

# Extras 61

Chapter 61 The Eighth Floor [Pt 2]

'[Heat Vision]!'

Rey's glowing eyes instantly release a beam of crimson energy.

It sliced through the air in a vibrant him, swiftly moving towards its target in a straight line.

"GRRAAA!!" The Monkey Monster's [Safe Haven] activated once more, but thanks to the creature's paling glow, the barrier began to blink.

As a result of this instability, the ray of light was able to penetrate its defenses to a limited degree.

The result?

"GRAAOO!"

The right arm of the Monkey Monster was badly bruised by the power of the blast.

It took a few steps back in recoil, tightly gripping its wounded region.

At this point, its glow ceased.

"Interesting. So it only lasts for thirty seconds. The effects begin to dwindle in the 20 second mark, and once it reaches 25 seconds, the ability gets unstable."

After the time limit, the Skill completely vanished.

"That's quite something. I'm curious, though. Does this apply to all Skills, or does it depend on the Skill absorbed?"

[Safe Haven] was a B-Tier Skill, so if it lasted for thirty seconds, would a C-Tier Skill last for longer?

What of A-Tier? Would the duration be shorter?

Rey was curious to find out.

"What an interesting Monster..." He murmured.

Compared to the others he had found, this was by far the most dangerous.

'And there's also the fact that the creature is durable. Even though the effects were mitigated by [Safe Haven], that heat vision should have completely sliced off its hand.'

If it was other Monsters, that would have been the outcome.

'Its speed and durability are superior to the others, and the Skill it has is superb.'

Rey wondered just what kind of Monsters would be awaiting him in the lower Floors if the one on the Eighth Floor was already this strong.

'I wonder how the others would fare if they faced this thing...'

Basic Martial Arts or flashy techniques wouldn't be enough to make it out of here alive.

To survive in the Dungeon, one needed two things.

"One is power..." Rey grinned, taking a step forward as he focused his gaze on the growling beast.

And the other was just as important.

"... Adaptability."

Rey stretched out his hand to the Monkey Monster, and it could not resist the 'Pull' effect of [Force].

Like a helpless ragdoll, it approached Rey with sheer speed.

"[Greater Corrosion]." He whispered the moment the Monkey Monster fell into his grasp.

Instantly, the body of the beast melted before Rey's very eyes.

As if it was disintegrating, its flesh turned into ash. The bones soon followed, all of them crumbling to dust as they fell from his hand.

Once he was done eliminating the creature, he dusted his hand and opened his lips.

"Status Window."

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Rey Skylar.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Commoner (F-Tier)
- Level: 15 (98.21% EXP)
- Life Force: 22
- Mana Level: 63
- Combat Ability: 30
- Stat Points: 0
- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): Nil
- Alignment: Neutral

[Additional Information]

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

[End Of Information]

As expected, he was still in the same Level, though the EXP had increased compared to its previous state.

'A little more, and I'll Level Up.'

The higher one's Level, the more difficult it was to advance further.

The kind of Monsters he would have to fight to grow even more had to be incomparably stronger than his previous foes.

Such a system ensured Rey could never slack off or feel too powerful since he had to constantly challenge himself to see any real progress.

He liked it this way.

"Now let's take a good look at the new Skill."

[Skill Categories]

~ Attack Category: 26

~ Defense Category: 9

~ Buff Category: 10

~ Miscellaneous: 7

[New Skills: Please Select Their Categories]

~ C-Tier: Breakdown

~C-Tier: Copy

[End Of Information]

"I see... so it was using two Skills the whole time..."

Rey had always thought the Monkey Monster's abilities were too broken for a single Skill, but after considering his own [Doppel], he quickly realized he shouldn't judge.

However, now that the truth had come to light, he felt a little at ease.

'Both of them are definitely going into the Attack Category.'

Rey remembered how he had restructured his Skill Categories after more thorough revision.

Once he had trained with them to an extent, familiarizing himself with their limitations and practicability, he had changed his mind on some Skills.

In the end, a few Skills had to change Categories.

'I'm very sure about these two, though.' Rey thought, referring to the two C-Tiers before his eyes.

Once he was done setting everything up, he closed the System Window and heaved in satisfaction.

"And with that, I have 54 Skills. Not bad."

Rey wasn't satisfied, though.

'I won't be able to fully test out the new Skills on the monsters here since they're all going to be using them as well.'

The best way to properly utilize them would be to square off with a different monster and see how the Skills held up.

'For now, though, let's just advance...'

Satisfied with his current disposition, Rey advanced forward.

'Ah... fuck! I went and corroded the Monster Core too!'

The moment he realized this, he almost pulled his hair out. How could he have forgotten something so important?!

"My moneyyyyyy!"

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"[Counter]."

The moment a Monkey Monster tried to get a jump on him from behind, Rey's finger flicked back, touching the face of the beast.

~SQUELCH!~

In an instant wave of repulsion, the beast's head exploded..

Its guts spilled over as blood spurted out of its gaping neck. The headless body of the Monster stumbled for a second before falling to its death.

The [Counter] Skill was very useful, albeit technical.

It required precision.

'I have to touch the part of the opponent that is about to hit me, and the damage I would have received is reflected to the opponent.'

This only worked on physical attacks, which was why it remained a C-Tier Skill.

'The fact that its head ripped apart just goes to show how sharp those jaws are.' Rey smirked as the fallen monster's core.

However, not long after he did this, a frown tugged at his lips.

The reason was simple.

"Once again, it's a bother to harvest the Monster Core..."

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## **Chapter 62 The Eighth Floor [Pt 3]**

"So... I was thinking..."

Rey was currently surrounded by Monkey Monsters, yet the way he was conversing felt like he was pitching an idea to humans like himself.

An excuse he gave himself was that he was simply doing this out of boredom, but Rey failed to consider the possibility that maybe... just maybe he was going insane.

"... Instead of picking up your Cores after killing you, couldn't I just bring a few Hobgoblins with me to do the job?"

"GRRRRRRRRRRR!!!"

In response to their loud growls, Rey swiftly raised his hands, as if trying to pacify them and further argue his point.

"Now hold on... hear me out! They'll just be a few. Maybe even one who's very intelligent and quick on their feet."

The rationale behind this was simple.

While Rey was busy exterminating these creatures, the Hobgoblin would be busy harvesting the Cores.

A win-win!

... Well, except for the Monsters being slain.

"ROOOOAAAARRRRR!!!"

The group of Monkey Monsters—about five of them—leaped from their respective positions at the same time, all of them desiring to get a taste of his flesh.

Rey couldn't help but sigh.

"[Blindness]."

The moment he said this, darkness shrouded the bright eyes of the Monkey Monsters.

With their sight—the primary sensory organ they had—gone, they couldn't clearly accurately locate him.

However, since they already had a decent idea of his position, they did not falter.

Hesitation was not allowed in the Dungeon, and as apex predators, these beasts were fine examples of the primal laws.

Unfortunately for them, Rey wasn't quite finished.

"[False Pain]."

The moment he snapped his fingers, every single one of them collapsed on the ground, groaning in sheer agony.

