

# Extras 431

## Chapter 431 Adventurer Registration [Pt 2]

"Hello, young man."

Burke was seated behind a more distinguished desk, her chair also looking more comfortable, then the one she used to occupy a few days ago.

She had her own office on the First Floor, and her job was a more specialized version of the receptionist's duties.

High-profile cases went to her, and she approved. She also dealt with top-class Adventurers who couldn't bother standing in front of an ordinary reception.

Based on her ten-year experience, it was something she could do pretty easily—and she did her job flawlessly well.

She enjoyed it too.

Burke had her own space, and since she wasn't as busy as before, she had more than enough time to think.

"Hello. May I have a seat?"

"Please do." Burke smiled, her eyes gleaming behind her glasses as she saw the handsome blonde walk towards her.

He had a serious look on his good-looking face, and Burke couldn't help but fawn over all of his manly features.

Jet was a lot more good-looking, just going off her memory of him, but this blonde was incredible in his own right.

"My name is Sebas. I'm to take the Heroic Rank Test, so I was told to meet you to sort out my details."

"Oh? This is quite the season." Burke chuckled in pleasant surprise as she opened her drawer to bring out a form. "Have you gone through initial registration already?"

"Not yet. The person attending to me said I can do everything here."

"Yeah... I suppose."

Burke brought out a few more papers and placed them on her desk.

"Fill these." She said with a broad smile plastered on her face while keeping her gaze on him.

Not long after, the Sebas fellow obeyed and gradually did so. One look at his pristine handwriting told her that he was a distinguished fellow.

She didn't realize it when she licked her lips.

"So... a Heroic Rank Adventurer, huh?" Burke said with a relaxed grin. "Any reason why you want to go so far so quickly?"

"Well, I am not the only one who has done this, right?"

As Sebas asked, she slowly shook her head. "But only one man has been able to succeed on his first ever Test."

"Well... I look up to that man."

Sebas' determined face and dreamy smile caused Burke's heart to skip a beat. She found herself grinning a little stupidly as she nodded.

"That's not a bad thing. Jet is a pretty admirable man..."

After all, if it wasn't for the epiphany she received after her encounter with him, she wouldn't have had the courage to seek out more.

The reason she remained as a base receptionist was to meet as many men as possible in her line of work. However, after realizing that she was just wasting her time, and the man she met weren't the ones she desired—neither were they the ones who desired her—she chose to change.

'I don't meet as many people in this position, but that's a good thing.'

She could filter out all the useless men from her life, hence making more time for the men who were truly decent candidates—like the one in front of her.

And because she now had a position of authority, they wouldn't be able to look down on her.

"Indeed. I heard you were the one who filled out his form. Also Lady Lux's." Sebas said with a nod.

"Yeah. It was a memorable last moment in my previous work station."

"If you don't mind, while I fill this form, could you tell me more about Sir Jet?" He asked.

The man really had a brilliant gleam in his beautiful eyes. How could she refuse him when he spoke to her like that?

"Well, what do you want to know?" A broader smile appeared on her face. "Besides, since you want to take the Heroic Rank Test, you plan on passing, right?"

"Of course."

"Then wouldn't it be better to ask him yourself, once you become a Heroic Rank Adventurer?"

Sebas looked a bit shy once she mentioned that, so she instantly knew what was going on.

'You want to know more about your hero before meeting him, huh? What an adorable man...' He was just her type.

"Well, where to start." Burke grinned, interlocking both fingers as she parted her lips.

"Jet is..."

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A lot of irrelevant information was added to the mix, but Adonis pretty much got the gist of things.

'This woman doesn't really know anything.'

It seemed like he had wasted most of his time learning things that were unnecessary, or irrelevant in his investigation of the two evils that threatened the city.

'The only useful thing I got was their appearance, but I could have gotten it from anywhere.'

The girl seemed pretty identical, for the most part, but the man was completely different from the descriptions of Jet from his past life.

'He has a pale skin and handsome face this time? In the past he had a horrible scar on his face, with a menacing aura.'

Their attires were also different—and this applied to Lux as well.

'He's dressed as a gentleman now, but he was more like a Dark Mage back then. As for the girl, while her appearance and attire's design was mostly the same, she was dressed in all-black as well.

—Same as Jet.

'Maybe they're different Dragons this time. It would explain why they're early and look different.'

But what could have sparked such a change? If Adonis had to guess, it would be the appearance and death of the Dragon Commander in the Capital.

The Alliance was still yet to face the consequences of doing such a thing, so Adonis had assumed that the Dragons were unaware of such a thing happening.

But now... he wasn't so sure.

'The effects have begun to ripple, huh?' He thought to himself as he finally finished writing on all his Forms.

'What a mess.'

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## **Chapter 432 Unexpected Welcoming**

"So, I'll have to return tomorrow for my Test, right?"

Adonis was already standing to his feet after filling all his forms. He could tell that the lady in front of him was interested, but he just wasn't having it.

It was better for him to spare them both the embarrassment and leave as soon as his business was concluded.

"No. There's no need for that." Burke answered, rising to her feet as well.

'H-huh? Don't tell me...!'

"You must have heard, right? That an A-Tier Monster was captured by those two."

Adonis tried to hide his surprise, but it was too much to be contained. He had indeed heard about it from the group of Adventurers he spoke to the previous day, but he thought that was an exaggeration on their part.

They seemed to disagree on so many details about the Monster that he assumed they heard the news from someone who, perhaps, also heard it from another.

It seemed like unreliable information at best.

'So it was true? They actually captured one?' A bead of sweat appeared on his forehead.

"Why...?"

Burke heard his whisper and chose to answer him, despite it merely being rhetorical. "Why else? For the purposes of the next Heroic Rank Test."

Hearing that only further confused Adonis.

The actions of the two didn't seem like what Dragons would do. Why would they ever think of contributing to the cause?

'Unless... could the Monster be a trap?' The only for him to find out was to actually see the thing.

Lucky for him, he was going to be taking the Test that day.

"That means I can take the Test now, right? Will you take me there?" Adonis asked.

"No. Just wait here while I call your supervisor." Somehow, Burke's tone seemed a lot more distant and cold than charming.

She must have taken the hint that he simply wasn't interested.

Adonis nodded and waited on his chair, wondering on a few things in his solitude.

