

Extras 361

Chapter 361 The Malignant One [Pt 4]

[A Few Moments Earlier]

"Huff... huff..."

Claudius was already beginning to feel the exhaustion in his body as he sprinted at full speed, without stop.

His aged, wrinkled body began to ache, begging to slow down for even a moment. However, he knew he could not do that.

Stopping for even the slightest of a second meant certain death.

Sweat sprayed from his face as he navigated the path he and his men took to reach the KariBlanc Mansion.

His goal was simple—escape the Capital!

He had expended all of his Mana, and right now he was merely running on the little reserves that his Enchanted Items gave him.

He had lost all of his Undead, and even if he had his full stock, they would be useless against the enemy.

Even running was useless.

But... Claudius had to hold on to hope one way or the other.

As a result, he found his legs moving.

'Faster!'

They swept past the silent city.

'Faster!'

They moved away from the peaceful ambiance.

'Much faster!'

They trampled upon the unsoiled ground.

'Fas... ter?'

Claudius tripped on something and found his body headed for the ground. Unfortunately for his tired self, he could do nothing but witness his collapse.

"Guh!" He winced as he hit the ground, his eyes tightly shut.

However, he couldn't allow himself to dawdle for much longer.

He had to get up!

He had to run!

'I-I have to, or else... h-huh...?'

Perhaps it was due to his overwhelming fear, but Claudius hadn't been paying any heed to his surroundings until now.

It was dark, and he was running too fast, so he didn't take the time to observe.

But now... as he knelt on the ground and looked around him, he found something odd.

'Where are the dead bodies?'

On their way to the KariBlanc Mansion, the Mercenary Gang Members had killed their fair share of people, while destroying properties and burning down homes.

But...

Claudius could see no dead bodies.

There were no burning houses or devastated properties.

Everything was in perfect order, almost as if nothing had ever happened that night.

'A-am I still in a dream?' Claudius wondered to himself, his body trembling.

He could no longer distinguish between dream and reality any longer.

What if, after running for so long and finally reaching his point of escape, it all turned out to be a farce?

What if he was actually still before the Mansion?

Would he really be able to tell?

'No one is pursuing me. Everywhere is eerily still...'

Yes—this had to be a DREAM!

Or... perhaps the opposite was true.

Claudius remembered how Phobio bragged about killing so many people in the Black Market, and yet there was no sphere of blood with him.

This wasn't merely the case of him being delusional either. Fernand also confirmed the same fact, which meant they all thought they killed people.

'But if there was bloodshed, there would be a sphere of blood...'

After putting his own experience into account, Claudius had to suspect that he and his men had completely dreamt through the entire massacre of the Capital.

There was never carnage or destruction.

—Just foolish men swinging their blades, thinking they were killing people.

"It looks like you figured it out." A certain silhouette appeared before Claudius.

It was very dark, so he couldn't see it very well.

However, he knew that voice very well. It came from the man who had single-handedly made all of them into fools.

"Which is it? Am I still in a dream right now, or... did we hallucinate everything?"

"The latter." Claudius couldn't see the man's face well, but he was sure he was smiling.

Only the gleaming purple gaze of the one known as Ater was visible, and it stared down at Claudius in amusement.

"C-can I ask you a question?" Claudius asked, his knees still remaining on the ground, as his body refused to move.

No... that wasn't quite true.

It was he who refused to move his body.

There was no point, after all.

"Sure. Ask your question."

Claudius leaked out a bitter smile as he parted his lips and finally addressed the issue he had been ignoring for so long.

"Why... do you look so young and attractive?"

"Hm?"

"You're a Necromancer, aren't you? That means you deal with Miasma when handling corpses and turning them into Undead. I'm only thirty-three years old, and yet I look like this..."

Claudius knew he was rambling to an enemy, but this was the first time he was telling anyone his real age and his personal struggle.

He thought that if anyone could understand, it would be a fellow Necromancer.

"My skin is wrinkled and loose, my body is aged, and my bones are weak. I always thought that it was a sacrifice I had to pay to attain the power I needed, but after seeing you... my resolve has wavered."

Claudius looked up at the being who listened in silence, tears now falling from his eyes.

"Why? What did you have to sacrifice to give you such power? How can you have everything I wanted, with no flaws or caveat? What did you do that I didn't? What makes you so special?"

Claudius always believed he was special since he was a child. After all, it was incredibly rare for someone to be born with an Exclusive Skill—especially one as rare as his was.

But, compared to the man standing before him... he was nothing.

Why?

"Your mistake lies in your initial premise." Once Ater spoke, Claudius' thoughts were suspended.

He only blankly looked at the man of darkness.

"Power requires sacrifice? Where did you get that absurd idea from? Those that claw their way into power will surely have a measure of it, based on what they scrape from the world. But... true power is etched in a being's nature."

'N-nature...?' This was the first time Claudius was hearing such a thing.

"Yes. Nature dictates that you are weak and I am strong." Ater's voice sank deep into the darkness.

"That is all there is to it."

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Chapter 362 The Malignant One [Pt 5]

"God is strong. Humans are weak. Angels are somewhere in-between."

As Claudius heard these words, he shuddered in ignorance.

"No matter how powerful a human tries to become, sacrificing all he can to attain strength, it will all fall under the allocated strength he is allowed to possess." Ater's words echoed coldly in the night.

"Ultimately, it will fall under weakness."

"S-so... all my attempts at strength... were in vain...?"

"Maybe it had some worth against fellow humans, but your luck ran out when you faced me. You see, I know I'm not weak... because I'm not human."

'N-not... human?' Claudius' eyes widened as he heard this deep revelation.

"I can take on whatever shape I want, while also possessing the abilities of those whose form I take. In essence..."

A flash of light sparked around Ater, and his form came into light as he crouched so he could somewhat be on the same level as Claudius.

The latter's eyes bulged as he looked at his reflection—the miserable old man he had become.

"... I can become you."

Ater had transformed into Claudius in every sense of the word, and upon seeing this, the old man felt his heart ache.

He truly... had sacrificed everything for nothing.

"I can also use all your abilities. There are a few limitations placed on my power, but that's how it works in simple terms."

Ater rose to his feet, transforming back into the handsome man he once was. .c(o)m

"You're... invincible..." Claudius croaked.

With such a power, Ater was at least in the realm of the Absolute.

There was no doubt about it in Claudius' mind.

"Am I really? Perhaps in some worlds, that would ring true. Even in this world, maybe..." Ater smirked, shaking his head as he circled around the despairing one.

"However, there exist beings who far transcend my current state."

"T-the Dragons...?"

"Yeah. I'll admit that there exist some that I can't beat right now. But all of it is only a matter of time."

