

Extras 751

Chapter 751 Vision Of The King

Deep within an ancient forest, a place of unparalleled enchantment lay hidden from the world. Towering trees with luminescent leaves created a canopy that sparkled like a thousand emerald stars. The air shimmered with the faint glow of the flora around, casting a soft, ethereal light upon the forest floor, which was carpeted in a bed of moss that seemed to pulsate with life.

Mystic creatures roamed freely in this secluded paradise; from majestic unicorns, to griffons that flapped their wings in the air. Pegasi danced amongst each other in a flock, and they were accompanied by several other creatures of wonder.

At the heart of this magical glade stood a structure that defied the laws of the mundane world. It was a palace woven from the very essence of nature itself. Vines as thick as a man's arm twisted and spiraled upwards, forming columns and archways that glowed with an inner light. The walls were made of interwoven branches and leaves, creating intricate patterns that seemed to shift and change as one looked at them. Windows of crystal-clear water, held in place by the unseen force of magic, reflected the myriad colors of the surrounding forest.

Atop the highest tower, where the vines converged to form a delicate spire, a certain entity darted gracefully through the air. Her wings, delicate and translucent, caught the light and scattered it in a prism of colors. With a joyful laugh that echoed like the tinkling of tiny bells, she flew towards an entrance formed by two intertwining branches.

She appeared humanoid, but was small—about an inch or two in height—and the way she danced with the wind as she closed in on her destination seemed surreal.

"Hehe!" In a playful glide, she ventured inside.

Inside, the palace was even more breathtaking. The floor was a mosaic of polished gemstones, arranged in a way that depicted the culmination of the beauty that the enchanted forest possessed. Walls of living wood pulsed with a gentle warmth, their surfaces alive with the slow, steady heartbeat of the trees. Hanging from the ceiling, luminous flowers glowed softly, illuminating the space with a warm, golden light.

The figure flew through the grand hall, where the air was filled with the sweet scent of blooming flowers and the sound of a bubbling brook that flowed through the center of the room, its water as clear as crystal and sparkling with flecks of gold. Before long, she arrived at her destination—the Grand Palace!

Within this pristine space, there was enough room to contain the entire population of her people. It had a wonderful warmth to it, with the floors sparkling like fine wine, reflecting the several gems that hung on the ceiling.

More entities like her were stationed beside windows that were systematically aligned high above the ground floor of the hall, and they remained suspended in the air even as she arrived inside.

They donned golden armor, each having staffs that were wielded more like spears than harmless sticks.

The eyes of these Sentinels fell on her, but none of that bothered this one.

She simply gilded forward, her focus on the altar that stood a few meters from her current position. In no time at all, she closed the gap and knelt at the foot of the elevated platform—the place where the Great Throne stood.

"My king... you called for me!"

Right in front of the kneeling girl was a figure—a couple of inches taller than her, but still having a similar build. He had a completely white apparel, adorned with hints of silver, and a golden crown that floated above his head.

Gems decorated his body from head to toe, and even his eyes seemed to be made of crystals.

He sat majestically on the grand chair, his massive wings nearly five times larger than his entire body. His face seemed to glisten like the sun, and his very presence radiated energy and majesty unlike anything one could see beyond the forest.

This was the one who witnessed the beginning and the end—the Fairy King.

"I have had a vision, Fae." He spoke, his voice almost resembling a rather grave whisper. In contrast to his serious countenance, the one called Fae maintained her bright smile and youthful exuberance. The tension within the palace did not seem to affect her in the slightest, even before her king.

"What did you see, my King!"

"..." For a moment, the King said nothing. He merely looked at his subject with his gem-like eyes, before finally closing them and speaking with a sigh.

"War."

The moment he said this, Fae's eyes slightly widened, her countenance swiftly shifting to shock.

"War... you say?"

As she said those words, her body trembled.

"Indeed. It draws near upon us—the time long prophesied from the beginning of days." His tone, his breathing, everything was calm... but the expression on his face showed something else—a graveness that could not be conveyed through words alone.

"Ahh... at long last." Fae's trembling persisted, but her expression of shock transformed into that of delight. The news did not frighten her, neither did it cause her to grieve. Instead, she couldn't be more excited. Her overjoyed face lay bare for all to see.

"The promised days are near!"

"It is too early to rejoice, Fae." The King raised a hand, causing her to instantly cease her commotion and bow her head in understanding and respect.

"The vision was rather unclear, and I am yet to properly interpret its content. Regardless, I see a great darkness visiting our lands. This darkness once came near, but this time... it will enter into the Forest."

"Will The Oracle allow such?" Fae responded with a confused expression.

"The Oracle's pacifism makes her grow impotent as the centuries pass. She is only concerned with the welfare of her own people, as she should be. None of her priorities extend to us Fairies." The King's sighs grew louder.

"This Darkness... will it consume the Elves?"

"No. I did not see that."

"And what of us? Will it consume our lands? Will it ravage our forests and swallow us into its depths?"

Despite saying painting a horrific future with her manner of speech, Fae appeared excited.

Her cheeks burned bright red, and she had a perverted expression on her small, cute face. Her gem-like eyes shone brightly, as she tried her best to conceal her squeals.

The Fairy King noticed this and slightly shook his head.

He understood Fae and her perverted thirst for battle—her never-ending desire to witness and partake in the long-prophesied war. For Fairies, guardians of the Forest who never perished, this was their purpose... but Fae's obsession with it was on another level. She dreamed of that day every waking moment... for the several millennia since her conception.

"That is not for you to know." The Fairy King finally answered.

"Tch."

"What was that?"

"N-nothing, my King!"

The Sentinels couldn't help but groan and frown as they witnessed all of this playing out before them. The sheer recklessness that Fae displayed was unbecoming before their glorious ruler, but none of them could voice a word of complaint.

After all... Fae was the strongest.

Other than the Fairy King, there was none that stood superior to her or was anywhere close to being her equal.