'The Conquest will most likely begin tomorrow evening.' He began, rubbing his chin as he considered a few things.

The students had to meet the Guildmaster who requested for them before them, so Adonis planned on making it today—probably after he was done with his Test.

There, they would explain their plan to him and hope it coincided with the plans of the Conquest that they already drafted.

More likely than not, they would officially announce Lux and Jet as Heroic Rank Adventurers before the current day ran out. If that was the case, then by passing the Test, he would also join them for the announcement.

'That will probably be the first time we meet...'

As Adonis was still on this train of thought, the door behind him opened, meaning it was finally time for him to take the Test.

"Thank you so much, Miss Bu—"

Adonis stopped mid-sentence as he turned and stared at the most unexpected sight he could imagine.

Yes, Burke was the one who opened the door, and she entered the office soon after, but the people who stood at the entrance were the ones that surprised him the most.

There was his Test Supervisor, Britta, but two others also stood there.

'Are they... Jet and Lux?' Adonis' eyes nearly bulged as he saw them looking at him with calm demeanors on their partially covered faces.

He felt a lump in his throat, and somehow his instincts warned him of danger.

'T-they're here? How are they here? Why...?!'

Did they already catch a whiff of him and planned to eliminate him by using the element of surprise? Were they planning on holding Britta and Burke hostage?

'How much do they know about us? About the plan...?!' As sweat began to appear on Adonis' face, he heard a voice wake him up from his dazed state.

"I suppose he's a bit overwhelmed, seeing his hero in person. Forgive his discourtesy."

The moment Burke said this, Adonis snapped out of his shock and quickly made an attempt to improvise.

"I-I am... honored to meet the strongest this City has to offer."

He swiftly bowed his head, hoping that would at least hide the nervousness that pervaded his face.

"Oh? He's a lively one." Britta commented with a slight chuckle.

'That's odd. Britta was a very bitter and strict woman, according to my memory of her.'

She reportedly lost one of her arms in the Dungeon Conquest, and so she was forced to retire as a full-time Adventurer as a result.

She remained a supervisor, though, but she was known to have a very bad temper.

Even before she lost her arm, everyone claimed that she was still very rude and mean. As such, even at this moment, she wasn't supposed to be so pleasant to be around.

Seeing her laugh so wholeheartedly should have made Adonis still very rude and mean. As such, even at this moment, she wasn't supposed to be so pleasant to be around.

happy, but he couldn't help but slightly stare at the two shady characters behind her who most likely caused the change.

'First Burke, and now Britta... they're causing so many changes.'

This would only distort reality more, creating more inconsistencies. Adonis felt both worry and fear at this point.

Especially after a dark possibility manifested in his mind.

'Could It be... do they know of my identity?' If they knew that he had lived the future and was on a mission to change it, could they be trying to stop him?

By creating more contradictions like this, Adonis would lose all predicting power in no time.

'If that's the case, then they're more dangerous than I imagined.'

"Well, it's not every time we get to meet our heroes. Be grateful, Sebas." Adonis raised his head to see Britta smiling at him.

"Once they heard that their biggest fan was here to take the test after being inspired by their achievements, these two decided to watch your Test with me."

More sweat dripped from Adonis' face that very instant.

'They're trying to monitor me? Do they want to get a good grasp of how powerful I am?'

If that was the case, then this entire thing could be a trap.

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### **Chapter 433 Nonexistent Mind Games**

'Why is Adonis pretending to be a fan? Was this part of the plan?'

Rey felt confused as he stared at the flustered expression of the Hero who stiffly stood before him.

'He's really good at acting, though. I feel so much respect and intimidation coming from that stare of his.'

It was nearly convincing to Rey, in all honesty.

All of this was a surprise to him. He only came to the Guild with Esme since they were told to come for their official recognition ceremony.

It was going to be hosted from the Guild and broadcast to the entire city.

Rey personally felt like all of it was unnecessary, since pretty much everyone already knew who Jet and Lux were, but he also understood how big of a deal it was for two new Heroic Rank Adventurers to pop out of nowhere.

... Especially with the emergence of the Grand Calamity Dungeon.

'I even heard some people trying to draw connections between our arrival and the Dungeon's appearance... as if that even makes sense.'

Their actions also made him feel ridiculous for suspecting Adrien being behind the Dungeon's appearance.

Paranoia was indeed a deadly thing.

'After studying a bit more about Dungeons to refresh my memory, I no longer think he made this one appear.' Rey laughed at himself.

He still suspected that Adrien was lurking around somewhere, though.

He just didn't know where and why.

"I'm flattered, but I really am not worth idolizing..." Rey spoke up, gazing into the distance as if he was speaking deep words.

"At least, not until I fulfill my dreams..."

With those whispers echoing within the room, Britta and Burke both nodded with smiles on their faces.

That told Rey his performance was exquisite.

"Your dreams... huh?" Adonis' tone was low, and his voice trembled as if he was under some kind of pressure. "What is your dream, really?"

'E-eh? Why is he asking me that? Shouldn't he already know if he claims to be a fan?'

Rey was at a loss for words, but he pulled himself together and strengthened his persona to the max.

"You... already know, don't you?"

After a moment of silence, Adonis made a slight glare. His face seemed to echo resolve, and he nodded slowly.

"Yeah. I know."

Rey also nodded. He still wasn't sure why Adonis decided to act like this, but he didn't plan on raining on the boy's parade.

'To every man his own, I guess...'

And as for his decision to come watch the exhibition, Rey was simply bored waiting for the Guildmaster, so he decided to buy time by watching Adonis fight.

Besides, it would raise his social points as Jet if he decided to personally witness his fan's ascent to power.

'Adonis will become a 6 Star Adventurer for sure. All of this is just ceremony.'

Now that he thought about it, Adonis probably wanted to latch on to the growing popularity of Jet and Lux. If that was the case, then Rey didn't want to get in the way.

'I'll do my best to prop you up, don't worry!' He gave an internal thumbs up.

"Well, since we're all here... let's go to the Test Center, shall we?" Britta beamed at everyone.

And so, with a nod, everyone departed.

Well, everyone except Burke.

'Did she get promoted or something?' Rey's thoughts trailed as he walked away with the rest, ignoring the wide smile she constantly gave him.

'Good for her, I guess.'

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[Moments Later]

The Test Center sounded like a fancy name, but in actuality, the place was just an auxiliary building attached to the Adventurer's Guild main building.