"T-then—!"

"However, there is one that I couldn't possibly hope to beat no matter the passage of time."

Claudius could only make a guess at this point, but he muttered a response.

"Your... Master?"

"Precisely!"

He couldn't see Ater's face, but the way his eyes narrowed and from the sound of his tone, Claudius knew he was smiling.

He had more questions, and so he didn't hesitate to ask them.

There was nothing left to lose, after all.

"How strong... is your Master?"

"Let's just say he can do exactly what I can do and so much more." Ater's amused chuckle echoed in the dark.

However, this response only made Claudius all the more curious.

"Can you not simply transform into him and use his powers?"

"..."

"Or... is that one of your limitations?"

For a moment, there was silence among the two who conversed.

Then—

"I can indeed take on his form. My limitation prevents me from turning into anyone with a higher Class than me, so Master isn't off limits."

However, despite saying this, there was no tone of triumph in Ater's voice.

It was the opposite, actually.

"I can normally use all the Skills in my target's Arsenal—though if it is higher than my Class, then the effects will be proportionally reduced." Ater continued in his melancholy.

"However, there is one exception: The Primeval Tier."

Claudius was lost, once again.

To humans, the highest realm that existed was the Absolute one—meant for heroes and gods.

If there was to be any realm above that, then perhaps it would belong to wherever designed reality and existence itself.

A sort of Divine Realm.

But... what was this Primeval Tier that Ater spoke of?

"The bulk of Master's power exists within that Primeval Skill, and I can't access it. Isn't it amazing?!" Ater's melancholy quickly turned into amazement.

He cackled in delight and drowned in the pleasure of it.

"Master's power... is something I can never touch—a realm I won't ever reach."

According to the earlier definition Ater had given down, it only meant one thing.

"Compared to Master... I am WEAK!"

As Claudius looked at Ater, he could now understand—at least to an extent—why he had played with everyone so casually.

'We were really worth nothing, weren't we?'

Compared to the likes of this man and his Master... the humans of this world were really nothing but dust.

'It was my mistake.' Claudius finally admitted as his face fell. 'I made too many assumptions from the start.'

Power... true power wasn't something one had to sacrifice everything to possess.

It was a mandate.

"Are you even... a Necromancer?" Claudius asked in passing.

"No. I am a being of Chaos, so I can use the Chaos Art of Ancient MajiK. The Hollow Technique is simply one of those Arts."

"I... I see..."

"It seems I was allowed a Skill to summon the Undead in my stockpile, but that's about it. I doubt I'll be permitted to use any advanced Ancient MajiK here... not that I have enough energy to do so."

"I... see..."

"Out of everyone present, you were the most entertaining. At the very least, you managed to feed my pleasures for a while. You have my gratitude."

Claudius didn't know how to react towards being praised as a plaything.

He could only respond as he normally would.

"You're welcome."

For a moment, there was a lull in the area.

"So... what will happen to me now?" He asked with a bitter smile.

Claudius already knew he wouldn't be spared. Ater didn't seem like the kind of man who would show the likes of him any mercy.

"Well, I already made sure you would die and come back to me as an Undead. The effects should be taking place pretty soon."

Claudius' eyes widened as soon as he heard this.

"W-when...?"

"Earlier, when you were still in the dome of darkness."

"A-ahh..."

Claudius' body shivered as he recognized the truth. He stared at his hand and found it already pale.

His body was refusing to function, and he was collapsing on the ground.

The Ater that was in front of him was nowhere to be seen.

'I see. I was... dreaming again...'

There was never an Ater in front of him, and there was no conversation with a being of such magnitude.

All those complicated things had to be what his brain conjured up in the end.

'I... I was truly strong, wasn't I?'

With that as his final thought, Claudius slumped to the ground and met his end.

For a second, he remained like that—an old corpse, lying on the freezing floor of an empty street.

Then, his body jerked back to life.

He rose to his two feet and turned towards where he was called.

He had vacant eyes and an absolutely dull face, completely devoid of any will to live and stripped completely of all his desires.

All Claudius had become... was a slave.

"Pfft!"

Ater smiled as he saw Claudius approached the lump of flesh that was his comrades.

"I-is there anything funny?" Asher, who was still trembling beside him, asked.

In response to this, Ater simply shrugged.

"No. Not really."

As Ater stared at Claudius becoming one with the abominable fleshy Undead that everyone had merged into, he grinned in further amusement.

Soon, all five of the Heads of Destruction—along with the Wyvern—became one.

"I just had a rather fun conversation with someone through his mind."

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Chapter 363 Fools In The Dark

"So... the mission failed, huh?"

A group of about fifty men sat together in an isolated room. There were no windows, and no external source of light—save for a few candles.

The men were coated in the black, though the turbans they used to wrap their faces were now pulled down so their faces were shown.

This was Scylla's Recon Unit—though it was members short.

"Is that what you're mostly concerned about? Who the hell was that man? How could he kill Leader Jawl just like that?!"

Jawl was often compared to the Nine Heads of Destruction in strength, so when they first saw his corpse, none of the Recon Unit Members present believed their eyes.

However, after seeing how the other Heads of Destruction struggled against a single Undead made by the mysterious black suited man, they instantly realized how big of a threat the enemy was.

Once the other squad reunited with them, they planned their escape. And, when no eye was on them, they stealthily left the premises.

"Do you think they're all dead?" One of the Unit members asked.

"I think so."

"R-really? Even with Five Heads of Destruction leading the charge?"

For a moment, there was silence.

No one really knew how the fight had concluded, considering they left prematurely.

Still, none of them regretted their decision.

"At least we were able to secure the merchandise for Lady Scylla."

"It's in the other room, right?"

"Yes."

"Whew! I wouldn't want her to chew us out for failing to do that along with failing the rest of the mission."

"Haha... indeed!"

As they laughed among themselves, a creaking sound began to echo from the door.

"H-huh...?"

"I-is that...?"

All the eyes in the room darted towards the only entrance and exit within the dark room. Some even reached for their weapons and waited.

The creaking continued, and the door slowly opened.

Gulps could be heard, and a few now had their hands on the hilt of their blade.

... Ready to strike.

Then—

"How troublesome..."

—A man entered the room.

The moment they saw him, their faces melted into relief, with nearly everyone exhaling and relaxing their muscles.

After all, the man who just entered was the Deputy Leader of the Recon Unit.

"What's with all of you?" He asked with puzzlement as he stepped into the room, locked the door, and went to have his seat at the corner of the room.

Many leaked out silly smiles, though a few still watched the Deputy Leader with anxiety.

"So, how did the call with Lady Scylla go? Was she understanding?"