As was the rule of the Forest, those who were weaker had to swallow their thoughts and restrict all the displeasures they had to their imaginations. Besides, if they desired to challenge her, Fae was always up to the challenge.

Every single Sentinel had tried at least once to beat her, but they ended up suffering severe humiliation and punishment that would have killed them if they weren't immortal.

"In any case, Fae... I have a mission for you."

"Ehh? At such a critical juncture? My King... why me?"

"Because, rather unfortunately, you are the most reliable one among the Fairies—the most capable person to fulfill my request."

"U-unfortunately...?!" Fae appeared aghast, but the Fairy King seemed unapologetic about his choice of words.

She simply had to swallow the sentiment as it came.

"The mission requires you to leave the Forest. You will head to the Land of The Elves at a specified period and guide a certain individual here when the time is right.

"Individual? But no one is allowed into the Forest."

In fact, the opposite was also true. No one was ever meant to leave the Forest—including all of the Fairies within its embrace.

At least, not until the end of days.

"This is an exception. As King, I possess the authority to issue that; just as I have authority over the Forest and all that dwell therein."

No one needed a reminder of that. He was their father—the progenitor of all Fairies, and the one who granted them their eternal life from his Primeval Skill.

All Fairies, without exception, bowed their heads the moment he uttered those words.

"Who is this person that I will usher into the forest? What makes them an exception?" Fae asked, her tone still that of reverence, but also of undying curiosity.

"...."

"You can tell me that much, right?"

After pausing for a while, looking at the impatient Fairy with his all-seeing eyes, the King finally parted his lips.

"He is a Singularity—one that by nature should not exist. His name is Rey Skylar... and perhaps he will be the one to save us from inevitable destruction."

Chapter 752 Alliance Summit [Pt 1]

"Now then... shall we begin the meeting?"

In a vast hall, surrounded by pristine decorations such as stained glass, marble tiles, exquisite curtains, and crystal-like chandeliers, a certain conference was being held. A large rectangular table stood erect at the center of the hall, with chairs on all sides—two especially at the head of the table, occupied by Vida and Conrad—leaders of the United Human Alliance. On both the right side of the table were the teenagers who had been summoned to save their world—The Otherworlders.

Alicia, Belle, Clark, Justin, and Trisha sat comfortably in their pristine chairs, and opposite them were the distinguished members of the Alliance who were considered the strongest—most influential as well—within the framework.

Lucielle, Brutus, and Lucy—who had just recently been promoted to Admiral—occupied this position.

Then, at the foot of the table was the designated leader of the Otherworlders. He was their representative, in a sense, and he was also recognized as the strongest one in the room.

—Rey Skylar.

Standing behind him was Ater, his Familiar, who still refused to sit despite many attempts to make him do so. He floated above the ground, but his feet were still close to its surface, so it wasn't easy to tell.

Still, this was the arrangement of the meeting room.

Guards were stationed outside the room, giving everyone inside utmost privacy. The items for discourse were also quite robust, so everyone strapped themselves into their respective seats and awaited the commencement of their grand assembly.

"The first thing I'd like to say is to offer words of gratitude to our Otherworlder Heroes who have continued to support us through everything that we have been through. Even during attacks, and betrayals... you six have continued to remain with us. For that, you have my thanks." Conrad spoke, turning to both the five teenagers, and then to Rey.

He had a genuine smile on his face—one that did its best to explain just how thankful he was.

Vida also bowed her head, not saying anything else since Conrad had pretty much taken all the words out of her mouth. The other distinguished individuals of the Alliance followed suit and did the same.

It might have been strange for the Otherworlders to receive such treatment from adults who were far older than them, but they were already used to it.

And so, as always, they chose to be humble and dismiss the thanks.

"A-ahem... okay then... let's move on to the first matter on the list of things to discuss." Conrad cleared his throat, now casting his gaze on Rey.

"Thanks to the efforts of Rey Skylar, the Elves have agreed to be our allies—supplying us with ores from their end while we offer them Enchanted Weapons in exchange. They are also fighting the war on their end, so it's important that this alliance will be benefiting both sides."

Conrad went further to explain the model they would be using to supply the Elves their weapons, and how they would be receiving the goods from them.

In the end, it all boiled down to the Reaper Group.

"The Reaper Group is the largest in the market at the moment, and they are our personal suppliers as well. In essence, the whole exchange will go through them. Their operations will have the full support of the Alliance, and it appears the Elves have also agreed to trade with them."

No one would have expected that a company that surfaced mere months ago would have such a monopoly on the most profitable and important business in the Alliance, but considering their track record and the quality of their products, it was only common sense to go with them.

Besides, with or without the aid of the Alliance, the Reaper Group would have kept advancing anyway. They had already grown so large on their own, which was impressive in its own way.

They donated a lot of Items to the Royal Council, and they even assisted in rebuilding the city. Certainly, their reach wasn't small and their pockets also ran deep. Most importantly, they were trustworthy.

"And with that concluded, it's time we discussed the issue of alliance... one of the rather problematic subjects to be addressed today."

Now that the Nobles of the Alliance were dead, there was really nothing standing in the way of the Royal Council making decisions. They also now had more resources at their disposal than ever since they confiscated the resources of the Nobles.

With the aid of the Reaper Group, and the recent alliance of the Elves, it was safe to say that the economic situation of the Alliance had never been better. They were thriving, possessing more than enough resources to get them through the coming years.

But, even with that issue addressed, there was one matter that could not be ignored.

—The War against the Dragons.

"It's only a matter of time before they attack us with ferocity. We're doing our best to arm our soldiers with sufficient resources—particularly Enchanted Items—but there's only so much those can do against the full might of their army. We have suffered many losses over the years, and the number of soldiers we have has dwindled."

It was bad to the point where they had to dispatch a lot of palace guards and regular soldiers to the front lines, leaving the cities and Capital largely defenseless.

That was not a sustainable model, and with the reduction in Dragon attacks, the security of the Alliance had returned to its optimal capacity. The difference in crime rates, as well as general productivity, made it compelling to leave things that way.