It existed in the same compound, at the backyard.

The building was separated into compartments, and it was designed like a maximum security prison. Considering the fact that dangerous Monsters were kept in this place for candidates to slay, it was the least they could do.

The doors, walls, ceiling—literally everything—was reinforced with Orichalcum, with some Adamantite alloy lacing some more dangerous and important areas.

The particular room where Adonis stood in was the largest of all; the only place that could possibly match the scale of the battle that was about to take place.

It was coated, from all sides, with a special Orichalcum-

Adamantite Alloy that made the place as sturdy as any establishment could afford to.

The spectators were three 6 Star Adventurers, and they stood at the farthest corner of the room as they watched Adonis prepare himself.

The spectators were three 6 Star Adventurers, and they stood at the farthest corner of the room as they watched Adonis. There was no safety guide or protection for them. Considering how supervisors assigned to Tests that reflected their capacity, they didn't need any kind of special barrier.

Not only would it add more cost to the Guild's budget, but a functional safety barrier could potentially get in the way of the supervisors helping out candidates whose lives were in danger.

Supervisors weren't obligated to help, and the Guild wasn't liable for any harm caused during the Test—it said so on the form—but it was still standard ethics for Supervisors to assist those who had given the Test their best but were in danger.

Being able to freely act, without a barrier stopping a supervisor, was far more optimal.

... Cheaper too.

"Are you ready?" Britta's voice echoed out loud as she looked at Adonis' anxious face.

Some of the flickering lights above the room added unneeded tension to the moment, creating an air of eeriness.

"You can still pull out if you want to.

Adonis sensed concern in Britta's voice, and he guessed she must have noticed his unease. However, the reason for his current state wasn't due to the Monster that stood behind the thick door a distance from him.

It was due to the two who stood next to her and watched him with dark intent.

'No matter what happens, I can't give them what they want.' Adonis inhaled deeply, preparing himself for the challenge.

'I can't show them my full power!'

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## **Chapter 434 Facing The Serocis [Pt 1]**

"I'm ready."

Adonis raised the sword he had taken on his way to this room.

The Guild provided many items and equipment for those who desired to take Tests, though using them was optional.

The items were also pretty basic, so no one taking any advanced test really bothered with them.

Still, with Adonis not having a sword of his own, refusing to even think of bringing out his Divine Sword, this was his only choice.

'It should do the trick.' He told himself, taking a battle stance as he narrowed his gaze on the massive door before him.

Once it was open, the Monster would charge out... and then came the tricky part.



'I have to try my hardest to hold back, just enough to defeat the A-Tier Monster. That way they can underestimate me as much as possible.'

Adonis would never give them what they desired.

"Very well. I shall now release the A-Tier Monster." Britta said, reaching for a lever that was right beside her.

~CLICK!~

The gigantic door began to tremble, almost mechanical in a sense. And then, the ground beneath it opened.

That very instant, the hinges loosened and the slab of metal that covered the entrance swiftly descended into the abyss.

Before even a second passed, a massive creature charged out of the dark room where it was held and wildly made its entrance.

"GRUAAAHHHHH!!!"

The creature's body resembled a lion, albeit blackened by its dense hide. It had three scorpion-looking tails, and its six eyes were red with fury.

'Serocis, huh? This is a tricky one, even among A-Tier Monsters.' Adonis stole a glance at the dark gentleman who folded his arms and watched him keenly.

His suitcase was right beside him, as was his partner, Lux.

'Did they pick this one intentionally?'

There were many questions bubbling up within Adonis' mind, but something told him that the ferocious beast he faced wouldn't give him any chance to mull over them.

He strengthened his stance and looked at the creature with untainted resolve, his blade shimmering with the flickering lights.

"Come!"

~WHOOOSH!~

The Serocis charged at Adonis with primal force, but he refused to back down.

Not while he had his goals to fulfill.

'A Serocis is similar to the Manticore myth back on Earth, with a few adjustments.' Adonis' thoughts trailed as he waited for the thing to near him.

Not only was it much taller—about four meters—than in the myths, it had three tails instead of one.

'The strongest ones have up to five, but those are rare.'

Adonis prepared himself as he let energy surge through the rest of his body. He promised himself he would not go all-out, but it was very difficult to quell his fighting spirit when a threat was right in front of him.

Perhaps this was simply instinct—the result of spending years in a world filled with nothing but chaos and despair.

Still, Adonis calmed himself and resolved only to use one of his powers.

'[Grand Light Magic].'

~BOOOOOOOM!~

The ground nearly shattered as the creature sent its claws charging at Adonis, and he responded with a slash of light.

The resultant force caused everything to quake, even the bodies of the spectators.

However, this was simply the beginning.

~WHOOSH!~

Adonis fluidly moved his body away from his position, just in time to avoid one of the Serocis' stingers.

It was a close call too—or at least it appeared to be.

He leapt to the side of the Monster, once again avoiding the next sting attack. Increasing his pace, he twisted his body as he made to slash the Serocis' hide, but the last stinger caught his blade.

~CLANG!~

"Guh!" The density of the stinger caused some recoil on the blade, which forced Adonis' hand back.

If it wasn't for the golden light that shrouded his weapon's body, it would have definitely shattered into pieces.

That was just how strong the stingers were.

~BOOOM!~

Once again, Adonis evaded the assault of the stingers that attempted to catch him while he was defenseless.

Thankfully, the Light Element was pretty fast.

Any other Elemental Attribute, and he would have had to task his body a little more.

"GROUGHHHHHHHHH!!!" The Serocis let out a mad cry, causing the room to be filled with an intimidating roar.

This was some sort of 'debuff' move that caused a rapid decline in its opponent's Stats by inflicting the Negative Status Condition of 'FEAR'.

Fortunately, this only worked on fodder, and any candidate who desired to take the Test, in the first place, wasn't expected to fall under such a cheap move.

Of course, that wasn't all the Serocis had to offer.

It was just a prelude to the main thing.

~FWUUUUSH!~

The mouth of the Serocis suddenly began to suck in an absurd amount of air. It was most likely going to release one of the deadliest Skills in its arsenal.

'[Greater Air Blast]'

~VWUUSH!~

Adonis barely dodged the first blast of compressed air, causing the attack to hit a nearby wall.