"G-GURAAAAAHHHHH!!!"

"UROOAAAGHHHHH!!!"

"K-KURGHHHH!!!"

Their screams of the phantom pain they were experiencing was further amplified by the horrors of darkness that overwhelmed them.

These beings were not used to being in pain, or not seeing.

The hesitation they had avoided for so long soon spiked to confusion.

... And then despair.

"Guess you didn't like my pitch. Oh well..." Rey's disconcerted voice was the last thing they heard.

And then, their lives came to an end.

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Smoke was still emanating from Rey's fingers as he looked at the deceased creature.

Once again, he could already dread harvesting the Cores.

"I personally don't think it's a bad plan..." He mumbled, thinking about his pitch.

The major problem when it came to this plan was that there was a possibility he couldn't protect the Hobgoblin as well as he could defend himself.

In essence, his Monster Core harvester could die on him.

'The Dungeon is an unpredictable place, so I can't guarantee anything.'

Taking care of himself was a given, but what about others?

"Since Hobgoblins are pretty much expendable, I don't see why I should be too concerned about their well-being, though..."

When Rey said words like this, they made him seem like a monster. However, he had long outgrown those sorts of concerns.

"If I use the females, they should be smarter than the young ones."

The problem was that all the females were pregnant, which meant they would be slow.

'The males are too young and stupid...' Rey sighed.

No matter how he looked at it, either option would slow him down while he was trying to advance in the Dungeon's deeper floors.

In the end, there was only one method Rey could think of that would be most viable.

'Once I'm done with a Floor, I'll assign the Hobs to fetch the Monster Cores.'

He could supervise them the first few times to ensure they got it right and didn't leave any single Core alone, but afterward, he didn't see a problem in letting them do the work while he advanced to a deeper floor.

'That works...'

Rey smiled, glad to finally have that topic behind him.

Right now, he was almost done with the Monkey Monsters, and there was a lot he had learned about them.

'Skills that affect them directly and do not use a tangible wave of Mana are the most useful...'

He had initially thought he would have trouble dispatching them—especially if they came to him in groups.

However, they were easier than he expected.

'The more I know, the easier they become to fight...'

Skills like [Blindness] and [False Pain] came in handy in times like this.

'Once they're incapacitated, they won't have enough focus to activate their Skills, so I can just finish them off with whatever.'

It was that easy!

'Of course, it might take some people a bit of time to get the trick behind it...'

In fact, the only reason Rey could do something like this was due to his wide array of Skills.

If it was some other person, they wouldn't be so lucky.

'Diversity and versatility is the best weapon I have.'

And in the Dungeon—a place where monsters with varying abilities and qualities existed—Rey's weapon was the ultimate kind.

'I just need to keep building my arsenal...'

As Rey had these thoughts, he neared the massive entrance that was the Boss Room.

'What a nice setup...!' He found himself leaking a smirk.

Naturally, a bunch of Monkey Monsters were guarding the entrance and instantly reacted to his presence.

"GRRRRRIII—!"

Before they could even leak out another growl, Rey finished them off.

As their dead bodies plopped to the ground, Rey decided to leave them be.

'The Hobs will handle the rest...'

Instead, he kept his gaze forward.

The gaping entrance to the Boss Room was just a formation of rocks that seemed to naturally construct a doorway.

It was open, and Rey took the liberty of inviting himself in.

Once he entered the inner sanctum of the Monkey Monsters, he found himself assailed by even brighter light than before.

The Mana Crystals in this place glowed incomparably more than the ones he found on his way here.

Not only that, but they were literally everywhere.

The walls were made of the stuff, and the ceiling had spikes of Mana Crystals covering every corner.

It felt like a Mana Crystal Chamber at this point.

"Ohhh!" Rey's mouth opened slightly as his eyes caught the most imposing figure he had ever encountered throughout his stay in this new world.

More imposing than the Kobold Boss.

Far more threatening than the Hobgoblin Chief and the NightWolves.

... Immensely more intimidating than the Monkey Monsters.

This entity was seated on a throne made from Mana Crystals.

The throne didn't seem very comfortable, but it was massive and grandiose—radiating so much light that an average person would have to look away so as not to go blind.

Rey was staring right at it though, feeling his heartbeat increase drastically.

The Boss was at least seven meters tall. That was about five times taller than Rey.

It glared heavily at its prey, its breathing echoing throughout the room like the brewing sound of Thunder.

"So you're the Boss, huh?" Rey felt his lips widening to their limits as he grinned.

Rather than trembling in fear, as he had done before, he could feel his anxiety mix in with profound curiosity.

... And excitement.

"Perfect!"

### **Chapter 63 The Boss Monkey Monster [Pt 1]**

Boss Monsters usually exist as two kinds.

The first Kind is the 'Commander' type, who is usually surrounded by tons of minions and has a lot of influence over them.

It would be difficult facing this Boss Monster because not only would the challenger have to defeat it, they also have to focus their efforts on the mobs that naturally assist their leader.

As a result, Parties are necessary for fights like this—whether in a game, or in a world of Magic and Fantasy.

However...

... There exists the second type of Boss.

The Solo Boss!

In a way, this one can end up being even more troublesome than the first.

At least, the first Boss is guaranteed to be defeated with proper teamwork and well-coordinated actions.

Since it's a 'Commander' type, it's usually weak individually—though exceptions to this exist.

A Solo Boss, however, is an 'Assault' type.

Its power far surpass anything a 'Commander' can dream of wielding, and one could also refer to this type as a Tyrant.

Only one thing matters when it comes to subjugating this kind of Boss.

... Power!

Teamwork and coordination can work for a while, but without sufficient power, it's all pointless.

It just so happened that Rey found the Boss of the Eighth Floor to be the second type.

An unstoppable Tyrant!

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The seven-meter-tall monstrosity rose from its giant throne as it fixed its gaze on Rey.

Its immensely muscular form slouched thanks to its quadrupedal nature, but that did not at all diminish its presence.

It had unbelievably huge arms. And while its legs were much smaller, they looked thick with muscles—like the stump of a robust tree.

Misty breath escaped its lips as it stared at Rey. Its three eyes all had different colors—blue, red, and purple.

The latter was on its forehead.

"Easy, big guy..." As the creature's growl began to rise to a climax, Rey's voice interrupted it.

"Enough flexing already."

The Monster's glare tightened, and veins appeared all over its ugly ape-like face.

"I'm ready when you a—!"

Before Rey could complete his sentence, the beast closed its distance with Rey and sent one of its robust hands forward.

~WHOOSH!~

Only the sound of parting wind could be heard, followed by a loud crashing sound from the end of the room.

~BOOOOM!~

Huge chunks of Mana Crystals fell to the ground, causing the ground to rumble.

This only happened because of the person who had crashed on the wall.

"Oh wow..." Rey's slightly disheveled hair danced all over his face as he used a slight ~huff~ to send a strand of stray hair flying away.

"... That hurt."

What happened just now was simple.

The Boss Monster hit Rey, and he ended up being uncontrollably thrust to the wall.

