Raid**

'I see. So this is what you meant, Ater...'

As Rey trailed behind Billy and Adonis, he had a hidden smile on his face.

After their earlier conversation, the three hadn't spoken very much. In fact, it was mostly Billy talking to Adonis, and that was perfectly fine.

However, something had definitely changed, and Rey could see it.

'We've gotten a bit closer. I understand the two of them a lot better.'

Billy most likely regretted what he did that led Alicia into such dangers based on his words and actions. It also seemed like he wanted to be a better person.

'I can't dismiss that he could be lying, but if I cross reference what he said with his [Additional Information], then it's easy to see that he's telling the truth.'

Rey found it almost comical how detached he was to Billy when they had been the closest of friends merely months prior to this entire incident.

'I guess a lot can happen within such a short span of time'

Barely two months had passed, and things had become this way. It showed just how fleeting experiences and human life generally was.



'In any case, Ater was right. This whole thing should prove beneficial to the whole group, and it helped satisfy my curiosity as well.'

Rey figured that a similar occurrence would have happened between the two other groups, and Ater would probably record all that information for him somehow.

'This is good...'

There was nothing better than a common understanding among members of a group for effective teamwork.

'I still don't fully understand how he was able to go about this and get this result, but I can make a few guesses.'

For one, by causing the atmosphere to be tense and pulling at certain heartstrings, he caused Clark and Justin to be the first to display some measure of emotion and reveal parts of themselves that they normally wouldn't.

This lit a fuse that inevitably led to everyone else being more open and predisposed to sharing information given the right circumstances.

'The next thing he did was to divide us into groups that would increase chances of revealing said information.'

Justin, Eric, and Clark were close friends—and they were boys—so it was a given that they would share deeper conversations with each other.

Girls were also more prone to discuss personal things if left alone for a long period of time.

Finally, placing the weakest of the group and the strongest in the same team made for a very compelling arrangement.

Conversations were bound to occur.

'Since we're in smaller groups, it is easier for everyone to speak their minds. Also, the absence of Ralyks in the groups allows everyone to be more comfortable.'

In the end, Ater planned all of this well.

'I'm impressed.' Rey smiled as he increased his steps to gain more ground.

'Looks like the next round of Monsters are incoming.'

\*\*\*\*\*

Once the team concluded their journey through the corridors, they all converged at the exit point.

Justin's group seemed as cheerful and optimistic as ever, while the girls looked to be the opposite of that. They had an awkward atmosphere among one another, though it didn't seem like they were on negative terms.

Finally, Adonis' team arrived with a similar vibe as the first group.

They were all smiling.

Once Alicia saw Rey with Adonis' team, she rushed to him. As for Belle, she subtly made her way to Justin's group. Trisha also joined Adonis and Billy.

Before anyone noticed, they were back to the status quo.

"Well done, everyone. I've been waiting."

Ralyks appeared out of a distortion in space, his body covered in sheer darkness.

His crimson eyes glowed and his magnificent robe flapped with the pressure of the energy he gave off.

"Glad to see you all in one piece."

The Otherworlders shrugged.

Sure, the Centipedes were tough in the beginning, but after splitting up and fighting them they became relatively easier to handle.

... Nothing too special.

"It's time to challenge the Boss. I hope you're all ready."

The moment Ralyks said this, the looks on the faces of some people soured.

They seemed to scream out "No break?!"

Unfortunately, Ralyks didn't seem to care about their feelings. None of them could even complain at all since they were on the clock.

They still had two more Floors to conquer.

\*\*\*\*\*

[Several Hours Later]

"Congratulations, everyone. You did well."

The Otherworlders beamed as they stood in the Royal Estate's open field. The second day was officially over, and once again, everyone had made reasonable progress in their Levels.

The average Level was around the Level 35, though outliers like Billy had a Level of 39.

Trisha was understandably in Level 37, though Alicia already caught up to her and went a step further.

She was in Level 38 now.

Belle was in Level 35, the average for most of the Otherworlders to fall under.

Justin was the lowest, as usual, with Level 34—just one Level shy of the expected number.

Rey decided to boost his outward Level to about 19, which he considered to be fair—all things considered.

As for Adonis, no one knew, but he was in Level 69.

He would have probably had a much higher Level, but he was asked to sit out the entire Boss Fight for all the Floors.

In the end, all of them had grown reasonably stronger than they were at the start of the day.

"Tomorrow, we'll finally be putting that Familiar of yours to use." Ralyks looked straight at Alicia and narrowed his gaze on the rabbit that she held.

"We'll begin the Seventh Floor with Snow trying her hardest to solo the Floor. I want to see how she'll do as an offensive force on her own."

"W-what?!"

Most of the Otherworlders were shocked, but Ralyks maintained his calm demeanor.

"It's not fair that you're the only ones who get to grow. Snow is still in Level 1 because I made her sit back and let you all Level Up."

In order to make things balanced, it was better to make certain Floors exclusive to the Grand Summon so she could decently hunt and grow.

Since she had incredible potential at just Level 1, there was no debate as to her use if she could grow even stronger than normal.