This was the most important question to all of the members of the Recon Unit at the moment.

Despite being in the secret Scylla Safehouse within the Capital, they couldn't feel safe until their Boss and Master had deemed them so.

The Deputy Leader had stepped out so he could use the Communication Device with him to communicate with Scylla, since the walls of this particular room was made from dense Orichalcum—hence preventing any signal involving Mana to pass.

Now that he had returned, they awaited the news.

"She wasn't answering. It's strange, considering she always makes time to respond to our calls..."

The Deputy Leader appeared worried, and for good reason.

Without some sort of external intervention from Scylla, or at least some kind of order, they were stranded in the Capital.

With such a monster within the Capital, it was easy to see why they weren't at ease despite being somewhere safe.

"Do you think something happened on their end? Perhaps some kind of interference?"

"Maybe things aren't going according to plan in the Dark Gathering too..."

"What should we do now?"

Murmurs turned into echoes of confusion as all the parties stared at each other indecisively.

None knew what to do.

Even the Deputy Leader had a guilt-ridden and absolutely confused expression on his face.

'If only Jawl was here...' His thoughts trailed in silence.

He would have been able to lead everything and everyone better.

'He just had to die to that thi—!'

"Looks like Master is pretty much done with things on his end."

The voice of a stranger echoed amidst the group of people who didn't instantly pick up the sound. Its amused tone had a strange sense of familiarity, but there was no doubt about how detached it was.

By the time the Recon Unit members realized what was going on, it was too late.

The dark suited man, Ater, was standing in their midst.

"H-how...?!"

"This is a top-secret Safehouse!"

"How did he get in!"

"I-impossible!"

"Eeek!"

The blood-red hair of the ebony man flowed as he looked at them with a condescending gaze of amusement.

It felt like they were nothing but maggots in his eyes.

"Safehouse, huh? Is that what you see? Interesting..."

Suddenly, the safe and cozy comfort of the room began to crumble.

It was replaced by an open field under the night sky.

They could see the clouds, the dull glow of the moon, and the scarce stars in the sky.

—A completely different sight from what they remembered a few moments earlier.

"This is just on the outskirts of the Capital. You never retreated to your Safehouse." Ater said as he took his seat in the air.

Everyone who saw him exclaimed in overwhelming shock. They couldn't even pick what to be surprised about, since everything was happening too quickly.

"W-what did you to do us?!" One of them screamed, only to cover his lips in fear.

In response, Ater only smiled warmly.

"[Illusion]..." He answered calmly. "From the moment you stepped into the Capital, you were all under my power."

As such, everything they experienced from that moment on was subject to him.

Was it real? Was it not?

They could not tell in the slightest.

"Now, it's my turn to ask a question." Ater narrowed his gaze as he looked at the paralyzed group.

"Why do you think I let you escape?"

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Chapter 364 Shadow Slave

Silence.

Deafening silence took over the members of the Recon Unit.

They could not move their bodies for some reason, else they would have fled. Besides, even if they ran, they would still be stuck under Ater's illusion.

The mere fact that Ater was here meant that the Mercenary Gang lost. Hence, if he wanted to, he could also unleash the Undead he previously unsummoned and wreck them.

Bottom line there was no escape.

"You don't need to answer the question. It was rhetorical" Ater chuckled as he looked at the group with hidden delight.

They all gulped simultaneously.

"I want information. No, more than that" Ater rubbed his chin as he spoke.

"I plan on controlling your group so you can scour the entire Alliance and sniff out as much as you can far and wide. Since you're considered elite, you must be pretty good, right"

The Recon Unit members shuddered as they heard what the man before them was saying.

It was indeed true that they were the best at what they did investigating, digging up dirt, and navigating everything regarding both the illegal and mainstream paths within the entire United Human Alliance.

When it came to espionage, sabotage, and thorough investigations they were the best.

"I would have used the minions in my arsenal, since they're more efficient and competent, but they lack that human element as well as the experience you've all accumulated."

The Recon Unit felt a bit of relief from what they were hearing.

'WE HAVE WORTH!' Their thoughts echoed.

As long as they were useful for something, the man before them wouldn't kill them.

To be honest, that was enough for them.

All the members of Scylla's Recon Unit were her slaves. They had no freedom or life of their own.

If Ater made them his slave, nothing really changed.

They just changed employers.

"And so, after deliberating both the advantages and disadvantages of using you versus using my Undead, I came up with a perfect compromise." Ater's grin widened to monstrous proportions.

"I'll simply make you Undead! That way, you'll be more efficient and competent."

The eyes of all the Recon Unit Members bulged in shock.

"Of course, I'll make sure you keep your memories and everything else. You'll only be slightly stronger than your current selves, but at least you won't break easily and you can endlessly serve."

Before they could think any further perhaps even beg and offer their undying loyalty Ater had already begun the process.

"Hollow Technique #2: Shadow Slave."

In that instant, a dark silhouette washed into all fifty or so of the men, causing them to collapse on the ground dead.

Their gray corpses oozed darkness, and their cold, lifeless forms remained stagnant for a few seconds.

Then

"Uuuuuuuu"

They returned to false life, the white in their eyes darkened, with dark vein-like markings appearing in multiple parts of their skin.

All of them had become Undead.

"You've become Shadow Slaves. You can move freely through shadows and do a lot of interesting things, which should further assist you with your mission."

One of the requirements to become a Shadow Slave was that the targets had to be killed by the Hollow Technique.

In exchange for just a few seconds of painless death, they were basically immortal creatures who never tired or required sustenance.

They could turn incorporeal and become Shadows. They could travel long distances and even blend in with their surroundings.

All their senses and physical abilities were heightened, and they could always relay information to their Master.

They also possessed all the Skills and abilities they had before death.

The only problem was that their Class would be changed and forever stuck under the C-Tier Shadow Slave Class.

Since they were merely minions meant for reconnaissance and information gathering, however, this much was fine.

"Very convenient tools to have." Ater smiled as he gave one final look at them.

He ceased sitting and stood on his two feet.

"I've passed across the details of your task to your minds. Begin immediately."

All the Shadow Slaves knelt before Ater, bowing their heads in profound reverence.

A second later, they were nowhere to be seen.

Their bodies had become one with the darkness, and they had blended into the night.

"Master desires to completely eradicate the Criminal Underworld, however if care is not taken, they will spring up again."

Such was human nature.

If given enough time, malicious individuals would gather together under the banner of self interest.

They would form their own Dark Triumvirate.

'But, as long as I keep undying watchers on them and nip the problem in the bud before anything further arises, then there will be no issue at all.'

Ater smiled as he looked at the darkened sky.