~BOOOM!~

Despite how reinforced it was, the pressure made a small dent on its surface. If it was any other wall, the whole thing would have been blown away.

One needed not imagine what would happen if such an attack had direct contact with a human.

... Not even their bones would remain intact.

"Fuu..." Adonis exhaled deeply, intending on increasing his pace a little more.

He also planned to increase the strength behind his blow—

especially since he now had a proper understanding of how strong the thing was.

'Come on!'

~BOOOM!~

Adonis raced, his body becoming a blur of golden light as he dodged the several blasts that were sent at him.

His eyes glowed with incredible vigor as he leaped away from his position and charged at the Serocis from the side.

As expected, it raised one of its stingers to eliminate him.

However...

"Wrong move."

~SWISH!~

Adonis became a swirling torrent as he twisted in the air, generating enough momentum to slice off the stinger.

In that swift motion, he obtained his first small victory.

"Two to go!"

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## **Chapter 435 Facing The Serocis [Pt 2]**

"GUWAAAHHHHH!!!"

The pained screech of the Serocis pierced the air.

It was deafening—unbelievably so. The ground rattled as a testament to its agony, and the air shook in response to its cry.

It was obvious that this creature had never experienced a sensation this vile.

Corrosive saliva dripped from its open jaws, and it instantly snapped at Adonis, rushing towards him to rip his body to pieces.

"Flare!" Adonis yelled.

Instantly, the area was engulfed with blinding light, enough to completely stun the Serocis. Of course, that meant the golden-haired lad couldn't properly see as well.

Still, even if you didn't account for his array of Skills, he had memorized the position of the beast and predicted the trajectory it would take.

Thanks to this, he bounced off the air with yet another spin and coated his blade with more intense light.

~FWISH!~

In yet another perfect strike, Adonis cut down yet another stinger.

"G-GUROOOOAAAHH!"

At this point, the emotions of the Serocis shifted from pain and rage to pain and fear.

It darted back, its instinct instantly telling of a horrid fate that awaited if it advanced without any assurance of success.

~FSHIII~

Hot steam rose from its seared injuries as the remnant heat caused by burning light kept the fresh wound stinging.

Once the light dulled, Adonis and the Serocis returned to normal view.

The two severed stingers of the Monster occupied the floor close to the human, while the Serocis was surrounded by its vile blood and pungent drool.

Both sides were unmoving, clearly wary of the other in some way.

"Haaa... haa..." Adonis made heavy breaths, obviously trying to show his exhaustion.

Whether this was to deceive the Monster or the enemies hidden in plain sight—perhaps both—was not clear.

Still, it seemed to do the job for the creature.

Its crimson eyes widened, all of them turning bloodshot as it growled with newfound fervor.

'Finally showing your last card, huh?' Adonis thought to himself with a silent grin.

The Serocis had a bunch of passive Skills, but its two most fatal attacks were the Greater Air Blasts and the next move it was preparing.

'Here it comes!'

Adonis readied himself, hunching over as he strengthened his legs for yet another race.

'I should be concluding the fight soon. That way, I can show that I have limits. Or... should I try to drag things out a little more?'

Before he could make that choice, the crimson eyes of his opponent shot out intense blasts of energy.

~FWOOSH!~

They pierced the air, making way for their target in no time at all.

Adonis, who was already expecting this, instantly darted away from his previous position.

However—

~FWOOSH!~

—Yet another blast charged his way.

'From another eye, huh? Guess it's learning pretty well...'

The Serocis' [Grand Eye Blast] was an A-Tier Skill for one solid reason—not even accounting for its superior destructive power compared to the [Greater Air Blast].

Its range!

Other than the fast and streamlined way a single blast of crimson energy could go, the Serocis had six separate eyes, which meant it could fire off six separate blasts to varying locations—all at the same time.

The previous blast consisted of only two eyes, and now that Adonis evaded them, he had fallen for the Monster's trap.

'Judging from the movement of its eyes, it's about to fire one to my left, another to my right. One will be aimed above, just in case I try to evade the current blast heading towards me.'

For a Monster, that was some quick thinking!

'It already recognizes that I'm fast enough to evade its strikes, and it sees me as a big enough threat to use its ultimate move on...'

It was rather unfortunate for the Monster that Adonis wasn't even trying at all.

'Now then, my choice will be... to take it head-on!'

~CLANG!~

Adonis swung his blade, coating it with dense light until the entire thing glowed golden. The flashy weapon directly clashed with the crimson ray, instantly sending a surge of power flying in multiple directions.

The result?

~BOOOOOOOM!~

Adonis was blown away as a consequence of the shockwave, his body suffering from the recoil of taking such an attack to the face.

Well, that was how he made it seem like.

"G-gahh... haaa..."

He struggled to rise, squinting his eyes as he displayed symptoms of pain.

His simple attire had been ruined, and several burn marks were evident on his body. Even the blade that he tightly clung to was finally broken.

By all categories, he was in an extremely tight spot.

'Perfect!' He grinned internally, still breathing heavily as he staggered slightly.

The Serocis was watching all of this with cautious notice, its crimson eyes flashing with malevolence.

It was clear that another round was coming—and fast.

"You can give up now if you want to!" A concerned voice echoed out. "You've done enough!"

It came from Britta.

'It's really weird seeing her all kind and compassionate...' Adonis chuckled internally, casting his gaze on the calm faces of the two others in the room.

They didn't seem concerned or worried at all. They just stared calmly—almost as if they were waiting for something.

'I think I've shown them just enough of where I stand in the ranks.' He smiled widely, almost like a crazy person.

"Never! I'll never give up!" Letting out a throaty scream, he let light explode from all over his body as everything began rushing to his broken blade.

Britta's face depicted nothing but absolute surprise. She must have been so amazed by his fiery spirit, considering how Adventurers so fearless came in short supply.

Even Jet and Lux seemed amazed by his gumption.

'Great! Everything is set now...' Adonis returned his sights to the enemy he had to beat.

In no time now, the barrage of destruction would resume, and he would somehow have to close the distance between him and the Monster to land the finishing blow.

It was going to be a bit troublesome, given his current situation, but was he going to lose?

No...

'I'll win!'

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### **Chapter 436 Facing The Serocis [Pt 3]**

'Damn... Adonis is really good at acting!'

Rey was genuinely shocked by how amazing the Hero was in pretending to be so weak.

