

# Extras 761

## Chapter 761 Recommendation

'The numbers are absurd by H'Trae standards, but...'

Rey couldn't help but feel incredibly underwhelmed when staring at Lucielle's Status Window. Not only were the numbers much lower than what he had been used to over time—a side-effect of being surrounded by powerful Elves, facing Dragons, and obsessing over his own strength—but even the scarcity of Skills troubled him.

'Humans have a limit of five Skills. Right now, she has two A-Tier, two B-Tier, and one C-Tier Skills. I know they're absurd by human standards here, but I honestly feel like they should be a lot more.' He almost sighed.

Her Additional Information still did her justice, regardless.

'I don't think I've seen any H'trae human with base Stats reaching a thousand. If I add all her Privileges and Items, then all her Stats exceed one thousand, and the Mana Point even exceeds two. That's impressive.'

Compared to Brutus, she was a considerable step higher—though he was a worthy contender for close second.

'I guess these aren't the two monoliths of the United Human Alliance for nothing.'

If he remembered correctly, Lucielle wasn't this strong when he first saw through her Stat Window. She had to have gotten much stronger over the course of time.

He liked that about her.

'Somehow, she's always better than she was before. It's fascinating, but also inspiring. Makes me want to try my best...'

Rey decided not to rely on the Skill he just acquired through [Doppel], instead creating the process he just witnessed on his own—by casting the Spell.

"Black Void."

~VWUSH!~

A small sphere appeared atop his palm, with a ring also dancing atop it. He made sure to regulate the suction power, just as Lucielle told him she did, and also reduce the size, so it wouldn't grow as large even when sucking in air and Mana.

It was amazing how he was able to get it right on the first try.

"W-what?! You just... n-no way! I... I spent years working on that and you just...." Rey, who was initially engrossed in the Spell, heard Lucielle's devastated cry and looked at her.

She had tears streaming down her eyes as she looked at him.

'A-ahh... my bad!' He swiftly canceled the process, forcing the black sphere's implosion within a second.

That didn't make the situation any less awkward, though.

'Now I feel bad. I shouldn't have tried it out in front of her, but... I guess I got a little carried away.' He thought to himself.

Even though he successfully accomplished the same thing that Lucielle achieved, it wasn't like he felt any sense of pride in it.

'I was able to see the full process thanks to my incredible senses, so I understood the components and the interactions of the elements perfectly well.' Ever since he acclimated to his enhanced vision, having no need for his eyepatch any longer, Rey's ability to understand Magic-related occurrences had skyrocketed. And this wasn't even counting the other Passive Skills at work that made his calculative, observative, and overall cognitive Skills improve dramatically.

Unlike Lucielle, who had to figure everything from scratch, he had a perfect example before him.

'Besides, casting the Spell turned out to be very easy thanks to my two Divine Magic-based Skills.' He nearly laughed at himself.

Perfect Divine Magic and Divine Magic Supremacy allowed him to create his own Spells based on loose ideas, and the rules were rather lax with him—unlike the complicated process that Lucielle was bound by.

It was inevitable that he would be able to flawlessly match Lucielle's level of skill when it came to that single Spell, and probably every other one she showed him.

'I could also achieve the same result by simply using the new Skill that formed thanks to seeing her use the Spell. I swear, this is so unfair...' The decade-long efforts of Lucielle ended up being perfectly ripped off by him.

'And, unlike her, I can make the Spell more powerful and have more than enough Mana to maintain it.' He almost felt bad about how easy it was, since he was now beginning to see more and more of his potential.

'I'm really too overpowered at this point.'

Of course, his ego was easily shattered once the image of The Oracle flashed in his mind, and he remembered just how humbling his experience with her was.

If he tried any funny business with the Dragon Emperor, he suspected that would be the same experience he would suffer.

"Damnit... I don't know what else to do." Lucielle interrupted his thoughts by yelling and crashing on the ground. "I thought, for sure, that this would impress you... yet you just replicated it so easily."

Her troubled expression caused him to feel a little prickle in his heart.

It wasn't her fault that he was simply built different—in every single sense of the word.