'Master will be able to learn all the Skills of the ones I captured later, which will further improve his might.'

A tinge of regret formed on Ater's face, though.

'How I wish Master could use the Arts. But that time is yet to come. He is too young'

Ater's grin broadened regardless.

'Soon, Master you will ascend beyond the bounds which nature has dictated for you." He licked his lips in anticipation.

Ater simply could not wait to watch it happen, all in the fullness of time.

'Only you can do it, Master.'

Only Rey Skylar, holder of the Primeval Power, could possibly reach such height.

"Status Window." Ater whispered.

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Ater
- Race: Bakeneko (Beast)
- Class: Absolute Summon (S-Tier)
- Level: 3 (09.12% EXP)
- Life Force: 1,000 (500)
- Mana Level: 1,500 (750)
- Combat Ability: 2,500 (1,250)
- Stat Points: 200
- Skills (Exclusive): [Shapeshift]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Dark Magic]. [Magic Supremacy]. [Possession]. [Compulsion]. [Illusion]. [Undead Summon]. [A\$!?!]

- Alignment: Chaotic Evil

[Additional Information]

An Absolute Beast whose true form remains unknown, but takes the form of a cat. It is a great trickster with malevolent desires. It is a wicked entity.

[End Of Information]

"Calling me a wicked entity, huh?" Ater muttered as darkness shrouded his entire self.

Soon, he vanished from sight, leaving only the whispers of his voice behind.

"How cold

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Chapter 365 Conclusion Of The Night

"S-so... that's what happened, huh?"

Rebal was still recoiling from the words of his son.

What he described wasn't as gory or bloody as what Ralyks had displayed during the Dark Gathering, but something about it felt more twisted.

... Far darker.

"The worst part is, I could have sworn that there was a lot of damage during the entire fight, but there's nothing! Nothing at all..." Asher replied, still not completely himself.

The honest truth was that he was scared.

Was he in a dream? Was he in reality? What if, just like the Mercenary Gang, he thought he saw something which wasn't real?

Asher didn't know what to believe anymore.

"You just need rest." Rebal smiled at his son, though he too had some rabid fear within himself.

Perhaps they both needed the rest.

"Sir Ralyks... he slaughtered all the enemies without mercy. I've never seen a man kill with such... lack of remorse."

And so many at once too.

Both Ralyks and his subordinate, Ater, seemed to be cut from the same cloth—one that even Rebal could not fully comprehend.

"The battle is won, and now it is time for the aftermath." Rebal chuckled, a hint of fear in his eyes.

"What do you mean, father?"

"I mean... Sir Ralyks was employed by us to take care of this mess. Now that it is over... isn't it time to think about his payment?"

It felt like an absurd thing to say, but they had to face it—the truth that confronted them.

What could they pay such a man?!

"It seems you also need some rest, father." Asher said with a tired smile.

Rebal nodded, returning the exact same expression.

Even though it was nowhere near enough, both father and son decided to consider the horrors they witnessed as a penance for their crimes.

They knew what awaited them if they deviated from their current path.

—Certain tragedy, followed by inevitable death.

That night, everything changed.

The world was turned upside down in the span of merely a few hours.

While the denizens of the Capital were fast asleep, oblivious to the events that had transpired within the walls of the massive city, the situation in the Allied Merchant City was completely different.

Scylla's Building—the location for the Dark Gathering—was exposed to the world that very night.

Troops of the Alliance stormed into the building, searching every nook and cranny until they were able to see the horrors for themselves.

Of course, they still required extensive investigations to piece together most of the details, but the core issues did not elude them.

At the very least, they did not elude General Lucy and Councilor Conrad.

They saw for themselves... the kind of darkness that had been festering within the haven that the Alliance was supposed to create.

Slave Trade was expected to be vilest thing they would find, but that was hardly the most disgusting thing was seen in their pursuit for the truth.

They saw it all.

The bad, the worse, and the ugly.

All the disgusting truths came to light that night

And then what?

The Black Market was officially disbanded, and the Triumvirate collapsed.

The Criminal Underworld was done for, and while there were bound to be vestiges here and there, those were on borrowed time.

Sooner or later, they too would die.

The world saw, that day, that darkness would ultimately fall... and justice would prevail.

Merchants were reminded to remain honest and diligent in their dealings with customers.

And clients knew they had to be fair.

If they weren't, the angel of death could descend upon the land once more and reap justice.

Yes... they all felt it.

They heard whispers from the passing soldiers who described the gory sight that the public was not allowed to see.

Most importantly... they heard the name.

The name that would go on to be a legend amongst the denizens of the Merchant City and beyond.

—The Reaper.

'It's been a long night.' Rey smiled to himself as he sat on his bed.

He was in an entirely different outfit, in his real form. His pajamas felt a bit oversized for him, but he didn't mind at all.

In fact, he liked the space.

"I killed even more people. I already knew I would do it, but still..."

Rey had steeled his heart. It was one of the reasons he decided not to tell Alicia anything.

He already knew what he was going to do.

However, despite all his planning, there were a lot of things he hadn't accounted for.

One of those was the presence of Adrien Chase—how deep the conspiracy went, and how he had been a puppet on a very loose string all this time.

But more than that...

'I didn't expect this world to be so twisted.'

He had always been grateful for the second chance he got to enjoy in H'Trae.

He had overpowered abilities, Allie's who respected him, a loyal subordinate, a lot of money, and plenty of prospects.

Sure, it was a dangerous world, but he was very strong.

'I never thought I would live an easy life here. I already knew I would have to grind and keep getting stronger if I didn't want to get left behind.'

Never once did Rey consider getting comfortable.

'But... this world... is not what I thought it was.'

Perhaps he had his na?veté to blame.

He didn't expect the human malice and wickedness of this world to reach such a peak.

'If I had known from the start...' Rey narrowed his eyes and let tears flow.

All the tears he saved up—they streamed down his face and dropped to the ground.

"If I had known it was like this... I wouldn't have hesitated from the start."

All the wicked humans in this world—people like Scylla, and the others on the list—deserved the same fate.

—Miserable death.

They weren't worthy of his mercy in the slightest.

The same way he viewed Dragons as scum who toyed with humans, or how he saw Monsters as threats to the safety of people...

'... That's how I should see those scum!' That was the conclusion Rey reached that night.

And from that point on... there was no going back.

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Chapter 366 Praise From The Master

Rey found it difficult to sleep that night.

And when he finally fell asleep, he had the worst of nightmares.

Needless to say, he didn't enjoy his night at all. Memories upon memories appeared to haunt him, tormenting his mind until he finally woke up.

By the time he did so... it was already morning.