'I really need to take some notes.' He thought to himself, nodding silently as he did his best to maintain a stoic demeanor.

All of Adonis' movements seemed so calculated to represent a certain ceiling of power that he couldn't surpass. Rey was impressed by such sophistication... such intricate level of detail.

Adonis had really mastered the craft.

'But why? Why is he going to such lengths?'

Rey couldn't comprehend it. 'Shouldn't he be trying a bit more so he can get the attention of Jet and Lux?'

Surely, if he was playing this 'fanboy' card, and pretending to have been heavily inspired by Jet... then shouldn't he be showing a lot more power?

'At the very least, he must already have an idea of what Jet accomplished. I can't think of any other reason why he would choose this route if he had no idea how popular Jet and Lux are, and why they are so famous right now.'

Their power was phenomenal—out of this world.

Compared to that, Adonis was displaying the strength of an unpolished gem—someone who barely made the cut of a Heroic Rank Adventurer.

'Well... I hope you know what you're doing, man.' Rey had no intentions to rain on Adonis' parade, so he decided to just watch and observe in silence.

'Britta seems impressed, and I guess he really embodies that Adventurer spirit.'

In contrast, Esme seemed bored of the whole thing.

It looked like she just wanted to use a Skill and kill the Monster, instantly getting rid of the problem for everyone.

Well, she couldn't.

'Looks like the fight is coming to a close, though.' Rey felt a tinge of relief as he saw Adonis charging towards the stationary Monster.

One of the requirements for using the Skill [Grand Eye Blast] was to be stationary. The rewards were worth it, though, as it allowed the user to shoot out blasts from any ocular organ of the body.

'If I combine the Skill with a shapeshifting Skill and created many eyes, I could cause a lot of damage...'

It was going to be gross for sure, but with [Mimic], or maybe even [Shapeshift], couldn't he create several tiny eyes and create and send several shots flying at the same time?

'That's seriously OP, especially if I consider how my defenses wouldn't let my enemy touch me even if I stay still...'

It was awesome—no, beyond awesome!

'Is Ater really serious about me not being able to take on a Divine Beast...?' Rey wondered.

He didn't want to do anything behind his trusty Familiar's back, but it would be a lie if he said he wasn't tempted to try [Divine Beast Summon] at maximum power, just so he could see its effects.

'I'll just be patient. At least wait until the eggs hatch...'

~BOOOM!~

The tremors emanating from Adonis' location caused Rey to raise his gaze and see what was happening.

Apparently, the Monster concentrated all of its blast on a single location—all so it could kill the pesky Adventurer.

Unfortunately, it failed.

'Adonis, you rascal...' Rey grinned widely as he watched what the blond boy did.

All of his light was focused on the tip of his broken blade, and he used that to literally sever the intense blast into two.

'Even if he appears weak, this kind of resourcefulness and skill is exceptional!'

Even Brita recognized that much.

It showed just how much control Adonis had over his [Grand Light Magic]. If someone told Rey that Adonis had reached the highest level of mastery of the Skill, he wouldn't even doubt it.

'What a beast...'

Rey nearly chuckled, his widened eyes taking in the damaged ground surrounding Adonis.

It burned bright red, all thanks to the deadly heat that was deflected.

And now... it was time for the finishing blow.

\*\*\*\*\*

Adonis roared, feeling his throat ache a little thanks to his constant battle cries.

It seemed this body of his wasn't accustomed to the rigors of war. He knew that would eventually change, but for now his pitch had reached its limit.

'Time to end this!'

The final stinger of the Monster charged at Adonis in attempt to buy enough time for it to recover from the [Grand Eye Blast]'s cooldown period.

Of course, Adonis was sure that the Monster wouldn't mind an outcome where the attack happened to kill him.

~WHOOSH!~

Deftly moving his boy, Adonis ensured that wasn't a possibility, using the chance to generate a spin and slice off the last of the creature's lethal tail.

'All three taken care of!'

Rather than let out a sharp cry of pain, the Monster stifled its screams and used the chance to suck in air and release it at such a rapid pace.

'Ahh... nice one!' Adonis grinned.

The Serocis used its stinger as a sacrificial pawn so it could catch Adonis at point-blank range. It was a brilliant move, and such a tactic would have meant the end for any Adventurer.

Even Heroic Rank Adventurers would be in trouble.

But, Adonis wasn't a mere Adventurer—Heroic Rank or otherwise.

He was the real deal.

—A true Hero!

~WHISH!~



He flung his light-coated blade towards the Serocis, instantly cutting through the compressed air right before it was released.

This, of course, caused an explosion that fractured the jaws—  
definitely also injuring the throat as well—of the desperate Monster.

The resultant impact forcefully caused the Serocis to stagger away from its position, instantly ending the Skill's effects.

"G-GUREEUGH...!"

Adonis made a wide toothy grin as he soaked in the frustrated and agonized moans of the damaged creature.

'You were so close to release, weren't you?' He prepared his whole body for one final launch, concentrating light on the sole of his feet for maximum output.

'Don't worry, I'll end it now... your suffering!'

As the Monster was still recoiling from its pain, Adonis blasted off and charged at it with unstoppable power.

'Full thrust!'

\*

### **Chapter 437 Heroic Rank Gathering [Pt 1]**

That last blow did it.

~BOOOOOM!~

In a rush of wind and unstoppable force, Adonis sprang forth like an ascending meteor. His body became shrouded in brilliant light as he charged straight for the beast.

He ripped into the beast's mouth and burst out through the other end, searing its body with enough pressure to cause blood to splash all over.

By the time he made his triumphant exit, it was already too late.

... The beast was dead.

Blood spilled all over the ground as Adonis stood over the creature's corpse, his tired body hunched over a little in an attempt to display exhaustion.

Despite how wretched he looked, covered in the vile blood of the enemy, he smiled in victory.

"I did it..." He muttered, still feeling the sting of the battle—or, at least pretending to.

Everything was perfectly set up to lead to this moment.

"I really did it!"

\*\*\*\*\*

"You really surprised me, Sebas." Britta beamed, calling Adonis by his code name.

She handed a potion over to him to help him recover from his injuries, but he rejected it and professed that he would be fine after a long rest.

However, after her insistence—especially with how wretched and borderline miserable he looked—he finally agreed to the potion.

As he took it, Adonis of course felt nothing.