Using defenses would have been detrimental, so Rey refused to go down that route.

As a result, he had to suffer the full brunt of the Boss Monster's strike.

"Guess I underestimated y—"

Once again, the Boss Monster became a blur and swiftly closed the distance between itself and Rey.

It felt like teleportation at this point.

~WHUUM!~

It sent its fist flying, but Rey was able to successfully dodge the first crash by jumping away from the wall.

The result of that evasion, was the creature's now hitting whatever remained of the wall.

The result...?

~BOOOOOOOOMMM!~

As the loud noise erupted throughout the room, Rey activated [Flight] and tried to glide through the air, but was promptly stopped by resistance on one of his legs.

"Oh fuck...!"

The Boss had managed to grab a hold of Rey's leg right as he leaped away from harm's way.

Rey feared what would come next.

~WHOOOSH!~

The creature jumped from its height and flung Rey to the ground.

The boy felt like a helpless ragdoll as his body flailed through the air before inevitably crashing on the ground.

"Not giving me a chance to—"

Once more, the monster descended on Rey from above—it's clasped hands landing fervently on Rey's exposed stomach.

"G-GURGHH!" Both blood and saliva leaked out of Rey's open mouth as his eyes nearly popped out of their sockets.

However, this was only the beginning.

~BOOOM!~

~WHAM!~

~BOOOOOM!~

As tremors echoed in the magnificent expanse, everything began to crack.

The ceiling shook, the earth shattered apart, and shockwaves sent dents spreading throughout the far walls. freeweb(n)ovel

This level of destruction was unbelievable.

"GRUUUUUUUU..."

Once the Boss Monster had gotten its fill of primal violence and senseless rage, it took a good look at Rey's battered body.

"U-urrrgh..."

The human was lying there... pathetic and weakened.

He was too broken to do anything else.

"HUHUUUUUU..." The Boss Monster chuckled as it raised Rey up, dragging him from his head.

It licked its ape-like lips, revealing a toothy grin.

A terrible odor wafted through its discolored but incredibly sharp teeth.

Saliva drilled down as it intently observed its prey.

This was its moment of triumph—the final act of their brief, but enjoyable dance.

~CRUNCH!~

As the Boss Monster devoured its prey, it felt nothing.

No resistance. No flesh. No bone.

... No blood.

"...?!"

A confused expression greeted its face as it glanced at what was supposed to remain of the prey's body being held in its grasp.

It found nothing.

At this point, confusion greeted all its senses as it furiously glanced around in sheer disillusionments

Its primitive brain could not properly comprehend what had just happened, but it knew one thing for sure.

It had been played!

"Took you long enough to notice."

The voice of its prey suddenly echoed in the air, forcing the giant creature to turn in the direction it came from.

Standing there, completely unharmed, was Rey.

"Looks like [Projection] works well on you. I thought you'd be able to see through it, but apparently not..."

The monster did not understand what this 'Projection' meant. However, it could understand that its prey was still alive.

And that pissed it off.

"GROOOOAAAHHHHHH!!!"

As its roars reverberated through the air, Rey's smile seemed to increase.

"Is it due to your body's lack of proper sensitivity that you were unable to properly feel the lack of impact when you were striking?"

In exchange for their thick skin which granted them impressive durability, these creatures had very desensitized nerves on their flesh surface.

That was what Rey referred to.

"I guess the impact from the surfaces, and the wind pressure also helped a lot, so it felt like you were actually hitting something."

All the while, it had been fighting a nonexistent enemy.

"The only real strike you landed was the first."

After that, Rey had promptly activated [Projection] and watched everything that came next from the sidelines.

"I have to say... It was quite entertaining."

It felt a little odd seeing himself beat up like that, but Rey considered it to be a warning.

A warning for what would happen if he were ever to get careless in a fight.

"ROOOOOOOAAAARRRRRR!!!" More incoherent roars emanated from the beast, but Rey couldn't be less bothered.

"Did you really think I wouldn't take precautions when fighting someone of your caliber? Thanks to your exhibition, though, I have a fair grasp of your strength."

Rey's voice oozed with genuine gratitude, but this only served to enrage the Boss Monster more.

"I suppose it's my turn now."

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## **Chapter 64 The Boss Monkey Monster [Pt 2]**

~BOOOOOOMMM!!!~

The very ground shattered into massive chunks as the Boss Monkey Monster—BMM for short—charged from its position and lunged at Rey.

Fury filled all three of its eyes, and its salivating mouth was wide open as it thrust a punch forward.

~WHOOOOOMM!~

The air vibrated as the wind parted to make way for the massive blow that rapidly approached Rey.

For anyone, this would be the end.

But Rey was not anyone.

"[Grand Armament]"

In an instant, all of Rey's body emitted what could only be described as hot steam, and an orange-like substance covered his skin.

This 'armament' especially shrouded his hand as he launched it towards the fist of his opponent.

~BOOOOM!~

A resounding explosion echoed across the room, and the walls around it cracked.

The earth that Rey stood on also broke into pieces, and based on the clash between the two... one would expect that the smaller one would have to recoil thanks to the shock.

Rather surprisingly, the opposite was the case.

~SQUELCH!~

BMM's massive hand was completely crushed by the effects of the A-Tier Skill. It completely tore off, turning into nothing but mangled flesh and spraying blood.

"So even you can't copy an A-Tier Skill, huh? I figured..." Rey smiled.

[Grand Armament] was the only Buff Skill he had among his list of A-Tier abilities.

It basically coated the body in a flexible exoskeleton that improved the offensive and defensive prowess of the user.

The user would be invulnerable to weaker attacks, and the resistance they had towards both Magic and Physical attacks skyrocketed.

Sure, speed and perception wasn't really affected by [Grand Armament], but the power boost alone was enough to compensate for all of that.

With just one hit, Rey had easily torn apart the massive arms of his opponent.

"Don't look so surprised." Rey's voice interrupted the stunned creature before him.

"We're just getting started."

Rey's body moved much faster than BMM could see, so the only thing it noticed was a blur that reached for its bulging chest.

~BOOOOOM!~

BMM's body started towards its throne, shattering the entire thing in a flash.

The blow that Rey landed on him was enough to send him flying without any form of resistance.

BMM was now the one who had become a ragdoll.

"G-GURGHHH...?!"

It could not understand. How could someone so puny wield so much strength?

As BMM struggled to understand, Rey was already right behind it.

"You good, buddy?"

BMM, of course, did not understand the language that Rey spoke. But it instinctively knew that he was being looked down on.

It hated that more than anything.

"Hey... I asked a questio—" As Rey took one more step and leaned closer to BMM, the beast had a clever idea.

~WHOOM!~

It swiftly coiled its body and sent its face flying towards Rey's face.

Its goal was simple—crush Rey with its most powerful asset—its powerful teeth.

However...

"Urgh... your breath stinks." Rey's voice echoed from within BMM's mouth.

"?!!"

Despite trying its hardest to crush Rey with its enormous teeth, BMM felt an odd sensation—resistance unlike anything else he had ever encountered in the past.