But... that would mean the front lines would suffer.

"The dispatched soldiers taken from the regions and cities are cannon fodder anyway. It's best they remain in their local areas and carry out their duties. There's no use sending them to die at the hands of the Dragons." Brutus said, almost as soon as Conrad brought them up.

"I agree. We are at a crucial stage in the Alliance right now, which means we need as much security personnel around. Sending them to their deaths is pointless." Lucielle added.

"Where will we get soldiers, then? There aren't many new recruits, and even those we have are not ready for the rigors of war." Lucy sighed. "It's a dead end."

Their only saving grace was that the Dragons were yet to launch a full-scale assault. But, that was inevitable.

"You have us, don't you? We'll be heading to the battlefield in the coming week, so that should take a lot of the burden off your shoulders." Clark commented.

Not all his fellow Otherworlders were as enthusiastic as him to rush into the battlefield, but they all nodded in agreement to his words.

Their duties remained the same, and since they were finally heading to the battlefield, surely some difference would be made.

"No offense to you, Sir Clark, but a few soldiers—no matter how skilled and strong—do not win wars. We need an army." Lucy responded with a stern tone, though she still had a respectful vibe about her.

While there existed reverence for the Otherworlders, it was no secret that they were inexperienced when it came to actual warfare. For that purpose alone, she felt the strong need to correct his mistaken assumption.

"There are several attack points that the Dragons utilize, and since they have aerial power, it's easy for them to swarm and overtake a group if there are too few members. It's one of the reasons we diverted so much security to the battlefield despite them being weak." Her further elaboration was educational, causing Clark to nod in understanding.

"Thanks for the enlightenment." He bowed his head.

"My pleasure."

The two smiled at each other with some form of unknown camaraderie, something strange to have since they hardly even knew each other.

"In any case, concerning the alliance, we tried to reach out to the other civilizations outside the United Human Alliance and offered for them to join hands with us." Vida finally brought the conversation back to the pertinent topic.

"They still refuse to be a part of the Alliance, but most of them have agreed to create a somewhat mutually beneficial agreement. We send resources to their lands, and they offer some of their finest warriors to assist in the battlefield." "Can we trust them?" This time, it was Lucielle who spoke up. "I find their actions suspicious."

"Same here." Lucy added, causing the two women to look at each other, smile, and then nod.

"Well, we don't have much of a choice, do we? We have to put up with their requests and simply watch them closely to make sure they comply with their end of the deal. Besides, why would they sabotage our efforts to drive away the Dragons when they also run the risk of being obliterated by the enemy?"

No one could argue with that logic, so everyone fell silent regarding the alliance.

Everyone but one.

"If I may speak... there is another alternative that you haven't considered."

All looked in the direction of the boy who spoke.

His dark hair swayed slightly and his two eyes gleamed with brilliant crimson as he interlocked the fingers of both hands and stared forward, parting his lips to reveal his thoughts.

"The Southern Continent... why don't we seek allies there too?"

Chapter 755 News From Adrien

[The Previous Night]

"Haa..."

Rey lay on his bed, contemplating the meeting that would take place the following day, and all he could make was a sigh.

He was planning to pitch his plan of allying with the denizens of the south, and he could already picture the image of disapproval that he would get if he did so.

That didn't mean he was going to give up, but still... it was a bit dreadful to think about.

Right as he concluded on that thought, another one regarding Adrien popped into his head.

'We didn't particularly leave things off on a positive note, and I already confirmed from Emil that he had been trying to seduce her, especially after noticing how my relationship with her was strained.'

That would have brought into question the boy's reliability, but Rey already knew he couldn't trust Adrien completely.

The boy intrinsically operated on his own self interest, and the only reason Rey was being carried along with his plan was most likely because he needed him.

'Not sure that still applies now. He hasn't contacted me ever since he and Emil left together. With Emil now with me, I wonder what he'll do.'

Strangely enough, Rey didn't feel any sort of anger or animosity towards Adrien.

Perhaps that was natural.

'I've never trusted him. But now... somehow, it seems I have to.' He narrowed his eyes as he sat upright on his bed.

Alicia wanted to leave H'Trae, and he also had to consider the safety of his other classmates. Besides, having access to that gateway could be key in saving as many people as possible from the world's eventual destruction.

'If I can somehow copy the effects, isn't it possible that I can use it at will?' That was his rationale behind the serious consideration he had towards Adrien's plan.

He still didn't know the full details, or whether he could even trust Adrien on the fundamentals of their agreement, but if there was a chance he could get what he wanted, he would have to take it while making preparations for potential betrayal.

'All of this is contingent on whether or not he actually comes through.' Rey shrugged as he decided to return to his sleeping posture.

Right as he was about to do so, though, he heard a knock on his door.

"Hm?"

The peculiar presence behind the door caused Rey to instantly teleport right in front of it, twisting the knob just as quickly.

The entity he found there was just as he expected—an Undead.

"Master Adrien sent me to deliver this letter to you." The entity was translucent, like a ghost, with a pale sickly face and a body that softly bounced in the air as it floated.

It had somewhat long hair, looking somewhat androgynous, though the voice made it clear that this was a male.

"I see..." Rey took the letter from the ghost, a small smile forming on his face as he did so.

'So he did reach out!'

"I see..." Rey took the letter from the ghost, a small smile forming on his face as he did so.

'So he did reach out!'

"I shall now take my leave—"

"Wait." The moment Rey said this, the figure froze in its track, ceasing its vanishing act.

"How am I supposed to contact him?"

He was yet to read the letter, but Rey could already guess its contents. Of course, he didn't have enough hubris to think that he knew everything Adrien wrote, but he could make a few educated guesses.

If he was right, then some kind of reply would be necessary.

"He told me you would ask that. He also told me to tell you that you'd know what to do when you read the letter."

"... And if I refuse to read it?"

The Undead once again spoke mechanically, as a mouthpiece for its master.

"Then you'll be missing out on one of the greatest opportunities you're ever going to get—that is what he told me to tell you."