The potion's quality was too low to really do anything to him, and his injuries weren't really caused by the Monster, but through injuring himself with [Grand Light Magic].

He activated his Passive Healing ability, however, and he was good as new in no time.

After the entire fight, the entire arena which was supposed to be the strongest center now looked like a mess.

Melted walls, and shattered floors all filled the area, and it seemed like whoever would clean up the Monster corpse and wipe off the blood was in it for a chore.

Still, that was the problem of the Guild's non-combatant staff. As such, Adonis took his mind off it and focused on the more pertinent issue.

One of which was currently staring at him.

"You did well, Sebas. I could see it, your potential, as I watched you do battle."

As Jet made this statement, Adonis' eyes nearly bulged.

'Potential? Does he have some sort of appraisal Skill?!' He felt his heart race as he wondered if everything he did was in vain.

To make matters worse, Jet proceeded with yet another statement.

"Your true power... remains hidden. I sense great powers within you. Keep up the good work."

Those words sealed the deal for Adonis.

'He knows something! Does he know my true power? Maybe he realized I was faking it...' His heart pounded tremendously.

If that was the case, then it meant Jet was a lot more formidable than he imagined.

He cast his gaze at Lux, who was just silently watching him without saying a word. In a way, she was even creepier than Jet.

He couldn't guess what was on her mind at all.

"Well, since we're done here... shall we leave?" Britta broke the tense silence, and everyone had to agree at that point.

"Y-yeah..."

\*\*\*\*\*

'Why does he look so gloomy?' Rey wondered to himself as all three of them sat—alongside Britta—as they waited in the Guildmaster's office.

Since Adonis had made the cut, he was also going to be introduced as the newest Heroic Rank Adventurer alongside Jet and Lux.

'I already knew this would be the outcome.' He nodded slowly. 'That's why I thought Adonis would try to be more proactive in his fight so he can properly match up to expectations.'

Of course, that didn't work out the way he thought.

'I even tried to prop him up a little by making him seem stronger than he displayed, but I guess he didn't like that either.'

At this point, Rey decided it was better to prevent any kind of glazing and just leave Adonis to his plans.

"I really apologize for the Guildmaster being so late." Britta broke the awkward silence within the room in no time.

The room they were currently occupying was at least five times larger than Burke's office, and rightfully so.

It belonged to the man at the helm of authority within the Adventurers Guild—and by extension, the entire City—the Guildmaster.

Several skulls, horns, or special body parts of animals were hung on the walls in the office like they were some kind of trophy, and the 6 Star Badge of the Guildmaster was on the table, collecting dust.

It had to have been a while since he reached that rank, and back in his Adventuring days, it must have been a big deal.

As Guildmaster, however, he really had no use for it.

The furniture in the room wasn't particularly exceptional, but it was decent enough—same as the designs and interior decoration.

Despite being the most powerful man in the city, it seemed he didn't really crave the luxury.

'I kinda like that...' Rey smiled and nodded.

"How often does this happen?" Adonis asked Britta. "The Guildmaster being late and all."

She sighed and shook her head in response.

"Every damn time!"

"I see..." Perhaps it was just Rey's imagination, but he saw Adonis smiling as soon as he heard that.

"That's good to know." He added.

~FWIP!~

The door behind them all flung open, and everyone turned—

expecting to see the Guildmaster walk in—but it was someone else entirely.

"Ahh... looks like I'm the last one to arrive."

The voice sounded charming and free, though a bit more mature than what his appearance represented.

It came from a relatively short and young-looking Adventurer whose 6 Star Rank spoke for itself and reinforced how one shouldn't judge a book by its cover.

"Ahh, I forgot you'd be coming too, brat." Britta said as she stared at Noah."

"The name's Sherlock!"

Despite the ensuing drama, Rey was more concerned with the expression Adonis had on his face.

'He's seeing Noah for the first time in a while...' He smiled.

'I wonder what is going on in his mind.'

\*

## **Chapter 438 Heroic Rank Gathering [Pt 2]**

Noah Sherlock.

He really wasn't anything special, and Adonis didn't really know too much about him.

He was one of the earliest to desert the team, and he never really learned anything more about him after that.

So how... how in the world did this happen?

'He's the other 6 Star Adventurer in this City?!' Adonis fought to hide his surprise, and he was largely successful, for the most part anyway.

He would never have imagined Noah going that far, so this was yet another irregularity in the timeline that he didn't account for.

So many changes, yet Adonis found it difficult to trace the nexus event.

There had to have been an initial cause, else things would span in an infinite regress—which wasn't possible.

'He looks capable now.' Adonis closely observed Noah and realized just how much the boy had changed.

Noah's donned a long dark brown trench coat, wearing a light piece of metal armor underneath, along with a dark shirt, with matching trousers. His dark brown belt was tightly strapped around his waist too.

He had dark brown boots, and while his outfit was baggy enough for him to hide most of his Enchantments, Adonis could see quite a few.

For example, he had an earring on one ear, two rings on his hand, and then there was the necklace that hung around his neck, with a sword dropping at the center.

All in all, Noah looked the part of an experienced Adventurer, even though it couldn't have been up to a month since he became one.

'Was he that strong when he left? I don't think so...'

If Adonis had to guess, he would say Noah was carried by gear. However, to get good equipment, one needed a lot of money.

Where did Noah see the money required for so many equipment?

"So you're the newcomer, huh? Nice to meet you." Noah smiled as he approached Adonis, displaying a level of confidence he had never seen the previous Noah display.

Adonis had to stand to his feet and accepted the boy's outstretched hand. As both of them shook hands, Noah beamed brightly while he pretended to be slightly nervous.

"My name is Sherlock. Let's get along as fellow Heroic Rank Adventurers."

"My name is Sebas." He responded with a strained smile. "I hope you treat me well."

"Hehe! Leave it up to me!"

As Noah made this statement, in form of a joke, he chuckled a little. To say Adonis was surprised by all of this would be a massive understatement.

He simply took everything in with intense shock.

"Pfft! Leave what to you? Shouldn't it be the other way around?" The moment Noah heard Britta's sarcastic remarks, he turned towards her and fumed.

"Let the matter die, woman!"

"Why should I? I'm just stating facts, you know?" Britta responded with an even bigger smirk.

"Your Party members even had their asses handed to them recently. I wonder how you still have the confidence to show your face around."