"Yawwwwnn!" He rose up, stretching both arms as he welcomed the freshness of a new day.

Somehow, he felt at ease just knowing that it was morning. Something about the new day seemed to wash away the anxiety of the night.

"Ahh..."

Rey smacked his lips as he blinked several times. He wanted to make sure he was really seeing what was in front of him.

And sure enough... he was!

"Good morning, Master! I hope you had a pleasant night."

Ater was bowing his head first thing in the morning, with one hand on his chest and the other behind him. Of course, he was still dressed in his entire black attire, but something about him seemed slick this particular morning.

Perhaps it was the bright gleam in his eyes or the cheerful smile on his face.

Either way... Ater seemed pleased just seeing Rey wake up.

"How long have you been watching me?" Rey muttered as he groggily cleaned the little tears that spilled out thanks to his yawns.

"Not for too long, Master. Just a few hours..."

Rey smiled and shook his head a little. In all honesty, it felt nice having someone dote over him like this.

"When did he start acting like my parent?" He mused and shook his head.

"You should stop the stalker behavior, Ater."

The moment he said this, Ater's face fell slightly, which caused Rey to quickly rethink his words.

'Did I hurt his feelings? Does he even have feelings?' He sighed and shook his head once again.

Ater was a chaotic entity. He was the worst kind of evil, even the System confirmed that much. Having him around was incredibly advantageous, but Rey had to wonder if he could treat Ater like how he would treat a normal person.

'Well, he is my Familiar, after all. I don't think I should treat him poorly.'

Not after a job well done the previous night.

"You did well last night, Ater. Just as you promised, no denizen of the capital died."

"Your praises are too much, Master. I only did what was expected of me." Ater bowed his head even more deeply.

'What was expected of you, huh? Can't you just take the compliment?'

Rey cracked a slightly wide smile and decided not to bother himself with the details.

"Do you desire any reward?" He asked.

Ater seemed to bow even deeper for some reason, after hearing the question.

"I am not deserving of such."

'Really? Welp, I guess that's fi—'

"Although, if you insist, there is indeed something I would like very much."

Rey narrowed his gaze in suspicion the moment he heard those words from Ater.

Was he buttering him up?

'I swear, if you ask for anything like a bunch of children to eat, we're gonna have some problems...'

"Go on. Tell me." Rey smiled, hiding his true thoughts underneath.

Any evil requests would be reciprocated with a slap on the back for sure.

"Well..."

Rey waited for the request with a racing heart.

"... I would like you to praise me, Master."

It took a moment for that request to fully register in the mind of the confused Rey. He couldn't comprehend it at first, and his eyes became a wide blank sheet.

"E-eh?"

"Who's a good boy? Yes, you are! Yes, you are!"

Rey was currently rubbing the belly of the black cat that sat on his lap, and an unconscious smile was tugging at his lips.

'Ahh... this is so cringe!' His mind yelled as he gently stroked the feline.

It had very soft fur, and the skin underneath was equally pleasant to the touch.

In all honesty, despite feeling uncomfortable at first, Rey was beginning to enjoy the process. His cheeks were beet red as he massaged the cat.

He could see Ater purring and twisting his body in delight, an obvious sign that the chaotic evil being—the personification of chaos, as he called himself—was enjoying the belly rub.

Rey didn't know which was worse; the fact that he was literally petting a grown-ass man, or the fact that he didn't want to stop.

'It's so addicting! Now I know why Alicia is so passionate about cats.'

In a way, doing this for only a few minutes allowed Rey's body and mind to completely relax.

He soon forgot about his nightmares, and his slightly uneasy mind became purged of all negativity. In a way, this seemed more like a reward for him as well.

'Thank you, Ater. You're really...' Rey smiled at the black cat on his lap.

'... More considerate than you appear.'

Rey's smile widened as he took his eyes off Ater and stared straight ahead, only to notice a screen floating in front of him.

It was his Status Window.

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Rey Skylar.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Anomaly (A-Tier)
- Level: 115 (05.13% EXP)
- Life Force: 146 (+206) [+900]
- Mana Level: 240 (+206) [+950]
- Combat Ability: 207 (+206) [+990]
- Stat Points: 0
- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Fusion/Fission]. [Merger]. [Dead Calm].
- Alignment: Neutral Good

[Additional Information]

You are an irregularity to the world. Achieving the unbelievable, shaking the balance of reality... you seek to overturn what is and isn't.

Will you succeed? Or will your failure be miserable?

[End Of Information]

'It looks like I was able to grow stronger...' Rey smiled wryly.

His Stats had increased quite a bit, and other than Leveling Up from the S-Tier Monster and the scum in the Dark Gathering, it was also a product of his [Carnage] Skill.

'How many... have I killed?'

The answer was presented to him in a perfect format.

[Skill Details]

[Carnage]

Tier: B

Ability: You grow stronger based on the amount of human lives you take. Additional Stats will be stacked based on this number.

~Current Additional Stats~

[Number Of People Killed: 1,109]

Life Force: 51

Mana Level: 51

Combat Ability: 51

[End Of Information]

'I see...' Rey's expression appeared a little downcast as he looked at the numbers.

He wasn't particularly bothered about the number of people he had killed, as his eyes were focused on something else entirely.

'So this is the value of a thousand lives. It's quite small.'

*

Chapter 367 Another Proposal From Ater

"... And that's where we stand now."

As Rey listened to Ater's full report, he found himself blown away by all he heard.

Not only was he pleasantly surprised, but he was also shocked by just how much Ater knew and how many steps he had taken on his own.

'I never even told him about my [Doppel], yet he figured it out on his own.'

Thanks to that, he was able to preserve the dead bodies of the important players that he killed—all so Rey. Oils copy their Skills later.

"Great job, Ater! You even went ahead and took action regarding the investigation of the vermin in the Alliance."

After seeing the names on those packets of meat, Rey knew that a lot of people—if they could even be called that—would have to be purged from the Alliance.

It was the best route to take.

"I will acquire all those names from the Royal Council's inventory and inform the Shadow Slaves to investigate and execute them."

Rey smiled and nodded at Ater, pleased to have such an autonomous and intelligent person by his side.

'Should I have sent him to the Dark Gathering while I stayed in the Capital instead?' Rey smiled internally.

He wondered how different things would have been if Adrien had to deal with Ater and not him.

'Would he have been able to locate Adrien's real body and capture him?'

It was all speculative anyway, so there's no need to think too deeply about their matchup.

'Maybe next time, then.' Rey mused, and he furthered his discussion with Ater on other matters.

'I'm surprised he was even able to turn them all into Undead. That's not a part of his Skills, so... ah, he must have shapeshifted and used the Skill of the Claudius guy...'