"That's the end of today's announcements." Ralyks gave a slow nod at everyone and subtly vanished from the open field.

"See you tomorrow."

\*

### **Chapter 300 Reading Between The Lines**

"Hmmm..."

As Rey finished listening to the last recording of his classmates, he couldn't help but squirm a bit uncomfortably on his bed.

After all, he had heard some pretty personal things from the girl side of things.

'I should have asked Ater to filter it...'

Rey definitely didn't need to learn about Belle's boob issues and Trisha's thick thighs.

He felt especially bad because he was one of the boys who stared hard at those parts of the girls' bodies, and he now realized how much they disliked it.

'Alicia even called those who do it creeps. She basically called me a creep...'

Rey had never thought of it like that before, but he was now seeing things from a different light.

'On a more serious note, though... I can't believe all of these issues exist with them.'

Rey wasn't just thinking about the girls, but every single one of his classmates.

'It seems they all have issues that I never even thought about before.'

Rey never deeply considered what his classmates felt about being trapped in this new world—unable to return home.

The way it seemed, most people had given up on returning to Earth.

'According to Seraph, we would have died anyway. So what's the point?'

Still, he felt like Alicia was a special case for seeking a way to return home.

'I never expected there to be others. Justin wants to return home, and even Clark wants to do so if he can take his superpower with him...'

There could be a few others among the girls, as well as in his own group, who shared the same sentiment.

'That's important to know.' As he rubbed his chin, a thought came to him.

It was a fleeting one, but it appeared regardless.

"Would I ever get an ability that allows me to cross realities? Is it possible?"

As he mumbled these words, he noticed a slight movement in front of him.

'A-ah, I forgot I wasn't alone.'

Ater was floating right in front of him in his same seated posture. He was waiting for Rey's review of the entire plan. no doubt.

"Good job." Rey said as he set aside his other thoughts for a separate time.

"I can now understand them a lot more... all thanks to you."

It was all due to Ater's actions and thorough planning that he was able to naturally learn a lot more about his teammates, and also ensure they bonded in a sense.

"The plan wasn't completely effective on the girls, unfortunately. Would you like me to try again?"

As Ater brought that topic up, Rey felt his cheeks flush in embarrassment.

Memories of the girls and what they said at the very end of their conversation struck him.

"Which guy are you most interested in at the moment?"

The response the girls gave to that question was forever etched in his mind.

'They're all interested in me? For real?'

Rey didn't think he could believe it.

If it wasn't that Ater recorded it, he would have thought someone was pulling some kind of prank on him.

'Well, maybe the interest they mean is just simple curiosity...'

Rey realized he had stood out in a few ways, so it was possible for the girls to find him interesting. Plus, he was the supposed weakest, so that made him unique in his own way.

'But why would they all give such a unanimous answer?'

They could think of a couple more reasons, and one of them was the influence of a particular girl among the group.

"Belle... she was definitely up to something."

Rey noticed Ater nodding in front of him, but he was too engrossed in his thoughts to properly pay him any mind.

'Did she say my name in order to get on Alicia's mind? Then what of Trisha? She probably meant it innocently. That leaves Alicia...'

Rey's cheeks turned even redder the moment he thought of Alicia.

His racing heart doubled in speed, and he felt like he would have a heart attack just thinking of the possibilities attached to her words.

'To be honest, if they all liked me that way... I don't know what I would do.'

He found Belle to be completely out of the option and entirely disturbing.

'I still think she's just trying to cause trouble with Alicia.'

Seeing that she was the one who asked the question, it was also clear that she did everything on purpose.

Rey didn't even want to think of her in that way at all.

'As for Trisha, I don't know...'

It was still more likely that Trisha was simply curious rather than romantically attracted to him.

'What do I know about romance, though? Haha...'

The one he desperately wished to be true was Alicia's confession.

'I like her, so if she likes me... maybe I can finally confess or something.'

Doing so would mean he would reveal his identity as Ralyks, but Rey didn't think it would make too much of a difference.

'Alicia doesn't like Ralyks too much, sure. But if I explain everything to her, I'm sure she'll understand... right?'

He still wasn't sure, and his heart was pounding abnormally.

'I probably shouldn't think about it too much. At least, not right now.'

It would be stupid for him to try anything during such a pertinent period in their training and growth.

'Maybe after the Raid is over...' Rey had a nervous smile on his face, but his face was lit with some kind of excitement.

'I can't wait!'

"I have a question, Master." Ater interrupted Rey's thoughts, causing the boy to look up.

"Yeah? What is it?"

"You could have easily controlled them to do your bidding and reveal everything about themselves. So why didn't you?"

Ater's concerns about the most efficient route remained, and based on his Beast mindset, it was clear that Rey had chosen the effective method.

"I know what you mean. I could have gotten even more information from them, and I could have also made them get closer without any need for the organic process."

Ater nodded and waited for his Master's reasons.

Rey simply chuckled and shrugged, collapsing his back on the soft bed.

"I still operate under the bounds of my moral restraints, Ater."

Closing both of his eyes, he smiled to himself.

"There are lines I don't cross."

\*