Rey smiled even broader once he heard this.

"We'll see about that, won't we?"

He sent the ghost on its way after that conversation, and the entity disappeared as soon as permission was granted. His body coiled into itself, and in a rapid swirl, it completed its vanishing act.

'Nice trick.'

Rey had copied it, but he reckoned he would have to sacrifice it for Stat Points—mainly for two reasons.

One was obvious; his Skill Slots in [Doppel] had gotten pretty bloated thanks to the many Skills he copied from Emil, who was able to get them from Adrien. As such, he had to get rid of any Skill that overlapped with a more useful or powerful Skill in his arsenal.

The second was something more prospective.

'I'll be needing as many Stats as I can get if I'm going to take his deal.'

With that in mind, Rey sat on his bed and cast several defensive Skills and Spells on himself and his surroundings before opening the letter.

Once all the precautions had been made, he opened it and read its content.

~Hello there!

Feels a bit awkward writing this to you after what happened last time. Apologies or explanations are unnecessary, and they would frankly be dishonest. Due to that reason, I'll skip over that until we meet in person and go straight to the point.

I've successfully entered the system, but as expected, I don't have the necessary freedom required to explore the Dragon Continent and locate the Chamber Of Ancients—the goal for this entire expedition. It's why I need your help.

I hear Alicia has finally woken up from her slumber, and I can bet that she's feeling pretty homesick at this point. Now is a better time than ever to consider a serious partnership and also make good on your side of the deal to join forces and find us both a way home.

If working together still sounds good to you, then find a way to reach me. I'm currently writing from my dorm room in the Dragon Academy of the Empire. It's located in the Academic City right next to the Capital, but I can't even go beyond the walls anytime soon.

I'll need your assistance for that.

I look forward to your favorable response!~

Chapter 756 The Clairvoyant

"Pffft!"

Once Rey finished reading the letter, he felt a myriad of emotions, but the most prevalent one was amusement.

'School? For real?' He chuckled to himself. 'Who would have thought that I'd be returning to that sort of space in a fantasy world like this?'

'I see. So, he decided to infiltrate the Empire as a student. Or rather, that is the best way he'll get integrated into the system and become accepted as part of the Empire.'

Rey had already suspected that Adrien's valiant efforts in the war against the Elves would be insufficient to earn him a spot among the Dragons—even if it happened to be recorded on tape.

'Was he being optimistic? Or did he also envision this situation? I'm not sure, but...'

One thing was for sure.

'He's currently stuck—or he appears to be. There's only one real way to verify, and while I'm a bit hesitant to do this... I need to take precautions in order to respond appropriately.' Closing his eyes, he took in a deep breath and called forth the name of the Skill he wanted to employ.

—His second SSS Tier Skill.

"[Clairvoyance]."

That instant, Rey's consciousness was transported to a much different landscape than what he had around him—or what could possibly exist in the world.

It felt like a blank space, within which there were several mirrors that displayed varying things.

'It never gets old.' He smiled to himself, recalling the first time he tried out the Skill and nearly got overwhelmed by the confusing cluster of information that was available for his consumption.

'With [Clairvoyance], I can see anything that is happening anywhere, at any point in time.'

It was an overpowered ability, but there were several limitations—not on the Skill, but on his current self—that made it difficult for him to use it.

For one, the further into the future or past he wanted to look into, the more Mana he would have to expend. This Skill took a lot of Mana just to function properly, so the exorbitant sum to look very far into the future was a luxury Rey could not yet afford.

The second, more important limitation, was the issue of "Memory."

The simplest way to put it was that Rey had limited cognitive abilities—including information storage—and so for every time he used [Clairvoyance] to take in information, a portion of that storage would be taken up.

This effect could not be undone, and the information gotten from [Clairvoyance] could not be taken back. Hence, it was a permanent effect of the Skill.

'Even The Oracle had a problem with this, so I have to use this Skill sparingly.' He sighed to himself.

Though, this was one of the times when he had to utilize it.

'If Adrien is lying about something, or luring me into a trap, I have to be prepared, don't I?'

With this rationale, he focused his thoughts on Adrien and the Dragon Academy—both the person and place—and found all the mirrors converging to form a rather large mirror that allowed him to view the current whereabouts of the boy in question.

Adrien Chase was actually in his dorm, and he was... STUDYING!

'Haha! Why is this funny to me?'

He was flipping his textbook and writing on the note—both of which were neatly placed on his rather exquisite-looking table. The whole setup resembled the modern world of Earth a little too much, and a single look at the dorm room confirmed this.

'It's all so modern...' His thoughts trailed.

This was his first real glimpse into the Dragon Continent, and he already found himself rather impressed and curious.

'Okay, let's not get sidetracked.' Rey had figured out where Adrien was at the moment, but that wasn't enough to confirm if this was legitimate or not.

'For all I know, he could be there temporarily and lying about his inability to leave. Just to be safe, I'll look into both his past and future and see if he's being honest about things.'

Of course, these would be restricted to the Academy, since it was the only location that Rey was certain that Adrien was occupying.

'Let's go for a few days and see...'

Just as Adrien professed, he was constantly in the Academy, and he would continue to be there as well.

'Good! Looks like I can trust his words.'

There was the slim possibility that Adrien was putting up an act still, since he would think of Rey spying on him to test the legitimacy of his statement, but since there was no way Adrien could detect the spying power of an SSS Tier Skill, he found it highly unlikely.

'Plus, using [Clairvoyance] any further for this would be a waste.'

In the end, he had to take the bull by the horns and invest some measure of trust in Adrien's words. Or maybe...

"Ater." Rey canceled his [Clairvoyance], returning his mind to the regular plane of reality.

Once he opened his eyes, he already found Ater waiting for him, his head bowed as he made a gentlemanly pose.

"You called for me, Master?"

"Yes. I got this from Adrien. Why don't you read it and tell me what you think?"

The letter instantly floated from Rey's grasp and found its way to Ater within a second. The red-haired Familiar wasted no time in reading through its content.