'I should comfort her.' After finally deciding this, he reached for her shoulder, trying his best to smile warmly while thinking of the best words of encouragement he could render to someone being outdone by their junior.

"You should—"

"Uuuu... this is so frustrating! But that doesn't mean I'll give up!" She jumped back to her feet, nearly grazing Rey with her chest.

'She's too energetic!' "Mark my words, Rey Skylar... the next Spell I create will blow your mind away. Even you won't be able to resist my awesomeness!"

Rey's mind was already blown away by her presentation, but he didn't think she would believe it if he simply told her. Besides, it didn't matter what new Spell she came up with.

'I could just copy it all the same.'

Watching her bright smile and optimistic smile, however, made Rey feel a certain kind of way.

He really admired the passion that Lucielle was showing.

'Just as I thought... she's the perfect person for the role.' Parting his lips while still maintaining eye contact with Lucielle, Rey finally blurted out his intentions.

"Do you want to go to the Dragon Continent with me?"

## **Chapter 762 Blissful Conclusion**

"E-eh...?"

Lucielle appeared dumbfounded by Rey's question.

"The truth is... I also wanted to see you. Your knowledge and versatility in Magic is necessary for the mission I want to accomplish in the Dragon Empire. It would really be helpful if you came with me."

"F-for real...?"

Most people would shake in fear once they heard that they were being nominated to infiltrate the territory of the enemy, but not Lucielle.

Yes, she was trembling, but it wasn't out of fear at all.

The pink hues on her cheek, her wide eyes filled with both excitement and shock, and the loud squeals that burst from her mouth were enough to let anyone know that she felt the furthest thing from fear.

Instead, she was overjoyed. "For real." Rey said to her. "I take it that you're interested."

"Yes! Oh, yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!" She dashed to Rey, nearly pressing her voluptuous chest on him as she went for a hug. Thankfully for him, he was an expert at Spatial Magic, so he easily created sufficient distance between the two of them.

"Haaa... in any case, it's safe to say that you impressed me with your presentation today." He began, observing how Lucielle's bright beam became even more blinding.

"I also have a lot to learn regarding Magic, and so I look forward to that long talk that you proposed we have regarding Magic. I really want to share ideas with you and also pick your brains regarding some thoughts I have."

"Mmmmmmmmm!!!" Lucielle did her best to be quiet, but the more she held it in, the redder her face got, and the louder her squeals became.

She even began fidgeting on the spot.

Rey ignored all of this, however, and proceeded with his talk.

"However, all of that will have to be postponed until after we return from the Academy."

"A-Academy...?"

"Ahh... I guess I didn't inform you yet." Rey lightly slapped his head, instantly correcting himself.

"The place we're heading to is the Dragon Academy of the Empire."

Literal heat began to rise from Lucielle's head as she heard all of this.

Stars manifested from her eyes, and after holding her scream in for so long, she finally hit her limit and let her voice loose.

"REEEEEEEEYYYYY!!! YOU'RE THE BEEEEESSTTT!!!"

Once again, she rushed to hug him, but using Spatial Layering, he was able to prevent any such interaction between the two of them.

"Well... I'm glad to see you excited about all of this."

"I'm more than excited! I finally get to satisfy my curiosity and learn Magic from the Dragons' perspective. The reason we've been lagging behind them isn't merely due to our difference in stats, but also information. If I can get access to their Magic and study how they activate it, then isn't it possible that I—no, we—we can grow stronger? Think about the possibilities! We could..."

As Lucielle rambled on about her passion, Rey watched her with a soft smile on his face while going over the more realistic and practical reasons why he was letting someone like Lucielle tag along with him.

It was for nothing more than the Chamber Of Ancients.

'I'm not confident that I'll be able to figure out or manipulate the Ancient Magic that will lead us home. Adrien has made it clear that he also hasn't figured that part out yet, which means she's our best bet.'

Since it was Lucielle's field of expertise, if there was anyone with the ability to tweak the Magic to send them to Earth, it had to be her.

'I still don't think it's a good idea to tell her about the whole plan yet, though.'

He didn't know how the Grand Mage of the Alliance would react to being complicit in sending their Summoned Otherworlders back to where they came from, but he had a feeling her reaction wouldn't be good.