"You seem to forget who they were up against."

"Doesn't matter. I'm sure it's because of your incompetence as a leader..." Britta folded her hands and looked away.

"Why you... ahh, I see what you're trying to do."

Noah was about to approach the lady, but he held off from doing so. Instead, he smiled and slapped his hand on his face.

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Don't pretend. You're trying to rile me up so we can fight, right?" He sighed, shaking his head.

"I won't fight you, though. There's no need."

"Tch..." Britta clicked her tongue in dissatisfaction and completely cast her gaze away from Noah, finally allowing the boy to cast his gaze in another direction.

"Jet, Lux... it's been about a day, hasn't it? Sorry for not greeting you earlier."

He beamed as he approached them, and they stood in order to shake his hand and offer their greetings.

"It's no problem. Nice seeing you again." Jet responded in his usual gentlemanly tone.

"..."

As usual, Lux said nothing, but her slight nod and firm handshake sent the same message as her professed sibling.

"Welp! The Guildmaster is late again, isn't he?" Noah collapsed on an empty chair the moment he was done with the greetings.

"I suppose I shouldn't even be surprised at this point."

The reason why Noah was present was for the same reason that Britta was. It was a tradition in the Adventurers City that whenever a new Heroic Rank Adventurer was to be announced, the current ones had to be present.

This was reminiscent of the 'passing on the torch' concept, except in a more colloquial manner.

Since the Heroic Rank Adventurers were recognized as the strongest in the Guild, it only made sense that they would share a sense of camaraderie with one another.

As such, everyone that gathered in the room were unofficially recognized to be the closest of comrades.

That was the effect of strength.

"Sorry I'm late..." Without any sign of the door opening, or any sound of footsteps, the Guildmaster made his entry.

As he spoke, he walked past the seated Adventurers so he could get to his position behind the desk.

All the Adventurers displayed some measure of shock once they heard his voice. None had sensed his presence prior to the time he spoke, causing them to react that way.

Even Adonis looked a bit puzzled.

'I'm sure my Passive Skills are all active. Why couldn't I detect him?' He wondered. 'It has to do with his Skill, doesn't he?'

Judging from how effective it was on even him, it had to be an A-Tier Skill, at the very least.

'I never met the Guildmaster in the past, since he died in the Dungeon Conquest, but...' Adonis cast his gaze on the man who now sat before them.

He had an aged face—one that showed him to be in his late fifties or so—with very low gray hair and a bushy beard. The man had an incredibly well-built body, all hidden behind his dark overall suit which resembled a priest's garment.

As he took his seat, his hulking frame rested on the chair and he stared at all of them with his narrow, icy-green eyes.

'... He's pretty huge.'

\*

### **Chapter 439 Heroic Rank Gathering [Pt 3]**

"I'll get straight to the point."

The Guildmaster closed his eyes and took in a deep breath. His deep tone perfectly represented the mature features that were vividly outlined on his face.

"Congratulations on joining the highest echelon in this trade we call Adventuring." He said, looking at the three newcomers.

—Jet, Lux, and Sebas.

In his eyes, all three were splendid. They would make for good candidates to succeed him once he no longer occupied the position of Guildmaster.

'I'm not growing any younger. Someone will have to step up eventually...' He often said this as a joke, but he genuinely meant it.

He—Richard Lysth—was not as strong as he was in his prime.

After reaching the pinnacle of strength, the only place you could go was down. As such, his abilities were already showing a rapidly growing rate of decline.

He didn't think he would last another decade before he had to permanently retire from this position.

'To do that, though, I need a capable successor.'

Before the advent of the three newcomers, he only had Noah and Britta, and just a month ago... there was only the latter.

The numbers had increased so much in such a short span that he couldn't help but be relieved.

'Is this some kind of sign?' Richard thought to himself with a wry smile. 'It seems my time as Guildmaster is coming to an end sooner than I imagined.'

He just had to choose his successor before then.

'I can't choose any of the Vice Guildmasters, so it has to be one of these ones.'

The operations of the Adventurer Guild was too vast for just one or two people to properly manage. As a result, there were five Vice Guildmasters in total.

Two belonged to his faction, and they wholeheartedly agreed with his decision to seek an heir outside the administrative system of the Guild.

However, the other three didn't like the idea at all.

They insisted that whoever would run the Guild after the Guildmaster retired had to be a qualified person who was already in the Guild's framework.

The 'qualification' for such a position was—unsurprisingly—being a Vice Guildmaster.

Their reasoning wasn't unfounded, though. Based on the records of the Adventurers City, this had always been how things were.

The role of Guildmaster wasn't one that could be handled with muscles alone, but brains. As a result, Vice Guildmasters were traditionally chosen to fill up the position of their predecessors.

'But... times have changed.' Richard sighed internally.

With the war against the Dragons reaching a crescendo, and the appearance of more skilled Adventurers and deadlier Dungeons, it was obvious that the world was marching forward.

The Adventurers Guild—no, the entire City—had to do the same.

'They don't seem to realize that strength is becoming extremely crucial in the current world. It is the most valuable commodity at the moment.'

Of course, that didn't mean brains were useless. However, any true Heroic Rank Adventurer had to have the spirit of Adventuring embedded in them, coupled with the instinct of a truly strong person.

Weak men like the Vice Guildmasters didn't understand it, but once humans reached a certain level of strength, they saw the world a lot differently.

That was what Richard was after! He desired a champion that could lead the Adventurers City into a new path that would allow them to thrive in the changing times.

'But those fools don't see it.' He nearly sighed again. 'They cling onto the old ways without consideration for the future...'

They were the same people who kept opposing compliance with the United Human Alliance and also reinforced the narrative of hatred in the minds of many Adventurers towards the Alliance, all while the latter fought the war on everyone's behalf.

'I had to request the assistance of the Royal Council for this Grand Calmity Class Dungeon behind their backs. Other than the two in my faction, no one else knows about this...'

And he would like to keep it that way.

Richard cast his gaze on each and every one of the people present and nodded to himself.

'Perhaps I should finally make a choice in the upcoming Conquest.'

He would choose an heir and groom the person to take on his role. Of course, that meant teaching him the rules of administration and qualities of leadership.

'All for a better future...'

"Huu... I have something important to discuss with you all." Richard said, calmly ensuring everyone was paying attention before proceeding.