Despite his expression showing how diligently he analyzed every word on the piece of paper, the speed at which he finished the letter made it seem like he skimmed through the content.

"I'm done, and... let's see..." Rubbing his chin, Ater sighed and told Rey the answer that the latter already predicted.

"... You should start getting ready to go to school."

"So you think it's legit?"

"I do." Ater nodded, maintaining his calm smile as he returned the letter to him.

"Why do you think so?"

"...." For a moment, he said nothing.

It almost felt like Ater was sorting through a lot of thoughts, but he finally spoke up.

"Well, for a host of reasons. Let me begin..."

Chapter 757 Dilemma Of The Strong

"... And that's why I think he's being honest."

Once Ater was done with his analysis, Rey found himself nearly dumbfounded by the intelligence that his Familiar displayed.

From a psychological analysis of Adrien, to the content of the letter, and the materials, age, and a host of other factors utilized in his detailed interrogation of the subject matter, it all led to Ater's fine conclusion.

"I see..."

In the end, it was no different from what [Clairvoyance] showed him.

'Should I have just asked Ater from the start rather than use [Clairvoyance]? No... no, this way is better.' Rey told himself.

He had become too reliant on Ater, and that was not a good thing. Plus, if Ater told him something that reinforced what he already knew to be true, then that meant he could rely on his words.

But what if he never checked? Then how would he know to rely on those words?

... Especially after The Oracle warned him.

'I can understand why she warned me against him, though.' Even discounting Ater's intelligence and raw cunning, there was one more issue that made him incredibly scary.

[System Error]

~Your Specified Target Is Not Compatible With This Skill~

'... I can't use [Clairvoyance] on Ater.'

Why couldn't he do that? Why could he see Ater's Status Window, but couldn't see his past, future, or present whereabouts and actions with an SSS Tier Skill?

It made no sense to Rey.

'Should I ask him about it? No... not yet.'

He could already predict how the whole thing would go.

Ater would either feign ignorance—mentioning how his memory was not complete, and how he didn't know the details behind himself.

Or... he would finally retaliate.

'He's smarter than I am, and there's a possibility that the System Window that I'm seeing right now isn't the correct one.' Rey carefully told himself, though his calm demeanor projected something else.

'Right now, he appears to be on my side, and he's also very good at his job. I should leave it at that.'

That was Rey's decision.

At least, until Ater slipped up or he found enough information that would prompt him into action.

"Looks like I'll have to start packing then." He smiled at the Familiar, and the latter smiled back.

"You are dismissed."

Ater bowed once again and vanished, causing Rey to leak out a bead of sweat and sigh in relief.

'He makes me so nervous, even though I'm supposed to be stronger than him.'

Rey had become phenomenally stronger than ever, and he was even Ater's Master, yet he still felt this unease anytime he was in his presence.

'The reason is obvious, isn't it?' He collapsed on his bed, staring at his open Status Window with a stoic expression.

[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Rey Skylar.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder)
- Class: Singularity (S-Tier)
- Level: 270 (0.58% EXP)
- Life Force: 13,000 (+13,000)
- Mana Level: 39,000 (+39,000)
- Combat Ability: 21,550 (+21,550)
- Stat Points: 57,900

- Skills (Exclusive): [Doppel]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Merger]. [Perfect Calm].[Sacrifice]. [Symbiosis]. [Consume]. [Perfect Mimicry]. [Domain Of Man]
- Alignment: Neutral Good

[Additional Information]

You have done the impossible and stand at the precipice of power. As such, you now possess the interest of this World.

[End Of Information]

[ALL SKILLS]

{Original Skills}

Doppel (SSS-Tier)

Merger (S-Tier)

Perfect Calm (S-Tier)

Sacrifice (S-Tier)

Symbiosis (S-Tier)

Consume (S-Tier)

Perfect Mimicry (S-Tier)

Domain Of Man (S-Tier)

{Doppel Skills}

[SSS-Tier]

Clairvoyance (Active)

{Total: 1}

[SS-Tier]

Divine Weapon Creation (Active)

Perfect Divine Magic (Active)

Divine Power Ascension (Active)

Perfect Divine Ray (Active)

Divine Magic Supremacy (Passive)

Perfect Domain Of The Divine (Active)

Perfect Divine Defense (Active)

Perfect Divine Regeneration (Passive)

Perfect Divine Appraisal (Active)

Perfect Divine Martial Supremacy (Passive)

Perfect Divine Growth (Passive)

Perfect Divine Form (Passive)

Perfect Divine Adaptability (Passive)

Unbreakable (Passive)

Wish Fulfillment (Active)

Divine Magic Interference (Active)

Tempora (Active)

Divine Persona (Active)

Perfect Wish Fulfillment (Active)

It Is Written (Active)

{Total: 20}

[S-Tier]

Absolute Myriad Breath (Active)

Absolute Energy Pulse (Active)

Absolute Mass Stun (Active)

Absolute Mana Recovery (Passive)

Absolute Intuition (Passive)

Absolute Cry (Active)

Absolute Comprehension (Passive)

Perfect Reflection (Active)

Absolute Illusory Allure (Active)

Absolute Executioner (Active)

Perfect Decorum (Active)

Perfect Collapse (Active)

Symbiosis (Passive)

Consume (Active)

Perfect Mimicry (Active)

Equip Limit Break (Passive)

Deep Anticipation (Active)

Command Code (Active)

Pinocchio (Active)

Status Interference (Active)

Idle Gamble (Active)

Perfect Veil (Active)

Last One Standing (Passive)

{Total: 23}

[A-Tier]

Fertility Inducement (Active)

Miasma Aura (Active)

Nature Affinity (Passive)

Venom (Active)

Perfect Float (Active)

Inventory (Active)

Mind Touch (Active)

Link (Passive)

Where Evil Lurks (Passive)

Banishment (Active)

Full Comprehension (Passive)

Collapse (Active)

Grand Darkness (Active)

Grand Luck (Passive)

{Total: 14}

[Active Skills: 40]

[Passive Skills: 18]

[Total Skills: 58]

[END OF INFORMATION]

A lot had changed since he left the Land Of The Elves, especially in terms of his Skills and Stats.