At least, until he got a full handle of the situation and understood Lucielle enough to trust her with the plan, Rey planned to be silent about that bit.

'My second option would have been Feralia, since she's also the most powerful among the Elves. She also has expertise in runes, but considering Lucielle is far more skilled in Magic, and has proven herself to be more versatile... I think she's the best pick.'

Plus, since she was the one mostly responsible for the Otherworlder Summon, she remained the most optimal choice.

'And it's a good thing I don't have to convince her to tag along.'

"So when are we leaving again?" Lucielle popped right in front of Rey, her wide smile and bulging eyes appearing super creepy despite her pretty face.

"Dude..." Rey took a few steps back, not out of shock, but just to avoid contact with her. Thankfully, she didn't approach him any further.

"Three days." He responded.

"Three days, huh? That's enough time to prepare, then..."

"As for your disguise as a Dragon—"

"Don't worry about that. I've got it covered!" Lucielle grinned with delight, giving a thumbs up.

'Is she getting over-excited about this whole thing? It's not that I don't trust her, but disguise is very important if we are to properly blend in.'

"Are you certain?" The Grand Mage nodded, giving Rey a rather serious smile. It was one that brimmed with maturity—something even she was capable of at times.

"Yeah! Trust me."

Despite still being skeptical, Rey decided to take her at her word. Besides, this was yet another avenue for him to be surprised by her.

"Alright then. I suppose this concludes our meeting."

"Yeah. You should get back to talking with Alicia about lovey-dovey stuff." She teased with a rather big smile.

"That's now what we talk about!"

"Didn't you tell her you weren't taking any girl on your adventure this time? I wonder how you'll explain yourself to her..."

"Ah, that's true—hold on, stop making this worse!"

Rey didn't know why and how Lucielle became so adept at teasing him like this, but it wasn't a particularly bad feeling.

Perhaps this was something that had developed over time, or it was simply a result of their just-concluded meeting, but Rey found that he and the Grand Mage now spoke freely with each other.

—Almost as if they were friends.

"In any case... bye."

"Don't you need me to—"

"I'll show myself out!" Rey yelled out, and in a single flash of light, he vanished from Lucielle's mystical domain.

She watched as he did this, amazed once again by his overall prowess—particularly in Magic.

"Rey Skylar... what an interesting man."

She never would have expected the ordinary-looking boy from back then to become such a monumental success as a Mage.

'Could this be the one I've been searching for? The one that can lead me to the Zenith—to transcendence?' She didn't know yet.

Rey never displayed any phenomenal insight or affinity regarding Magic, unlike Adonis, which was why she didn't really notice him. He was always one of the background characters, but all of that had now changed.

'It's selfish of me to desire all of this, I know, but... I can't help it, can I?' Clasp ing her hands on her face, she gave a euphoric smile and sent her gaze up high.

'Haaa... what bliss!'

## **Chapter 763 Meeting With Ater [Pt 1]**

"Haa..."

Rey collapsed on his bed, feeling the soft bouncy effect on his back as he did so. A warm smile circulated his face as he closed his eyes and recollected a lot of fun aspects of his just-concluded meeting with Alicia.

No, calling it a meeting made it sound too boorish.

They hung out in their dedicated spot—the library—and spoke about tons of stuff. It was beyond fun for him, and he could see that their talks did a lot to cheer Alicia up as well.

'Her Divine Summon killed Billy and a lot of the people in the Capital. It also destroyed so much...' Not many people could see it, but Rey knew full well that Alicia was hurting due to consequences of her actions.

It was a miracle that she could pull herself together and laugh with him.

According to her words:

"There's just something about you, Rey. Being around you just makes me forget all those horrible things. I... don't know what I'd do if I didn't have you."

It made him feel a little guilty for leaving her so he could go to the Dragon Empire, which further raised the difficulty of him telling her about his arrangement with Lucielle. He nearly even postponed it, until he had a reality check with himself.

'I promised myself not to lie to her...' He sighed. 'Still, just as I suspected, she didn't take it too well.'