Rey realized that Ater probably didn't need to preserve their corpses for him since he could just copy them directly from him.

Still, it was smart for Ater to have Undead that could end up being useful, one way or the other.

"What are your plans now, Master?"

Rey raised his brow as Ater asked this question.

"The Dark Undertaking is over, and in due time, the Dungeon Raid will be concluded as well. I was just curious about what you planned on doing after that."

Rey rubbed his chin upon hearing the question. It would be a lie if he said there hadn't been any planning on his end. However, nothing was concrete enough to be considered a proper plan.

"I want to defeat lots of stronger enemies so I can Level Up more. Despite killing a thousand humans, I barely Leveled up two times. If this keeps up, I will probably fall off and be surpassed by the likes of Adonis."

His Enchanted Items were giving him quite the advantage when it came to Base Stats, thanks to his ability to Equip a lot higher than normal.

But what of it?

Eventually, if he wasn't careful, others would catch up to him.

"I see. I do not believe you need to worry about that—at least, not for the time being. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to grow stronger in the near future." Ater responded with a smile.

Rey wondered if his thought process was too childish after looking at Ater's doting smile.

He blushed a little in embarrassment.

"What did you mean by plans, then?" Quickly asking to change the topic, Rey found himself rushing through the question.

"A-ah... I was talking about what you plan on doing with this place. This United Human Alliance..."

"What do I plan on doing? I don't understand..."

"Do you ever consider the possibility of leading this entire Nation? Perhaps... becoming the king?"

"E-eh?"

"I can make that happen, Master. If you rule this place, then it will be a lot easier to—"

"What are you talking about, Ater? Me being a ruler? I'm only sixteen!" Rey slapped his hand on his forehead as he stared at his Familiar in disbelief.

He couldn't believe Ater was thinking that far already.

'This guy is seriously giving me too much credit.'

"I do not believe your age is an important factor, though. You have done and achieved more than what most would never dream of in their lifetime." Ater responded calmly.

Sighing very loudly, he shook his head while raising one hand to show his lack of interest in the suggested position.

"The answer is no. I would rather be a fighter and leave all the administrative stuff to those in charge than to govern everything myself."

"But you can merely leave a proxy behind while you fight. Besides, do you not believe that the strongest should be the one to lead?"

"Of what use is strength without maturity and cunning to back it up?" Rey answered in swift motion.

Surely, Ater would have to agree that a leader needed more than raw power to be able to properly lead a group of people.

If they didn't have the skills necessary for commanding the respect, trust, and fear of those that followed them, then not was no use.

"That is why you have me, Master."

Ater's answer caught Rey off-guard. He didn't expect his Familiar to be so adamant on the subject. And he had no further rebuttals to give.

"The answer is no." Rey maintained his ground, squeezing his fingers on the surface of his palms.

'There's no way I would want to be such a high-profile person...'

He was still struggling with balancing his dual identities, yet Ater wanted to suggest something even more draining?

No way!

'Getting stronger comes first! If I'm strong enough, I can just influence Conrad and Vida to do whatever I want, as Ralyks—of course.'

He could enjoy his time with his classmates as Rey, while also building his strength and commuting the necessary evils as Ralyks.

It was straining and convoluted, but thanks to his list of Skills, Rey was convinced that he could do all of it.

There was no need for more.

"I understand, Master. Then, please forget I said anything..."

"Your idea wasn't bad, Ater. Maybe when I grow older and become a lot more responsible." Rey laughed, clearly making light of the issue.

Ater shrugged and gave a slight chuckle too.

"Yes. Maybe..."

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Chapter 368 Identity Crisis

Thanks to the immensely harsh experience that the students went through in the Royal Dungeon, they were allowed to have a whole day to themselves.

No one expected a full-day break, but they sure were plenty satisfied when they heard that.

Most of the students went outside the Estate's walls, but not all of them could afford to do that.

For example, Adonis was very busy with the Royal Council regarding the aftermath of the Dark Gathering and the implications it would have on the Alliance.

Alicia called in sick, and so she was being treated by the Royal Physicians.

Apparently, she had suffered excessive mental stress and a lot of drain from overexerting herself.

It wasn't fatal or anything, but she required a lot of rest.

Everyone was prevented from visiting her—including the Otherworlders—as she needed proper rest and isolation for her to be able to recover.

The only living entity allowed by her side was her Familiar—Snow.

They couldn't get rid of the thing even if they tried.

Then, there was one last person who didn't leave for the Capital's wonders.

It was none other than Rey, and his excuse for doing so was simply due to wanting to sleep in after exerting himself too much the previous day.

It wasn't surprising, since Rey was the weakest out of all of them.

Even though their entire bodies ached, they were able to recover overnight by sleeping. However, Rey probably hadn't gotten enough sleep.

As a result, he had to rest more.

And so, with that arrangement... the Otherworlders began their day.

"Now I feel even more guilty."

Rey let out a sigh as he walked in a hallway, with Ater following right behind him.

The gap between the two of them was very small, but it remained as a sign of the hierarchy that existed.

"May I ask what makes you so guilty, Master?" Ater's question came as a whisper, but Rey could hear it well.

Rey sighed even more as he kept walking to his destination, and though he didn't really know how to phrase it, he didn't want to ignore his Familiar's question.

"It's about Alicia. She's sick because of me. I really pushed her and everyone hard, didn't I?"

"Wasn't it for their benefit? So they can get stronger?" Ater responded with another question.

Rey knew where Ater was going with this, but he also couldn't help but feel bad for placing such a strain on someone he had feelings for.

He thought everyone would be fine after a day, even Alicia—given how they even talked after returning from the Raid.

Yet...

"Do you think she's like that because she spoke to me after the Raid instead of sleeping?" Rey asked Ater, who shot him a quizzical look by raising a brow.

"N-never mind..."

Rey felt like sighing again, but he stopped himself from being so soppy.

He was almost at his destination, and he had to deliver as much positive energy as possible. Of course, he was dressed as Ralyks, so the 'positive energy' he had to exude needed to match and even exceed his dreary ambiance.

'I just... haa, I guess I'll stop worrying about her.' Rey smiled to himself.

He had secretly visited her room and used [Absolute Appraisal] to check how she was really doing.

'It's just as the physicians said. She'll be fine after some rest...'

That brought some relief to him.

Alicia was sleeping when he visited, and even if she was awake, she wouldn't be able to see a thing due to how well he cloaked himself.

"Why do you not reveal your identity to everyone, Master?"

"W-what?!" Rey nearly choked on his saliva the moment he heard that suggestion from Ater.