There was nothing this Boss Monster couldn't crush with its powerful jaws and sharp teeth.

Yet... what was this?!

Rey's skin was much tougher than BMM's incredible teeth that it actually began to hurt it to exert pressure on the boy's head.

"G-GU—!"

Before BMM could utter another sentence, it felt heat rise inside its mouth.

It began to get so hot that it couldn't help but squirm as it tried to remove its mouth from Rey's face.

Unfortunately for BMM, it was just a second too late.

~WHOOSH!~

Two hot rays of light passed through the back of its throat and seared out of its neck.  
freew(e)bnove(l)

If one looked through the two massive holes that formed in its burning skin, they would see two crimson red eyes glowing inside the creature's mouth.

"ROAAAHHHH!!!"

BMM shrieked in pain as it stepped away from Rey.

Its throat was burning, and it was experiencing so much pain—

too much pain.

"You can't break down Skills if they're activated inside your bodies, can you? Or maybe you can and you just didn't use it..."

Rey's voice was completely ignored by the Boss Monster.

It was in such extreme pain that it was now waving its only remaining hand aimlessly through air, hoping that it would somehow get rid of Rey.

If only that would be enough...

~WHOOSH!~

Rey shot a single thrust, aiming for the very things the monster before him had the most pride in

Its indestructible teeth!

Well... they shattered upon impact with Rey's armament-coated fist.

Like sharp spikes breaking apart and flying in multiple places at once, the broken teeth all went their way—a lot of them skewering the flesh of their previous owner.

"G-GURGHHH..."

At this point, BMM was already choking on its overflowing blood. It staggered back, helplessly unable to do anything but cast a fearful gaze on its supposed prey.

"Hehehe... hehehehe... hahaha...!!!"

The fiend before it was laughing as it struggled to do the one thing every living creature innately desired.

... To live!

BMM desperately wanted to live, and if it could, it would plead for its dear life in whatever language Rey understood.

"G-GURRR—!"

As it raised its hand in surrender, Rey's hand became a blur, and it flew straight towards the chest of the beast.

~SQUELCH!~

The smell of gore wafted through the air as Rey's fist was lodged deep within BMM's chest. Enough to crush its heart, and also to harvest its core.

"Two birds... one stone."

BMM knew at that moment that its life had come to an end.

Despite its brief, desperate, and shameful attempt to live, he had been rewarded with evidence that showed the futility of its actions.

As Rey's hand slopped out of its chest, dragging its Monster Core with it, BMM felt its consciousness fading.

This was the end.

"Sweet! It's bigger than the rest! I can definitely sell it for..."

Those were the last words BMM heard before it finally drifted to the world that Monsters go to when they die.

The land of nothingness.

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## **Chapter 65 Planning Ahead**

"Level 19, huh...?"

Rey had Leveled Up four times in the course of this brief event, and while it didn't seem like much, he still found himself smiling at the fact.

"I've gotten stronger."

His goal for the day had been achieved, and that was enough to satisfy him.

'If I can clear one Floor per day, and focus the rest of my time on other things, I'd say that's decent progress...'

Rey would have normally preferred doing two—if not three—Dungeons in a day, but that came at its own risk.

For one, the terrain of Dungeons made exploring a single floor very hectic. Doing so could range from an hour or two to almost four.

And all of this was without accounting for the fact that he would need to stop to fight Monsters and harvest Cores—though he had found a way to circumvent the last problem.

Of course, Rey could easily find a way to speed up his journey though [Flight] and other Skills in the Buff Category, but that came with its own caveat.

'Going fast increases the risk of falling into traps or being careless.'

When moving fast, there were a lot of things one tended to overlook.

If this was any other place, then Rey could have easily shrugged off this underlying risk, but Dungeon Floors were very dangerous and unpredictable places.

He could also encounter Monsters that gave hard counters to his existing Skill-Set.

'I also can't afford to burn through too much of my MP...'

In a place where Rey wasn't certain what would come next, his Skills were his only lifeline.

Which meant MP was his precious fuel.

'I have tons of Buffs and my base MP is rapidly increasing, but it's still not quite there yet...'

Most Buff Skills had Duration and Cooldown Periods, so if he ended up exhausting all of them, he would be screwed.

He also had a Mana Recovery Skill, but that was a passive one, and it restored the Mana over time.

In conclusion, while Rey desired to explore more Floors in a day, he simply couldn't afford to—at least, safety wise.

There was just no way to rush through it.

'Training ends by 2:00 PM. I budget 1 hour for my journey here every day, which means I arrive at 3:00 PM...'

Rey often trained for about five hours, which meant he left around 8:00 PM.

Another hour to travel back, and that meant he would arrive home at 9:00 PM.

He would take a quick shower and reach the Library at about 9:30 PM.

After studying for a few hours—usually two, but sometimes three—he would leave around the 12:00 AM mark.

It used to be a lot different before, but this was his current schedule.

'And training the next morning starts by 7:00 AM... damn!'

Rey had never been much of a hard worker, so it was even surprising to him that he was following such a tight schedule.

Perhaps that was why he tried to have as much fun while killing Monsters and growing stronger.

'I really wish I didn't have to go for training...'

Rey knew that sounded a lot like a child whining about not wanting to go to school, but he couldn't help it.

Training was useless to him, at this point.

He was already way ahead of the class thanks to reading in the library. As for the practical aspect of training, he felt more productive in the Dungeon than among his fellows.

'Anyhow. I don't think this arrangement will last forever...'

Rey and his classmates were summoned for a reason, so it only stood to reason that they would soon be made to fulfill their purpose.

'I don't know when that will be, but considering the Nation's desperation, it shouldn't be too long.'

Rey approximated it to take about one more month.

'The fact that Lucielle and Brutus had to leave abruptly shows how grim the situation is.'

He had a feeling that he and his classmates would be pushed to the extreme when those two returned.

And not long after, they would be made to finally explore the Dungeon and grind their levels.

'They're going to find that I've already defeated the Monsters for them, though...' Rey laughed sheepishly to himself.

'What should I do?'

He was beginning to feel a little guilty about the whole thing.

'The weaker Monsters would have served as perfect cannon fodders for them to increase their Levels, and now they can't have that.'

In this world, there was only one way to increase Levels.

That was by gaining EXP.

Depending on the Class, EXP could be gained in multiple ways. For example, a Scholar could gain tons of EXP from studying, just as a Warrior could gain EXP from fighting a lot.

However, EXP accumulated very slowly in a long process over time.

That was why there was a much easier way to go about it.

Killing and Gaining EXP.

It was a universal principle in this world that one could gain EXP by extinguishing the life of another living entity.

Since it was immoral to take human lives, or the lives of beings with sufficient intelligence to be deemed sentient, the perfect alternative was Monsters.

Monsters were resources useful for quick growth, and Rey was a living testament to that fact.

'If they want to Level Up, they'll have to go to the Lower Floors, and I don't know how easy that'll be for them...'

Rey surmised that the Royal Council had to have other areas they could use for killing Monsters aside from the Royal Dungeon, so he didn't think it would be too much of a hassle for them.