Alicia wanted to come with him after he brought up Lucielle, but he had to refuse. Despite how much it made his heart bleed, there was no way he could expose her to any kind of danger.

This wasn't the Land of the Elves, or some vacation.

It was the heart of the enemy's domain.

'It's already risky bringing Lucielle along, but she serves a great purpose.' He inhaled deeply, relieved that he was actually able to convince Alicia to drop the issue.

Still, what was this ominous feeling he had?

'I don't even want to think about it right now. There are a lot of unknown variables that I need to consider if I'm bringing Lucielle with me that I need to consider. To properly bring everything into perspective...' He slowly sat up, watching something materialize before him.

It seemed like tangled-up darkness, with an entity walking out of the dark breach that stained the room. 'Just the person I wanted to see. Ater...'

The red-haired Beast fully emerged from the darkness, causing it to crumble right behind him. He had his sly smile on, and both hands were in his pockets.

"Master."

The moment he saw Rey, though, he bowed his head and ceased his casual demeanor.

With his hands away from his pockets, one was lightly placed on his chest, while the other on his back. His deep, respectful bow would have touched Rey immensely if he wasn't already suspicious of Ater.

Still, he appreciated the gesture with a smile.

"Looks like you're done taking care of matters with the Reaper Group?"

"Indeed, Master. Proper production will begin tomorrow. You can go to the site to observe for yourself."

"I think I will. Thank you."

"It is my pleasure, Master..." After Ater said this, there was a bit of awkward silence between the two.

It felt uncomfortable, but before Rey could think of something to fill in the wide gap between them, his Familiar took the initiative.

"About your trip to the Empire... I'm a little concerned. How do you plan to disguise yourself? You haven't fully revealed the details of that to me."

Normally, Rey would have simply folded and showed Ater all his cards, but he had to be careful here, so he took some time to think very seriously about his decision. Once he made up his mind, he finally spoke up.

"One of the Skills I got from Adrien is called [Perfect Veil]. It'll allow me to change my appearance into whatever I want."

Rey skimmed over the details, such as how his [Perfect Divine Growth] promoted the Skill from its base A-Tier state to S-Tier, and how the Skill could potentially serve as an illusory Skill meant to deceive all whom it targeted.

Using it as a disguise was just one of the many he could utilize it.

"Are you confident that your true identity won't be detected by anyone?" Ater went on to ask.

"Yeah. As long as the person doesn't have a higher Class than I do, it's impossible. And even if they have the same Stats as I do, they would have to get past my [Divine Persona] Skill, that allows me to imbue Divine Attribute to any one Skill."

"I see. So the [Perfect Veil] currently possesses Divine Status."

"Yup!"

"Impressive, Master! You've really thought this through!"

"Indeed."

Once again, there was a brief silence between the two of them.

"Then... may I see the form you plan to take once you are in the Dragon Empire?"

"Oh? Why?"

"Just out of curiosity, Master. I have also studied quite a few of them, so there could be hidden details in your design that could give you away. One has to be meticulous in these things, after all..."

"I see... I see..." Rey couldn't argue against his logic there.

Ater knew his stuff, and he wouldn't be foolish enough to refuse his help, especially since he already knew about how insightful Ater could be.

'Might as well show him...' Rey decided, after expanding his senses to detect any form of trick.

There was no trick.

It was simply Ater standing there, smiling and waiting.

"Here..." Rey rose to his feet and activated his Skill on the spot. Instantly, his appearance and his overall aura changed.

~FSHUUU~

He possessed bright blue hair, with a single horn protruding from his forehead. His eyes glowed brightly, and his small wings and tail flapped and danced as he revealed this form to Ater.

"Here! What do you think?" He smiled, folding his arms as he smirked confidently at the Familiar before him.

"This..."

Ater narrowed his eyes, placing his hand on his chin as his lips curled downwards to form a grim frown.

"... This is all wrong."

## **Chapter 764 Meeting With Ater [Pt 2]**

"W-what do you mean all wrong?"

For a moment, Ater remained quiet after Rey's question. Instead, he took time to observe the boy's appearance once more, his gaze scrutinizing even the littlest detail. It even almost felt like he was undressing him with his eyes.