'[Idle Gamble] really comes in handy here.'

The Skill allowed him to passively earn Stat Points by staking Stat Points—sort of like investment.

The more unused Stat Points he had, the higher the increase.

'After sacrificing the Skills I wouldn't be using, I had a little over 50,000 Stats. To think I've gotten so much already. It's crazy...'

By his estimates, Rey had to let go of over twenty decent Skills due to their overlap with his current Skills.

If he counted the other miscellaneous Skills he received from the Elves before his departure, there had to be tons of them—over a hundred in all honesty.

Those were the things that propped up his Stat Points to such a degree.

'I have to leave them there, though... at least until I really need them.'

Even while looking at such big numbers and remembering just where he started from, Rey couldn't help but be unimpressed.

Despite becoming so powerful, nothing much had changed regarding his standing in the world.

He had enemies he couldn't yet defeat, and he had many worries that threatened to drown him.

He had allies he couldn't fully trust, and limitations to his freedom.

Closing his eyes, he murmured to himself before going to sleep.

"How much stronger do I need to get before it gets easier?"

Chapter 758 Summit Conclusion

[The Present]

"I'll be going to the Dragon Continent."

As expected, no one took it well.

The instant his words settled in the mind of everyone in the hall, there was an uproar.

The audience—both from the side of the Otherworlders as well as the dignitaries of the United Human Alliance—gasped in shock, and they instantly raised their voice in confusion.

"Are you for real?!"

"That's crazy!"

"Rey... you can't be serious!"

"It's too dangerous!"

"Please don't!"

Before they could say much, though, Rey raised his hand and stopped them in their tracks.

"I can't properly hear you if you speak all at once?" He sighed.

His tone and expression were calm, and despite the myriad of expressions that the people around him had, he maintained a perfectly stoic demeanor.

'I expected this kind of reaction from them. It's big news, after all...'

Plus, he never actually told anyone of his deal with Adrien except Ater, who was the only one maintaining a calm smile through it all.

Everyone else was freaking out.

"Don't worry. I'll be going undercover. I'm not going there to stir up conflict." He explained. "The mission is considerably important, and while it's currently confidential, I can guarantee that it's for the sake of everyone that I go."

He considered telling everyone the details of his plan with Adrien, but after putting proper thoughts into it, he decided not to.

'The less people know about this, the better.'

It wasn't that he didn't trust his comrades, but it was more preferable to keep the circle of people who knew about it small.

Not only to prevent understandable pushback, but also to endure there were no cracks that the enemy could employ.

'Everyone else is going to be busy with one thing or the other. There's a chance that they might encounter enemies that inspect their minds. I can't allow my plans of infiltrating the Dragon Academy to be revealed.'

"How will you pull it off, though?" Lucielle was the first to speak up after everyone fell silent.

Her crimson eyes showed genuine curiosity rather than sheer concern.

"I'll disguise myself as a Dragon. I won't be able to tell you the details, but I've started making practical plans regarding it."

"I see. And you're confident you won't get caught?"

"I am."

"Hmm..." She fell silent after that, though her gaze was still on him.

"Hmm. Must you go alone?"

This time, it was Alicia who spoke up, concern etched on her face. It seemed she had a lot more to say, but she held those words back and merely focused on the question.

"Yes."

"Esme won't be there?" She raised a brow.

"W-what? No!"

"Hmm... so which girl is it this time?"

"There's no girl!"

Everyone in the room was quiet as they watched the back and forth between Alicia and Rey.

The two of them had rather serious expressions for the kind of topic they were breaching.

It was nearly amusing.

"Rey and Alocoa, sitting on a tree, K. I. S. S. I—ow..." Justin was stopped from completing his rather childish commentary on the matter.

He was merely mumbling those words, but it was loud enough for everyone to hear.

He received a few glares, which forced him to retreat into his shell.

"In any case, I'll be leaving in a few days. I can drop those who are heading to the battlefield off before going to the Northern Continent."

As for the ones heading to the South, they would be sorted out by Ater.

'Even if I can't use [Clairvoyance] directly on Ater, I can use it on others. It's one of the reasons why I chose to involve at least one or two Otherworlders and not let him go on his own.'

As for the people he wanted to head for the mission, it had to be Justin and Belle—since the both of them were going to fully cooperate with Ater.

'He already informed me of his arrangement with Justin, and I used [Clairvoyance] to confirm it as a test run. Then, I know Belle is rather fond of Ater... to the point of obsession, even.'

In essence, they would be able to do anything Ater asked without exception.

'Cooperation is key in these matters, so it's fine to leave things to them.'

As for the battlefield, he could leave that to Clark and Trisha.

They were the most Adept at combat anyway—apart from Belle, of course.

The real problem was Alicia.

'I don't know where to place her. The battlefield could be too intense for her, and I don't feel comfortable leaving her in Ater's care.'

Once again, Rey felt like he was unconsciously putting himself in the space of making decisions for people who were active agents on their own.

He was trying to arbitrarily decide what was right for Alicia, not what would be best for the current situation.

Perhaps he was wrong in doing so.

But—

'Isn't it normal to be like this when it comes to someone you love? Of course, I won't enforce anything. It'll just be a suggestion...'

Whatever Alicia chose would ultimately be what she would end up with.

"I nominate Justin and Belle for the mission in the South. They seem to be the most supportive of the idea, which leaves Clark and Trisha for the frontlines."

"... And Alicia. I'm going to the frontlines too." She spoke up.

'I suspected as much...'

Despite her perspective of the world of H'Trae, Alicia's personality was one that made her want to help the people around her.

Right now, those people were the humans in the Alliance.

"Are you sure? You could stay back and protect the Capital, or the rest of the Alliance in case of another Dragon attack."