'In any case, I'll just feign ignorance like always.'

Rey prepared himself to depart from the Floor and call the Hobgoblins to clean up the mess he had made and harvest the Monster Cores.

'I should probably burn the corpses, but I'll do it tomorrow...'

\*

## Chapter 66 Meeting The Unexpected

Once Rey left the Eighth Floor and returned to the Hobgoblin Clearing, he was once again welcomed by their subservient bows.

Rey was already so used to this that he merely waved his hand and they respectfully dispersed to fulfill their respective roles.

He called for competent-looking Hobgoblins—twelve in number—and decided that they would be the team responsible for his Monster Core Harvesting.

Spending the rest of his limited time bringing them down to the Eighth Floor and explaining how they were to trail straight down and harvest all the Monster Cores that were left there, Rey could see that the Hobs understood him.

'Is it just me, or have they grown more intelligent?'

He shrugged it off as nothing, deciding to remain as skeptical as possible.

'I'll come back tomorrow to see how they fare. Hopefully they get this on their first try.'

That would remove a lot of hassle from his future endeavors.

'I would have told them to burn the corpses, but I don't want them to start a fire down there...'

It was better to give them one instruction at a time.

To ensure the Hobs could make it down and back up, Rey provided them with a rope long enough for such.

They would use the rope to descend and ascend—a task pretty simple for Hobs.

He knew it would be harder to climb back up due to the load of Monster Cores on their backs, but Rey didn't think it would be an issue.

"I should get going now..." Rey caressed BMM's Monster Core as he shoved it into his [Subspace], right beside his rack of Platinum Coins.

There were some items he just had to fit into his [Subspace], and not just leave them in the Hobgoblin Hideout.

'About forty-five sacs of Monster Core should remain with me in [Sunspace]...'

And then his Spatial Ring was also locked in there along with more stashes of Monster Core, his Platinum Coins, and finally... BMM's Monster Core.

'That leaves only three free spaces in [Subspace]'s Slots, but that's no big deal.

He already had the Royal Dungeon's staple mask and goggles on, so Rey proceeded to make his exit.

'Need to get a lot stronger tomorrow!'

\*\*\*\*\*

Rey arrived in the Royal Estate and found some commotion in the compound.

He didn't know what was happening, but it seemed there were a lot more than usual taking patrols in the Estate.

'I should probably avoid them...'

Rey utilized [Stealth] with an array of other Skills to blend in with his environment and escape their gaze.

As a matter of course, he was successful with it.

'Ahh... I really need a shower. I hope everything is fine, though.'

Rey had a bad feeling clogging his heart, and despite his best efforts to calm himself, the feeling wouldn't go away.

'Must be the leftover tension from earlier...' He huffed, remembering how BMM made him feel during their encounter.

'To think I'll be fighting stronger Monsters than that tomorrow.'

He couldn't describe how he felt about it. It was a mix of fear and anxious excitement.

Rey wanted to do it right there and then, but he also recognized that tons of preparations had to be made before jumping right in.

This complicated thought process occupied his mind while his heart raced for some weird reason.

He found a few more guards on his way to the Otherworlders' Living Quarters, which struck him as strange.

'There are usually no guards stationed this close to us...'

Not only did the Nation believe they could take care of themselves, but having guards watch over them that way would make a lot of his classmates uncomfortable, so they desisted from it.

'There's also the fact that they can't afford to waste all that manpower...'

Rey felt like this was perhaps the most influential reason for their decision.

'So why are there guards here now? Did I miss something?'

Curiosity, but also nervousness, rugged at his chest as he approached the door.

Fortunately, it wasn't guarded.

'Maybe I'll just ask Trisha what's up.' As Rey opened the door, he had a slight inclination that perhaps he shouldn't.

He couldn't quite place it.

It wasn't [Danger Sense], since that only alerted him when some kind of harm was approaching.

This feeling felt intuitive—almost instinctive.

Despite that, Rey ignored it.

'I really need to freshen up and go to the Library...'

As a result, he twisted the knob and ventured into the living room.

What his eyes saw, however, stopped him dead in his tracks as soon as he entered.

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

Right now, all of his classmates were in the Living Room.

Yes... ALL OF THEM!

Guards were also there—about ten of them, all of them looking like elite soldiers.

'What is the meaning of this?'

Head Warrior Brutus and Grand Mage Lucielle were also around, and they were initially facing the classmates—which meant their backs were turned to Rey.

However, the moment he stepped in, everyone turned to look at him.

His classmates raised their heads and stared at him. The guards stopped everything they were doing and stared at him, and the two strongest in the Nation slowly turned to look at him.

Literally all eyes were on Rey.

"Look who finally decided to join us." Lucielle was the first to break the silence with her sweet voice.

Despite sounding playful per usual, there was a strange sense of seriousness about her vibe.

"Rey Skylar, you are—"

"Wait!" Adonis swiftly stopped Brutus from saying what he was about to utter.

He quickly rose from where he sat among the rest of his classmates and approached the unmoving Rey.

"Rey... something serious has come up."

As usual, Adonis had a very calm and respectful tone. His smile was relaxed, but his gaze felt purposeful.

He was being serious right now.

'What happened? What's going on?' Rey's thoughts echoed as he watched Adonis near him.

And more importantly...

'Why is everyone looking at me like that?!'

"Rey, could you tell us where you've been all day?" At this point, Adonis placed his hand on Rey's shoulder.

He could feel a slight pressure emanating from his hand.

Rey wasn't sure if Adonis was doing it intentionally or not, but it felt immensely threatening.

"Please, Rey... tell us everything."

\*

## Chapter 67 Suspect [Pt 1]

'What is this...?!'

Rey felt like he was in a lion's den, a prey to the predators that all stared at him with suspicious eyes.

He could feel the back of his throat itch as he mulled over Adonis' question, and more importantly... how to answer it.

"Well, there was training. Obviously..."

"After that." Adonis' voice was curt, straight to the point.

He didn't even give Rey a chance to buy time and think up an excuse.

'I thought we could spend our time however we wished. No one ever bothers to ask, so I never thought of an excuse!'

Besides, wasn't it private how he decided to spend his time? Surely, Adonis knew about this

So why? There had to be a reason why he was being pressured!

'I should just come up with a believable excuse and—!' Before Rey could finalize his decision about lying, he found something on the hand of the Grand Mage, Lucielle herself.

The Truthseeker!

'They'd go this far? I can't even lie about it?!'

Rey could feel beads of sweat forming on his face as his eyes sauntered back and forth.

He couldn't properly look at Adonis, considering how his gaze made him feel very uncomfortable.

The pressure on Rey's shoulder intensified as he nervously took a step back.

'H-huh?!' He noticed strange movements behind him.

Once he realized what was happening, his eyes nearly bulged. He tried his best to hide the fact that he knew, but it was very difficult to do so.

'Guards are waiting outside the door? They're a lot...'

His mind struggled to comprehend why they would be doing all of this, and why it seemed like he was the object of suspicion.

At this point, Rey felt absolutely surrounded.