"You seem overly concerned about your actions, and how they affect your allies. If that is how you truly feel, would it not be better to be transparent with them and ensure even greater cooperation?"

"Are you crazy? I can't do that now... not after everything I've done as Ralyks!"

Rey couldn't believe the kind of absurd things Ater said out of the blue. They were always too far off from where he would rather be.

Still, he couldn't help but consider this suggestion a bit more seriously.

"You'll only continue to do more, so everything will simply accumulate."

"..." Rey didn't know how to respond to this.

"You are merely compounding the issue, at least that's what I think."

Rey already knew that. The best moment to tell everyone—or at least, a few people—about his true identity would have been right before the Dungeon Raid.

Not only were the number of his classmates fewer, but they had grown to respect Ralyks and his strength to a considerable extent.

Rey was also not an object of scorn and ridicule any longer.

But, he missed that window a while back.

Why?

Maybe he was scared. Maybe he didn't know how to frame it.

Maybe... he just didn't want anyone to know how strong he was. Perhaps he liked things this way.

"Do you... really think I should tell my allies my secret?" Rey asked, his footsteps already ceasing their echo.

Ater also stopped walking, staring straight into Rey's eyes.

"My preference would be to not have allies at all. Subordinates are far more manageable than allies, and you wouldn't owe them any explanation regarding the secrets you keep."

Rey's face went pale as soon as he heard Ater's response.

He already knew where this was headed.

"Allies are problematic due to the nature of the relationship. Their trust is important... and it is unwise to keep them in the dark about certain details of importance."

Rey felt a slight pang in his chest as he heard this.

"The longer your deception lasts, the more catastrophic the feedback will be."

Rey nodded in agreement and sighed.

"You're right, Ater. I'll have to tell them soon..."

Ater nodded and smiled at his Master, and the former did the same as well.

"Now then, let's continue." Rey continued to move forward, now setting aside his previous thoughts while focusing on the most pertinent one at the moment.

"I hope you're doing better now... Esme."

*

Chapter 369 Grieving

[Moments Earlier]

"My partner... I'd like to see her. Where is she?"

Rey, currently disguised as Ralyks, was seated opposite Rebal, Kara, and Asher.

All three of them gazed upon him with respect and reverence—far more than what they would normally depict.

Rey ignored all of that and focused on his question.

"I haven't seen her since yesterday. She was very distraught back then..."

Rey could only hope that Esme was a lot better.

However, he soon realized—as soon as he saw the anxious expressions on the faces of the three—that his hopes were going to be dashed.

"The lady... said she doesn't want any visitors."

'H-huh?' Rey was surprised the moment he heard that.

"I'm not just 'any visitor', though." He responded almost immediately.

Rebal and the other two gulped, almost simultaneously. They must have thought he was offended when, in all honesty, he was just surprised.

"She also specifically mentioned that she doesn't want to see you, Sir Ralyks."

Rey felt something squeeze within his heart.

'Why? Why doesn't she want to see me?' His mind echoed.

Was it because of how he slaughtered all those people in the Dark Gathering? He didn't even torture them, and he made their deaths pretty much instantaneous.

They were all bastards who had it coming anyway.

'I thought she would finally understand after seeing what they did to her friends...'

Once Rey remembered her friends and the trauma she suffered, he considered the possibility that Esme could be grieving them.

She was most likely upset about their demise and blaming herself for their death.

'All the more reason to see her!'

"Show me her room. I want to see her." Rey pressed, his crimson eyes glowing brighter with every word that proceeded from his lips.

Needless to say, Rebal and his colleagues eventually folded and told Rey what he had to know.

'What's going on with you, Esme?'

Rey had this thought as he finally made it to the entrance of Esme's room.

Ater, of course, maintained even more distance now that his Master had arrived at his destination.

He stood a few feet away from the doorstep, watching as Rey nervously stood in front of the door while drawing his hand closer to knock.

Before his knuckles could touch the door's surface, however, a sound gently echoed from within the room.

"I don't want to see you... Rey."

As heartbreaking as it was to hear that, Rey maintained a straight face.

"I know. But I want to see you."

Rey responded before the door, ensuring his voice got carried over with Sound Magic. The entire area was also isolated from everywhere else, so nothing they said would leak out.

Not even Ater could hear what they were saying.

It was just Rey and Esme.

"Well... we don't always get what we want. You're not an exception, Rey."

"This isn't about that. I just want to make sure you're okay."

"I need time. Time to process everything."

Rey felt like Esme needed more than time. She couldn't be alone at such a critical time.

"I know that's what you think you need, but you also need—"

"What I THINK I need? What makes you think you know what I need right now?"

Reg was a bit startled once he heard Esme raise her voice. It sounded like she was very upset with him.

'Has she ever gotten angry at me before?'

Somehow, it made Rey feel terrible, shitty even. 'I'm only trying to help...'

"I'm grateful to you, Rey. I really am. But... I can't see you or speak to you right now."

As heartbreaking as it was to hear, Rey felt like she was being genuine with him.

Perhaps that was even what made it worse.

"Please respect my decision and leave me alone."

Rey could easily break down the door and step in. He could phase through, and there were a few ways for him to even sneak in without her even knowing.

He could see her without her seeing him.

'Maybe I should just—'

"Master..." Ater's voice suddenly echoed in Rey's mind, causing him to promptly look in his direction.

Much to his surprise, he saw a stern expression from Ater, who shook his head slowly.

"... Just leave her be."

For a moment, he let it all sink in—everything that happened, and all he heard.

'I just... wanted to make sure she was okay.'

Rey knew that was his justification, but after mulling things over for a few seconds—especially with the cold stare that Ater gave him—he began to understand things better.

'I guess I was just thinking about myself, huh?'

He wanted to do what HE thought was best for her, rather than trust in her decision or ability to figure things out herself.

'I'm such an idiot. If I was in her position, I would probably want the same thing—some time alone.'

Yet Rey was ready to barge in just to satisfy his own conscience and sate his curiosity.

Of course, all of these things would have been done with Esme's well-being in mind, but Rey knew it was wrong.

'The road to hell is paved with good intentions, after all.'

Rey had almost fallen for the mistake of doing something horrible, while using the justification that it was the best thing for the person.

'I made a mistake.' He smiled and nodded at Ater.

The latter instantly changed his expression and beamed, returning Rey's nod.

"You made the right choice, Master."

Deep down, Rey still felt like it would be better to check up on her and see how she was feeling. However, he simply decided to respect her wishes.

"Let's go, Ater." He muttered, and the two decided to walk away.

Perhaps it was just his imagination, but before Rey left the doorfront, he heard a whisper reach out to him.