"My abilities are best utilized on the battlefield. Besides, I don't think it's safe for me to use my Skill around innocent people." She gave Ater a particular glare as she uttered those last words.

It caused Rey to make a wry smile, nodding in perfect understanding.

"Alright. Got it!"

Logically speaking, Alicia's abilities would indeed be best used in the battlefield, so there was no real complaint he could make if that was what she wanted.

As usual, Brutus and Lucielle would also head to the battlefield with the Otherworlders, which meant everyone's roles were pretty much settled.

Except—

'There's something I'm missing...'

Chapter 759 Lucielle's Resurgence

The meeting ended on a rather anticlimactic note once the most important issue—the imminent war—was addressed.

After that, the discussion simply pivoted into the political and economic state of the Alliance.

So far, everything was moving smoothly.

The only aspect that was really suffering was education, but that was pretty natural during times of war. Besides, it wasn't like it particularly concerned the meeting, so not much emphasis was placed on it.

Once all the pertinent matters were addressed, everyone was dismissed, and groups began to form as they all left the hall.

Clark, Trisha, and Justin got together.

Belle rushed to Ater's side, and Brutus—along with Lucy—went to escort Conrad and Vida to their chambers.

Rey was already moving towards Alicia, as the two of them already knew they had a lot to discuss pending the time they would be separated for their respective missions.

However...

"Sorry to butt in, but I need to borrow Rey for a minute!"

... Lucielle suddenly popped up in their middle, completely out of nowhere, and had the usual enthusiastic smile plastered on her beautiful face.

"Oh?"

Rey was taken aback by the suddenness of it all.

Not only was it because he wanted to spend quality time with Alicia—as he had been doing for the past couple of days—but also because he was also thinking about Lucielle right before she appeared.

"Come on! It won't take long!" She said, folding her hands as she pleaded with her eyes.

'I was going to look for her after my time with Alicia, but... could this actually be perfect timing?' He wondered to himself, looking at Alicia, who was already shrugging.

"I'll be waiting for you at the Library."

"Thanks." He whispered, nodding at her as she walked away.

It felt nice to be understood that way, though he did feel a little bad for not being able to escort Alicia to their usual meeting spot.

'Still... business before pleasure.'

He gave his full attention to Lucielle, whose cheeks were currently pink while smiling a little creepily at him.

"What is it?" He had to ask, since she wasn't saying anything and was just squealing pretty loudly.

"You really really like her, don't yo—?"

"Shhh! You're too loud, idiot! I mean... Ah, sorry about that..." Sometimes, Lucielle made him forget she was a few years older than him.

That was why he was able to cover her mouth and call her an idiot despite the age gap.

She didn't seem to mind either one, though.

"Relax. I cast Sound Magic around us, so no one can hear anything."

'So that's what it was...' He could sense all the Mana around, and he knew there was a Spell at work, but since he couldn't be affected by it, he didn't bother with the details.

It turned out Lucielle actually put in more thought to the question than he expected.

"And what if I say I do?" He responded.

"Kyaaa! Nothing! Nothing at all! It's just so interesting watching romance like this!" She grinned with playful delight.

"Have you told her yet?"

"No." He responded very sharply, hoping she would drop it.

She didn't.

"Will you tell her?"

'How is that any of your business?!' He wanted to say, but controlled himself and chose a rather straightforward answer.

"No."

There was no point in telling Alicia his feelings if she was going to leave him and this world anyway.

'I should even begin to move on, but...'

The only other person he had feelings for—who he also knew felt the same about him—wasn't particularly on the best of terms with him.

He still hadn't spoken to Esme since he returned to the Capital, and from what Kara told him, she didn't want to speak to or about him.

'She's probably trying to get over me. Or maybe she already has...'

It was amazing enough that someone like Esme would like him, but it was even more amazing that he managed to blow it.

Alicia... Esme... it was best to give up on both girls.

—Perhaps all girls in general.

"Why won't you confess?"

"None of your business, Lucielle. Just tell me what you want already." He sighed, holding his head as if he had a headache.

"Hmph... what a square."

"Yeah, yeah."

"Tch. Anyway, come with me." Lucielle cast a teleportation Spell around them, causing everything to distort.

In a sharp gust of wind and energy, the two of them vanished from their positions and appeared somewhere else.

It was a vast room, with a large Magic Circle at its very center.

Floating lamps provided illumination to the room, and there were several bookshelves that also lay suspended in the air.

The floor itself was bare, save for the Magic Circle and the other engravings that decorated the ground and even walls of the massive room.

Items upon Items were carefully arranged on shelves and desks, all of them floating in the air—threatening to descend at any given moment.

The room was filled with Mana, and that was only natural when practically every item in the vast space seemed to be saturated with the energy.

"Welcome, Rey..." With the snap of her fingers, her outfit completely changed to something more casual—a large long-sleeved shirt and a skirt, with stockings hiding her pale feet.

A staff appeared in her hand, and a rather large mage hat gracefully sat on her white hair.

She floated in the air, with twinkling Sparks of Magic dancing around her feet, and a bright smile encapsulated her gorgeous face.

"... To my inner sanctum!"

Rey's eyes analyzed everything within seconds, and a wide grin formed on his face once he was done.

"Impressive. I didn't know such a place existed in the Royal Estate."

"This isn't the Royal Estate. It's a special dimension I made using Magic!"

"You can do that?"

"Yup!"

Rey was impressed. This was similar to Domain Of Man, except most of the objects here seemed to be actual items that Lucielle must have brought to the space at one point or the other.

She had to have been stockpiling her belongings here for quite some time if she was able to decorate it with such precision.

'She's quite versatile. That's good...' Once again, he got the confirmation that she was just the person he was looking for.

'But first...'

"Why exactly did you want to speak with me? Why here?"

"Boo! I gave you this excellent presentation and you're not even impressed? Just what will it take to properly amaze you?"

"I don't know, but you can start by answering my question." Rey spoke rather bluntly.

He was simply going to let her remain ignorant about his already favorable impression of her.

If he didn't consider her impressive, he wouldn't be thinking about what was currently going on in his mind.