"Just tell the truth, Rey. That's all we're asking..."

Rey could tell from the look on Brutus' face, as well as the rest of the guards, that if it were up to them this conversation would be going in another direction.

Even Lucielle was frowning deeply.

Rey had never seen her like that before.

"I... I... well, actually I..."

His gaze shifted to Noah, who was currently looking away with a nervous expression.

His gaze rested on Trisha, who was intently looking at him—as if searching for the truth herself.

At the very least, it didn't seem like she harbored a deep suspicion towards him. It just appeared like she was genuinely confused.

Finally... Rey shifted his gaze to Alicia.

He initially feared doing so, as he feared what he would meet. He didn't want her to look at him the way everyone else was, but he had to know.

How was she looking at him?

'Ahh...'

Her gaze was filled with worry, almost as if she would cry at any moment.

Rey could see her eyes glisten as she stared at him. He had never had anyone look at him that way before.

Unfortunately for him, he wasn't afforded the luxury of dwelling on those thoughts.

"He's not responding! He's clearly guilty!" Billy suddenly yelled, his face contorted in anger.

Rey couldn't have known this, but Billy had noticed the shared gaze of the two, and right now he was boiling in rage.

His dear Alicia looking at scum like Rey in such a way... it was unacceptable to him!

"That's enough, Billy! Don't be so hasty to judge one of our classmates!" Adonis yelled with a deep frown.

The moment Adonis said this, Billy backed down, instantly apologizing with a somber expression.

No one said anything, but they were really with Billy on this one.

Still, because of Adonis, no one murmured.

They simply waited for the suspect to confess.

Thankfully... they didn't have to wait for much longer.

"What exactly am I guilty of? Can I know that at least?"

Rey's voice was calm and low. It was almost as if he was completely numb to the tense atmosphere.

That wasn't the case at all, but right now... he was just tired.

He cast his gaze to the floor as he asked.

"Do you really not want to say where you've been?" As Adonis asked this, Rey didn't budge an inch.

"Just tell me... what happened."

For a while, there was silence, but Adonis finally delivered.

"Something was found in your room, Rey. In your closet..."

The moment Adonis said this, Rey felt his heart jump.

"T-they found the rest of my Monster Core stash?!"

Sweat began to gather on his face, and his body trembled slightly.

'What? How? How did they... why did they enter my room in the first place?'

"I received a tip from someone that you've been acting suspicious lately, so I personally conducted the search." Brutus' voice pierced the air at this point.

"Of course, I involved the Hero Adonis in the matter."

It felt like his last words were to make it seem like he followed due process, but Rey didn't care at all for any of that.

Only one thing stuck out the most out of what Brutus stated.

'Someone tipped him?!' Rey's eyes instantly darted towards Noah.

'Noah, you SNAKE!'

Rey had always known that his relationship with Noah was a temporary one. He expected it to end at a particular point, but this was too soon.

Noah betraying him like this wasn't within his calculations.

Rey's eyes faltered the moment he glared at Noah and found him slowly shaking his head in distress.

'What is he trying to say? That he isn't the one who did the tipping?!'

Now that he thought about it, it was too impractical for Noah to betray him now.

That was precisely why Rey never considered it to be a possibility.

'He has a lot to gain by being with me. Plus, I also know his secrets.'

Even if Noah was greedy, it would take him some time to craft a plan that would end up with him going scot free.

'We just started business! There's no way he'd want to mess that up this early.'

Once he thought things through, Rey could tell that Noah wasn't the ripper.

He couldn't have been!

'T-then who could it be...?!' Rey's eyes darted across all his twenty-eight classmates besides Adonis.

It was pretty clear it wasn't the Hero.

'Trisha? No... I don't think so. Billy? He had a motive, so it's most likely him!'

Once glance at Alicia told Rey that it couldn't be her.

Who else, then?!

'I'm a nobody! An Extra! No one cares about me enough to do this!'

It made no sense to Rey.

Fortunately for him, as he was racking his brain trying to figure out who could have orchestrated his downfall, someone rose from among his classmates.

"It was me, Rey. I did it."

"H-huh...?" Were the first words that came out of Rey's lips, albeit in a whisper.

The one speaking was none other than Adam Sanchez.

'What the hell? We don't even know each other...'

Adam was the furthest thing from a suspect that Rey would think of. They both didn't have anything that tied them together apart from Training.

Even throughout their training as Beta Class students, they hadn't said as much as a word to each other.

So what was this all about?

\*

### **Chapter 68 Suspect [Pt 2]**

"Ever since we started training, Rey has always been suspicious."

As Adam stated this, Rey's body twitched slightly.

'Me?! Suspicious? How?!'

As far as he knew, he had done his best to blend in with everyone and act as average as possible.

'What's with this bullshit?!'

"He would often mumble to himself and act weirdly. I noticed all of these things from a distance."

The moment Adam said this, Rey ceased his pointless thoughts.

He was guilty as charged.

'But I'm barely audible! And someone like Adam wouldn't have noticed!'

Besides, was it really that strange to talk to oneself in training? Especially if you were alone with no friends?

It was sad, sure, but not strange.

'But, with how Adam is framing it, and how the current situation is, that will be taken to mean I'm very suspicious.'

Rey already knew how things went at times like this.

He just decided to listen.

"One day as I was taking a stroll, I found him leaving the Royal Estate. I wanted to say something, but I ignored it, thinking maybe I was being delusional."

Leaving the Royal Estate was a serious matter, but the way Adam framed it suited his entire persona well, so no one was really surprised that he treated it flippantly.

"I noticed him doing it a few more times, so I got curious. He would often carry things with him anytime he came back, so it piqued my curiosity."

Rey narrowed his eyes as he stared at Adam.

'Something isn't right here...'

What Adam was describing was too vague to be realistic, and the anytime he became specific, Rey was sure that wasn't how the events went.

'I never carry anything with me when I'm coming back, and it's pretty dark when I do so.'

Also, Adam never specified how Rey left the Royal Estate since that was a very pertinent matter.

'I shapeshift into a bird once the coast is clear. If he wanted to expose me, he would have mentioned that.' Rey's gaze narrowed.

Why wasn't Adam exposing him for having multiple abilities like [Stealth], and the power to transform his entire body?

It almost felt like... Adam was making it up.

'So what exactly is going on here?'

Adam went on, talking vaguely about how he followed Rey and saw how he would often sneak around as he entered his room.

Rey felt it was all stupid the more he listened.

'It's like he's reading from a dumb script. What the hell is he saying?'

Rey had never been stupid enough to be so careless and obvious in his activities.

He always did everything with precision and caution.

'But I still got caught. Seems I wasn't careful enough.' Rey sighed as he heard Adam conclude his story.

He thought he would have more answers once the tipper confessed, but now Rey was more confused than ever.

"Anything to say for yourself?"

Rey leaked out a brief sigh and looked at Brutus, who asked the question.

"What did you find in my closet?"

His question surprised everyone in the room. No one expected him to still be acting this way despite all that was just revealed.

"Rey, just stop this. Playing dumb won't help you out now." Adonis said in a sigh.