It was low and stifled, nearly inaudible... but he picked it up right away.

"Thank you... Rey."

The boy smiled as he heard those words. He walked past the hallway, and eventually vanished from the mansion.

He had made the right choice, after all.

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Chapter 370 Getting An Upgrade

"Huu... that's the last of them, right?"

Rey was currently in his base—the 99th Floor of the Royal Dungeon, and in front of him were Ater and the Undead who just finished displaying a wide array of Skills to him.

After leaving the Blanc Mansion, they came here for Rey to add more abilities to his arsenal.

Needless to say, it was a success.

"Yes, Master. You have gotten all the relevant Skills that the enemy possessed."

Ater spoke like all of this was just a matter of course, but Rey hadn't gotten over how the guy figured out all the qualities of his Skills.

He didn't even realize it when he used [Absolute Appraisal] on Ater and found out his Level had increased.

"Congratulations, you're in Level 3 now." Rey smiled at the Familiar.

Ater got 100 Stat Points for each Level he gained—a far more impressive feat than Snow's 30 Points.

'I suppose it only goes to show the difference between S-Tier and A-Tier.' He mused.

"This much is nothing, Master. It does not compare to you in the slightest.'

Rey felt like bursting into tears the moment he heard those words.

Adding his bonus Stat addition and base Stat addition upon every Level Up, he only got 6 Stat Points for each Level Up.

If not for his gear carrying him for most of the time, he would be pretty weak in base form.

'Compared to me, he has an incredible Stat increase every level, and his bonus Stat Points are essentially half of his normal Stats...'

If that wasn't broken, then what was?

Rey found himself more grateful for deciding to take the risk and summon an S-Tier Familiar.

'But damn... I really wish [Bonding] could allow me to keep even more Familiars.'

As soon as Rey had this thought, he realized something.

'I could merge Skills together with Bonding to evolve it to the level where I can get that result!'

His eyes gleamed with delight as he began to imagine the possibility of having multiple Aters around.

"Master? You have a creepy smile." Ater's voice echoed in the vast room, but Rey hardly paid any mind to it.

Steam proceeded from his gaping mouth as saliva dripped from it.

He could feel it—the fullness of GREED within him.

"Ater..." Rey took a few steps forward until he reached the very front of his Familiar.

"Yes... Master?"

He placed his hands on Ater's shoulders, a sense of foreboding swirling around the room.

As the tension reached an epic crescendo, a brilliant smile burst from Rey's face as he gushed out to Ater with indescribable delight.

"How would you like a younger brother?!"

"Haa..."

After hours of deliberating and merging, Rey was finally done with the process.

What now appeared before his eyes was the finished product of so much hard work—the culmination of everything he had been through thus far.

[Skill Categories]

~ SS-Tier: 6

~ S-Tier: 10

~ A-Tier: 15

~ B-Tier: 13

[New Skills: Please Select Their Categories]

~Nil~

[Total Skills: 44]

"Pfft! The numbers are even less than before." Rey found himself chuckling.

Still, he could say the quality of his Skills has drastically increased.

"Master, is this all really necessary?" Ater's voice came out of nowhere, and Rey nearly rolled his eyes the moment he heard it.

Why?

Because since he started sorting out his Skills, all for the sole purpose of getting more Familiar, Ater had been on his case.

He was greatly against the idea, and it was easy to see why.

"Master doesn't need any other Familiar! I alone am enough!" Ater had said many times, not even hiding the reason why he was against Rey's decision.

He was simply insecure of his position.

'Maybe I shouldn't have told him, after all.' Rey sighed to himself.

If he had kept it a secret and chose to surprise him with a new Familiar, none of Ater's tantrums would exist.

'Well, I can't be sure about that.'

He could imagine Ater's expression if he presented the newest addition to the group as a surprise.

'He would probably want to devour it.'

Rey used his [Grand Sound Magic] to block off all the sound that Ater was making, but the problem was the bond that they shared.

Not only could Rey hear Ater in his head, but he couldn't turn it off either.

It was simply a consequence of their relationship.

"Master, please rethink this. Do you really want to hear multiple voices in your head at once? I don't think you would be very comfortable feeling the emotions of multiple Familiars at once."

In all honesty, Ater made a few good points. But—!

"That's why I'm only going to start with one more. I'll acclimate as time goes on." He grinned widely.

Ater appeared exasperated, which made Rey chuckle even more. It was very rare to see his Familiar display this kind of emotion, after all.

"Sorry, Ater. But my mind is already made up."

If it wasn't, he wouldn't have had to sacrifice a bunch of his Skills in order to get an evolved version of [Bonding].

'I no longer have [Absolute Mental Control], which is quite a loss... but [Compulsion] still works as mind control, so it is what it is.'

[Compulsion] was an A-Tier Skill, though.

'I hardly use mind control anyway, so it's fine...' Rey closed his eyes and smiled.

What mattered most was that he now had the means to summon more than one Absolute Beast and make them his Familiars.

"Let us begin!"

[.]

[Doppel Skills]

[SS-Tier]

Divine Sword Summon (Active)

Divine Beast Summon (Active)

Divine Elemental Magic (Active)

Divine Power Ascension (Active)

Divine Ray (Active)

Divine Magic Supremacy (Passive)

[Total: 6]

[S-Tier]

Absolute Perfect Defense (Active)

Absolute Healing (Active)

Absolute Appraisal (Active)

Absolute Spatial Domain (Active)

Absolute Dominion (Active)

Absolute Martial Supremacy (Passive)

Shapeshift (Active)

Absolute Necromancy (Active)

Absolute Perpetual Armament (Passive)

Ascended Godspeed (Active)

[Total: 10]

[A-Tier]

Grand Item Equip (Passive)

Grand Mana Recovery (Passive)

Grand Flight (Active)

Grand Sound Magic (Active)

Grand Inventory (Active)

Replicate (Active)

Defense Break (Passive)

Perfect Sensory Perception (Passive)

Grand Life Force Recovery (Passive)

Grand Concealment (Active)

Possession (Active)

Phantom Illusion (Active)

Grand Enchanted Weapon Summon (Active)

Grand Elemental Summoning Magic (Active)

Compulsion (Active)

[Total: 15]

[B-Tier]

Mimic (Active)

Transmute (Active)

Force (Active)

Greater Corrosion (Active)

Greater Debuff (Active)

Severing Claw (Active)

Carnage (Passive)

Greater Blood Magic (Active)

True Homing (Passive)

Aura Sword (Active)

Greater Corruption (Active)

Greater Intense Bloodlust (Active)

Greater Counter (Passive)

[Total: 13]

[Active Skills: 33]

[Passive Skills: 11]