"Well, remember our last conversation? I told you to give me enough time to come up with something that even you can't ignore! Once I did that, you'd have a serious conversation with me about Magic."

"Yeah... I remember."

How could he forget? That was the bargain she made with him during their dance together at the Gala.

"Well... prepare to be amazed. I've finally perfected something after spending nearly a decade developing." Lucielle grinned, raising her staff in the air.

Rey's eyes widened as he prepared himself for what he was about to witness.

"You won't be able to refuse me after this!"

Chapter 760 The Grand Mage's Show

Lucielle was a genius since birth.

Her entire childhood had been nothing but Magic, and even now—as an adult—it was all she could think about.

Due to her innate Skills, as well as her incredible pool of Mana, she was always bound to excel greatly in the field. However, rather than simply relying on her exceptional talent, Lucielle made sure to diligently study and understand Magic.

There was a level she needed to achieve—one where mere talent couldn't get her to.

That was why she became the Grand Mage.

No one—absolutely no one—was better than her at Magic!

"Watch closely." She told Rey, her ruby eyes glowing brightly as he raised her staff in the air.

The spectator did as he was told. He focused completely on whatever she was about to show him, remaining stationary as he used all his senses to concentrate on her.

'A lot of Mana is building up...' He noticed the surge of energy, but didn't feel any sort of leakage or waste.

Usually, when a Mage or Warrior utilized Mana, some of it would leak out to their surrounding bodies. This ended up creating pressure around them, warding enemies off if the energy was very intense.

But... Lucielle was different.

There was no pressure whatsoever. Every single ounce of Mana flowed seamlessly through her body, conducted perfectly by her staff.

Not a single drop was wasted.

Then—

"Black Void." She whispered, casting the Spell without any need to chant.

Despite paying rapt attention to the Spell, Rey nearly missed the incredibly swift reaction of what played out before him.

'That is—!' His eyes widened, breaking down the component energies and laws that gathered near the tip of Lucielle's staff.

The dark sphere that stood above her had a ring swirling around it, and while it remained stable for just a moment, its true effects kicked in barely a second later.

~VWUUUUUUUUSSSSHH!!!~

It instantly began to suck in the air and everything around it—all except Lucielle who cast the Spell.

The black sphere absorbed the Mana that saturated the air, causing it to grow larger by the second, until it neared Rey and began to suck him in as well.

Through it all, his eyes were wide open in disbelief.

What he was witnessing was a Black Hole, created by a Spell from Lucielle. This wasn't merely the result of Spatial Magic, as he could see the fundamental differences between this and any other Spatial Collapse.

'This one distorts space-time, sucks everything to its very center, and breaks them down perfectly—like a proper black hole should.'

The closer anything got to its center, the lesser the natural laws and even the effects of Mana would apply, since everything would dissolve before a proper Spell or Skill could be cast.

That had to be scary.

'I can see the process clearly. Everything that gets sucked in gets perfectly broken down and vanishes into the void.' He smiled, nodding his head as he reached out for the hole.

"Hey! That's dangerous!"

Lucielle instantly canceled the Spell right before Rey could allow himself to experience its dark touch, her eyes widened with disbelief. A bead of sweat formed on her face as she looked at him—almost as if he was a crazy man.

"That would have ripped you to shreds. I specifically contained the Spell, so its suction power wouldn't exceed its immediate vicinity. I planned to make it implode on itself right as it was about to reach you, but you just had to... haaa... never mind." She sighed, slightly steamy breaths proceeding from her glossy lips.

Rey was silent for a while, his arm still extended forward.

"You used Time, Gravity. And Spatial Magic to create that thing, right?" He muttered, now placing his gaze solely on the Grand Mage herself.

"Correct!" She grinned widely.

All her exhaustion seemed to vanish completely, and she beamed as she normally would.

"Those are three rather difficult kinds of Magic to Master—especially the first. I can't believe you pulled something like this off."

Rey could understand why she spent so many years on this Spell. The mere idea that a human in H'Trae could use three of the most difficult kinds of Magic in perfect synergy to create something like a black hole was absurd.

'Her Spell is equivalent to a Skill of the Grand Tier, but if the Hole kept growing and sucking sufficient Mana, it could grow even higher.' That was his analysis on the matter.

"I bet you can utilize this Spell in many ways. No, not just the Spell, but the combination of those elements. You just wanted to show me a flashy example for your presentation, didn't you?" Rey asked.

The true achievement here was her perfect Magic control, and the mere fact that she could replicate a natural phenomenon under her stipulated conditions.

"Yeah, you're correct. There are varying application methods, as you've said. The problem remains Mana Consumption, though." Lucielle responded with a rather exhausted sigh. "That Spell alone drains over half of my Mana. I'm still looking for ways to efficiently utilize it without suffering as much drawback."

"I see..."

Even at that, Rey was impressed.

'It's crazy how she's able to do all of this despite being A-Tier. Even with all my Skills granting me a perfect crutch, I couldn't come up with ingenious ways to use Magic like this.'

This just went to show the difference between pure dedication and talent.

'I wonder how powerful she could be if she transcends this level, though...' Rey wondered as he Appraised her from where he stood.

'Those numbers don't do her justice.'

[STATUS WINDOW] - Name: Lucielle

- Race: Human - Class: Grand Mage (A-Tier)

- Level: 275 (10.72% EXP) - Life Force: 600 (+300) {350}

- Mana Level: 500/1,250 (+625) {500}

- Combat Ability: 700 (+350) {200}

- Stat Points: 0

- Skills (Exclusive): [Grand Magic Mastery]. [Grand Magic Application]

- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Greater Insight]. [Combat Application]. [Greater Charm]

- Alignment: Chaotic Good

[Additional Information]

The most powerful human in all of H'Trae, and she is yet to reach the fullness of her potential. She currently serves as the Grand Mage of the UHA, but her true passion has little to do with service and more to do with exploration.

She has a keen interest in Rey Skylar.

[End Of Information]