His expression depicted genuine concern, but Rey couldn't care less about that.

'Of course, I know it's too late to play dumb! But I have to know...'

Rey repeated his question with a straight face, refusing to budge.

"A giant sack of Monster Cores. We counted at least a hundred pieces of C-Tier Monster Cores."

The more Rey listened, the more ridiculous the whole thing sounded.

However, at this point he was slowly realizing the truth.

'Someone else is involved.'

It was most likely not Adam, but the one who put him up to this.

'I've been set up.'

"Do you have any more to say for yourself? Are you ready to confess now?"

Rey couldn't help but chuckle to himself once he heard the question.

'What's there to confess? The current circumstances and testimony is different from reality.'

The Truthseeker wasn't activating for Adam, so Rey surmised that it could probably target one person at a time, or Adam had a special Item that helped him bypass the effects of the Item.

'It's probably the latter, since his initial testimony would have been fact-checked by the Truthseeker before someone like Brutus took action.'

This conclusion led to another fact.

'If Adam had an item that bypasses the Truthseeker, then that means the one who set me up has also been outside.'

Rey couldn't begin to guess their motives. He hadn't made any enemies thus far, and the only one who actively disliked him was Billy.

But Billy couldn't be the mastermind.

'He's not smart enough...' Rey thought to himself, though he considered the more practical reasons.

'Billy is a piece of shit, but he's no rule breaker. He'd never go outside if it was against the rules.'

Since the malefactor had access to Enchanted Items, it couldn't be Billy.

'Besides, knowing how petty he is, he wouldn't need to hide behind a front like Adam to frame me.'

Billy would personally take the credit for something like this, and he would do so with a smile on his face.

Heck, even now Billy was probably grinning at him for his current predicament.

Rey shot a brief glance at his former best friend to see what face he was making, and it was precisely as he predicted.

Billy looked deeply satisfied.

'Prick...' Unfortunately for Rey, he had more serious matters to think about.

'What should I do now?'

There were two options the way he saw it.

'One is to just escape. I have enough money and Monster Cores to live a fairly decent life and start over.'

He could go to a different city and don a disguise.

'That would be perfect, right?'

The Adventurer City was the first place that came to Rey's mind when he thought of where he would go.

'I'll just start afresh and grow stronger there...'

However, before he could fully settle on that thought, he had to properly consider his decision.

'Is that really what I want to do right now?'

He wasn't even sure he could escape Adonis and the two strongest in the Nation right now, even if he wanted to.

'I don't think I can take on all three of them—even if it's just to escape.'

If he tried and failed, that would be demonstrable evidence that he was guilty.

'I would also need to show my Skills in order to escape.'

Failing would literally tear down everything he had painstakingly built over the past couple of weeks he had been here.

'Even in the unlikely chance that I succeed, would I really want this now?'

The life of a fugitive—constantly on the run.

'The culprit behind this would win. Not only that, but they'll get to keep all those Monster Cores I painstakingly stockpiled.'

Rey couldn't have that.

'And what of all my stockpile in the Hobgoblin Territory? Will I have to abandon all that stash of Monster Cores?'

After considering all of these factors, Rey already knew the inevitable conclusion.

'I can't run away.'

\*

## **Chapter 69 Captive**

"Rey Skylar, you are under arrest for violating the security code of the Royal Estate set up by the Royal Council of the United Human Alliance."

As Brutus declared all of this, he placed his hand on his sword, preparing to unsheathe it if the situation demanded for it.

Lucielle sighed and shook her head, as if she thought the entire thing was unnecessary.

Guards slowly approached Rey, their expressions connoting caution.

'I guess they're already labeling me as a criminal now...' Rey sighed internally.

He couldn't have predicted that the last hours of today would take such a sharp turn at the start of the day.

"Don't worry, Rey. I'll do everything within my power to ensure you get a fair trial." As Adonis said this, he tapped Rey's shoulder.

"You'll be fine. I won't let anything happen to you."

Hearing those comforting words from Adonis felt strangely pleasant to his ears.

Rey never really had a strong opinion on him except the fact that he went out of his way to look out for his fellow classmates.

However, right now... Rey couldn't help but feel deep respect for Adonis.

"Please do not resist." Brutus' voice overshadowed the calm vibe that Adonis already established.

Adonis stepped aside and allowed the soldiers to do their jobs, all the while looking empathetically at Rey as he was restrained with Adamantite Cuffs.

Adamantite was the strongest mineral in this world, so it only made sense that it would be used to restrain an Otherworlder.

Even if the Otherworlder was a weakling like Rey.

"Take him away."

Rey was led out of the room, with the guards all leaving behind him.

Rey stole a final glance behind him and saw multifaceted reactions from different people.

Some were confused.

Some were happy.

Some were unbothered.

And one... was sad.

'Whoever set me up... whoever you are... prepare yourself...'

Rey gritted his teeth as he walked among the many guards that surrounded him.

'... I'll make you regret this!'

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[The Next Day]

"So... how bad is it?"

Rey was currently inside a room much smaller than his previous one.

It wasn't extravagantly furnished—having only a bed at the corner of the room, and a chair and desk to the side. The door to the bathroom stood at the opposite corner of his bed, and it contained only the most basic of necessities.

There were no windows in this room, and the walls were painted a dull gray.

When Rey first arrived here, he felt relieved that he wasn't being thrown into an actual cell.

If that were to be the case, he might have reconsidered escaping.

Right now, he was on his bed, and seated opposite him, on the only in the room, was Adonis.

He had a few guards behind him, but they made sure to keep a considerable distance due to Adonis direct specifications.

'He'd go that far to make me comfortable, huh?' Rey couldn't help but leak a smirk as he waited for the answer to his question.

"I still can't believe they put you here. This place is too dirty and—" Adonis appeared genuinely upset as he looked around the room.

"It's fine..." Rey's voice trailed.

Honestly, the place wasn't too bad once he got used to it.

'I still miss my old place, but it's not like I spent an awful amount of time there...'

The only major complaint he had was that Surveillance Magic was being used on him 24/7, so he couldn't really do anything apart from look at his Status Window and think.

"No, Rey! It's unbecoming for a savior of this world! I can't in good conscience allow this to happen to one of my classmates. I'm going to make a complaint to—!"

"It's fine, Adonis! Really!"

Rey was beginning to feel worn out by Adonis' overwhelming concern.

The situation could be a lot worse, so this wasn't particularly a big deal.

"More importantly, how bad is it? The whole situation."

It was already night—which meant it had been about twenty-four hours since his confinement.

A lot could have happened within that period, so Rey was hoping that Adonis would fill him in on everything.

"Well... your trial is tomorrow. That's the first thing I should get out of the way."

Rey was going to stand before the Royal Council and plead his case in order to prove his innocence.

If he was successful, he would be let go and even compensated for the actions that had been taken against him.

'Unfortunately, I don't see that happening.'

Not only was the available evidence overwhelmingly against his favor, but he was also unable to properly twist the truth or lie due to the Truthseeker.