However—

"Tell us why you were so late, Richard! You can't keep doing this!" Britta yelled out.

"As much as I hate to agree with the spiteful woman, she has a point, you know? What took you so long?" Noah asked, folding his arms and exhaling with a bit of annoyance.

Richard instantly felt trapped.

The new Heroic Rank Adventurers said nothing, but merely judging from their silent gaze, it was obvious that they desired answers.

"Ahh... well..."

He took his time studying the faces of everyone present and decided to proceed with caution.

"I went to the Grand Calamity Class Dungeon to observe it again."

He wasn't lying.

Richard had a policy about honesty that he never broke. As a result, he was able to get the trust and respect of everyone around him.

Honesty really was the best policy!



"Yeah, no shit! There's no way observing it would have caused you to be so late!" Britta yelled with narrowed eyes.

Richard gulped.

"Come on, just give it to us straight." Noah sighed. "We can handle it."

Beads of sweat formed on his face as he sighed and decided to come out with it.

Honesty was the best policy, except in situations like this.

"I... got lost." As he said this, there was a moment of silence dedicated to his statement.

It didn't last for very long, though.

"Again?"

"What the hell, man?!"

"I can't believe this!"

"Right? Every time! Just go with a staff or something!"

"Exactly! EXACTLY!"

Richard couldn't help but sit still and accept everything thrown at him with a smile on his face.

'I'm sorry, everyone. It's my fault... haha...'

\*

#### **Chapter 440 Heroic Rank Gathering [Pt 4]**

"A-ahem, anyway... back to the topic at hand."

After the two prominent Adventurers had chewed Richard Lysth for a considerable length of time, and had gotten their fill, he could finally proceed with his pertinent discussion.

"First things first, after this meeting, all three of you will be publicly declared as Heroic Rank Adventurers."

They already had their badges, but this was an unavoidable ceremony.

"Now, for the important issue for discussion. I already briefly spoke to Britta and Noah about it the other day, but with all five of you here... I'd like to talk about the Dungeon Conquest."

Even though it would be impossible for none of the parties present to not have heard of the Grand Calamity Class Dungeon already, Richard reiterated it for all to hear.

There were various kinds of Dungeons, classified in the order of difficulty; Normal Class, Special Class, Chaos Class, Disaster Class, Calamity?Class... and the final one... Grand Calamity Class.

The Royal Dungeon in the Capital was estimated to be around the level of a Disaster Class Dungeon, as most top-ranked Dungeons were.

Calamity Class Dungeons were rare, but there were quite a few of them. They had a similar status as Dead Zones, so most Adventurers never passed the first couple of Floors to grind Levels.

With the appearance of the first Grand Calamity Class Dungeon in over three centuries, it was pertinent to make a swift decision regarding it.

"Nearly a thousand Adventurers have already ventured inside as we speak. None of them have been heard from since. It's safe to say that it's a very dangerous mission."

Of course, the Adventurers who ventured in could be considered fodder compared to the likes of Heroic Rank Adventurers. They were simply desperate for some kind of benefit and wished to try their luck.

No high-ranked Adventurer worth their salt would be so careless.

"In order to maximize the benefits of this Grand Calamity Class Dungeon, and prevent any further unnecessary deaths, it's better we organize a Dungeon Conquest where we go in massive numbers and take on the Dungeon."

In order to account for the number of participants, and to ensure it wasn't too crowded, Richard would have recommended that only five thousand of the most competent Adventurers participated, but that wouldn't work.

A lot of new blood would want to join as well.

"We can't stop the people that desire to try their luck, so we can only ensure that the mission yields the highest amount of results."

Richard already did the numbers, and he estimated that about nine thousand to ten thousand Adventurers would participate in the Conquest.

'There's safety in numbers... even though most of those numbers are fodder.'

As a general rule, Dungeon exploration was a selfish task—every man for himself. That meant the participants were responsible for their lives.

Party members only assisted one another because not doing so would be detrimental to their own survival. It was a harsh truth about the trade, so even if the fodder were to join the Conquest, no one would be too distracted by them.

There would be no such thing as them being 'slowed down,'

Anyone who couldn't keep up would be abandoned. Those who were weak would naturally be culled.

"Is that really alright? I mean, wouldn't that reduce the overall number of Adventurers in the City?" Sebas asked with a raised brow.

In response to this, Richard and the two older Adventurers cracked a smile.

"You're right. But it won't get to that point." The Guildmaster answered.

"How so?"

"The Dungeon is always open for those who desire to leave. I actually stepped in myself, and I watched others do the same. The doors remain open regardless."

Since that was the case, once the weaklings realized how helpless they were, and that they couldn't possibly keep up with the strong... they would dip.

Such was the nature of the weak.

"They just have to witness it with their own eyes or they'll keep trying. The goal is to make them experience enough despair to stay away."

Of course, this plan would still have casualties, but they were necessary sacrifices. These people chose their path, despite knowing what kind of Dungeon it was, so they had to be prepared for the consequences.

"And what will you do about the Miasma?" Jet asked, his arms folded

"Well, it hasn't been confirmed to be Miasma since that is really rare and can come in various forms."

"But what if it is?"

As he pressured the Guildmaster, the older man knew he would have to answer the question.

"We'll make add that to the announcement, telling people the details and possibilities of Miasma. If they don't want to get Miasma Poisoning, then it's up to them to take the appropriate measures."

The Adventurers Guild wasn't some sort of parent, so they weren't responsible for the Adventurers in the City. In the same vein, the Adventurers didn't really answer to the Guild.

Other than activities involving the Guild, Adventurers didn't need to have any kind of interaction with the body.

All they had to do was pay their dues, and the symbiotic relationship continued.

"Miasma Poisoning is very rare and difficult to cure—especially in severe cases—but it's pretty easy to prevent."

Since the poisoning occurred when Miasma—that is, corrupted Mana—entered a person's body and interfered with the natural flow of Mana within them.

If a person had a higher amount or density of Mana compared to the Miasma that invaded the body, then they were safe.

The Miasma would simply be purified by their internal Mana, the same way the Immune System protected the body from germs and diseases.

However, just as with the Immune System, the problem arose when the resistance level of an individual wasn't as strong as the infection.

If that happened to be the case, they would fall sick.

There were, however, ways to prevent this situation from happening.

"If they take the proper measures, then we should be fine."