No lawyer would be able to defend him at this rate, irrespective of how good they were.

'There aren't even lawyers here. I have to defend myself.'

Rey already knew of his fate in the trial, but he was more curious about other things.

"We've resumed training as per usual. This time, we're undergoing Joint Training."

It was just as Billy said.

Alpha Class and Beta Class were going to be training together for a while.

But to what end?

"In one week... we'll be challenging The Royal Dungeon, Rey."

Rey's eyes popped open.

Things were progressing a lot faster than he expected.

'Did my arrest have anything to do with it? Or are things really that dire in the front lines?' He pondered.

Brutus did look a lot grumpier than usual, and Lucielle seemed very much on edge.

Rey had initially thought it was because of him, but what if the situation had gotten a lot worse?

'If that's the case, they have every right to get mad at me for leaving the Royal Estate and hoarding C-Tier Monster Cores.'

Rey couldn't blame them. However, he couldn't blame himself either.

"I'll try to get you out of this place before that time comes." Adonis interrupted Rey's thoughts with his usual encouraging words, and Rey couldn't help but smile at his optimistic attitude.

"Just hang in there, Rey! I'll save you!"

\*

## **Chapter 70 The Trial [Pt 1]**

Rey felt an itch at the back of his throat.

His stomach rumbled as a few beads of sweat fell from his face.

He had been preparing himself for this moment, but now that it had finally arrived, he couldn't help the nervousness that assailed him.

Right now, he was kneeling before the five members of the Royal Council.

Conrad Listrion, as always, sat at the center of the group. His yellow blond hair was long, and it trailed down his shoulders as he calmly stared at the one to be tried.

The woman beside him had a slightly feline smile as she gazed upon Rey.

It almost felt like she was a cougar who desired to devour his flesh.

The other three members of the Royal Council wore neutral expressions. They didn't seem particularly happy or sad.

... Just stern.

'Oof! Tough crowd...' Rey glanced around him and noticed the number of cold-faced guards that currently looked at him.

The pressure was overwhelming.

Rey could see his classmates seated on one end of the room—almost as if they were members of the jury.

Brutus and Lucielle stood right beneath the elevated platforms that the Royal Council occupied.

It was all so strange, but Rey took it all in as calmly as he could.

'I never thought I would get into this sort of trouble so I didn't bother to learn a lot about the judicial system of this world...'

Still, he knew they wouldn't be too hard on him about formality since he was an Otherworlder.

'I also know the punishment won't be too harsh. Not only will Adonis object, but I still have the label of an Otherworlder.'

As long as those two factors existed, he was at least certain of his safety.

"Let the trial begin." Conrad spoke up, and the murmurs instantly stopped.

Absolute decorum pervaded the Royal Court, and everyone stood still.

'Here goes...'

\*\*\*\*\*

The first thing that happened was the reading out of all Rey's potential crimes.

The fact that he had disobeyed the direct order of the Royal Council stood at the very top of the list.

It was followed by trespass and unpermitted loitering within and outside the Royal Estate.

Conspiracy, Non-Compliance, among other things were also mentioned.

"Potential act of stealing the Monster Cores." Was also added to the list.

Rey wasn't surprised when he heard that, even though he could see Adonis and a few others gasp.

'I mean, think about it. What legitimate way could I have obtained that many Monster Core?'

Sure, he was powerful enough to get even more than the amount he was being accused of, but none of these people knew that.

To them, he was none other than 'Rey The Extra.'

'Honestly, I would have preferred to maintain that than whatever this is...'

Once he was read all the list of potential offenses, he was asked how he pleaded to each of them, and he responded with the only valid option.

"Not guilty."

This was how he was pleading, so he was not exactly making a claim. Therefore, the Truthseeker was useless in that regard.

However, once that was concluded, the real heavy hitters began.

First, all the evidence and testimonies were presented to the Royal Court.

It was essentially a retelling of everything Rey already knew, with a few extra details.

Nothing too surprising, though.

The sack full of Monster Cores was also brought out, and the contents were properly accounted for.

'A total of one hundred and fifteen, huh? Interesting...'

Rey knew there had to be a lot more Monster Cores, which meant that whoever set him up was currently sitting on thousands of Platinum Coins.

'They probably thought that this meager amount of Magic Cores wouldn't mean anything.'

Rey sighed internally.

'I really can't wait till I figure out who this bastard is...'

Stuff like;

"We found his signature on the Monster Cores."

And

"He has no alibi."

Were constantly mentioned.

The opposition had built up a strong case against him, but Rey already knew all of this would happen.

Once they were done with their side, it was finally Rey's turn to defend himself.

"It's not true."

Those were the first words he uttered. The Truthseeker did not display any lies in his words.

"I believe I'm being set up by someone. A lot of what I'm hearing sounds strange and absurd. I would never do a lot of these things."

'Not without precautions. I'm not that stupid!' Rey's thoughts echoed.

Once again, the Truthseeker justified him.

"So are you saying the evidence and testimonies are all worthless?" Lord Conrad asked with a calm tone.

"I am just as confused as you are. You can imagine my surprise when I was accused of all this."

Rey had found a good way to skirt around the issue so far, but he knew this wasn't enough.

The worst was yet to come.

"So are you saying you didn't have that sack of Monster Cores in your possession?"

The moment Rey heard this, he froze.

He couldn't lie that he didn't have the sack since he indeed did.

"Answer the question, Rey Skylar."

Once again, he wasn't being given a chance to defend himself.

Saying the truth didn't need lots of time for considerations and calculations, so if he took too long to answer, he would appear suspicious.

"A sack full of one hundred and fifteen Monster Cores? That sounds absurd! There's no way I would have something like that in my room."

Once again, the Truthseeker verified he was telling the truth.

'All my sacks had at least three hundred Monster Cores in them. I'm not lying... technically speaking.'

Rey could feel his heart slow down in relief, but the next question caused it to spike up yet again.

"What about leaving the Royal Estate? Do you admit to not doing that as well?"

The one who asked this question was the only female member of the council—Lady Vida Origa. She looked about thirty, with a mature face that anyone would describe as pretty.

Her major appeal, however, was her curvaceous body. Her overflowing chest was a sight to drool over, and her thin waist, wide hips, and heavy buttocks could not go unnoticed too.

Since she was fond of dressing in body-hugging attires, there wasn't anyone in the Nation who didn't know of her amazing figure.

'Goddamn!' Rey himself had thought when he saw her take her seat right before the trial began.

From what he could gather from her two ring fingers, she was yet to be married.

Rey couldn't believe it—no one in the entire United Human Alliance could.

At least, not unless they knew her personally.

'Urgh! Now isn't the time to get distracted, Rey!'

Pulling himself from staring where he wasn't supposed to, Rey thought hard about how to tackle her question.

"I... erm..."

"Come on, boy. It's a simple question." Lady Vida smiled as she pushed her face forward while narrowing her gaze on him.

It seemed she was enjoying every moment of this, especially the way Rey squirmed under her intimidating stare.

'I can't think of a way to really answer this. At least not in time...'

This was already beginning to look like a checkmate.