"Your appearance... it feels odd—almost like you are cosplaying as a Dragon—if you know what I mean..."

"Wait..." Rey knew this wasn't an important thing to bring up at the moment, but he just had to satisfy his curiosity. "How do you know about cosplaying?"



"Belle told me about it."

"O-ohh..." It all made perfect sense once he knew who the knowledge came from.

'I guess the two of them really talk a lot, huh?'

"In any case, it doesn't feel very authentic. I believe it also does very little to hide your human-like features, and doesn't blend the two together. For example, you need slightly bigger eyes and more defined jaws. Your ears should also..."

By the time Ater was done with explanations, Rey realized just how off he was when it came to disguising as a Dragon. It wasn't that he wasn't that he didn't know what a Dragon looked like, but it was simply that he didn't know how to incorporate it into his own custom appearance.

The only thing he really got right was the number of horns. Even the age of his disguise was slightly off, but that was only because Rey had only encountered adult Dragons. In conclusion, he needed to rework his design from scratch—and that was exactly what he did.

Under Ater's supervision, he was finally able to get the design right. \*\*\*\*\*

"Thanks. I finally figured it out." Rey sighed, collapsing on his bed for a moment, mostly due to mental exhaustion.

He wasn't tired in the true sense of the word, but he definitely felt like he was.

"This is nothing, Master. You can always rely on me."

Ater bowed his head after saying this, and the sincere manner by which he said this caused Rey to feel a slight pang of guilt within him. It genuinely seemed like Ater was doing his best for the sake of his Master, yet Rey was viewing everything through the lens of suspicion.

At that point, Rey had two options—remain the way he was, or address the ever-growing gap of trust between the two of them.

He chose the former.

"Hm. Thank you."

"I will also ensure to do my best in the South. As promised, I will resort to as little violence as possible, and also ensure they become our cooperative allies no matter what. Of course, I won't force them to do it."

"Yeah... I look forward to that."

Rey didn't think he expressed it with his words, but he was really surprised and impressed by how much Ater had changed over the course of him being around.

He remembered how very open and assertive he used to be regarding his dark inclinations, but he had slowly gained more tact and understanding as time went on. In fact, he rarely ever brought up suggestions or plans unless asked, and his evil alignment hardly showed in his strategy.

All of these changes were due to the conditions that Rey had set previously.

'He's studied my preferences and chosen to act in accordance with them.' He smiled, clearly satisfied with the progress that the Familiar showed.

This made it all the more difficult to view Ater in a negative light.

"Master, I should remind you that you still owe me a reward for my most recent accomplishment of protecting the Capital and resolving the pre-existing issues."

Once Rey heard this, he gave a slight gasp.

"Ah, yes..."

He hadn't thought of a reward, and after becoming occupied with their other plans, it skipped his mind. Considering the gravity of what Ater did, Rey reckoned he needed something very rewarding.

'It's only because of him I was able to get this strong as well. The plan he concocted with Emil was suspicious, but also very helpful.'

Rey could not deny Ater's assistance, even though he no longer trusted him.

'I'll just ask him what he wants.' And so he did. Ater fell into deep contemplation upon being asked to mention what he wanted most as his reward.

"Well... if I was to choose..."

It was at that moment that Rey remembered what Ater chose as his reward the last time—being petted as a cat.

'It would be even weirder now! Please don't choose that!' He cried inside, looking at Ater with pleading eyes while the unaware Familiar seemingly wrestled with his thoughts about what he considered a fitting reward.

"I would have chosen to receive some praise from you, but... I believe there is one thing I desire most from you."

"Oh, whew! I mean... what is it that you desire most?" Rey smiled, relieved it wasn't what he feared, but also fearing what was about to come.

Silence.

Ater merely looked at Rey for a moment without saying anything, as if studying his countenance. He then approached the boy with a few steps before stopping just a few inches from his Master's feet.

"You no longer trust me, Master."

Those words hit Rey like a sledgehammer, cousin yet another pang to swell from within him.

Ater's smile completely vanished, now replaced by a contemplative expression that drew even more sympathy and guilt from Rey. He wanted to believe that Ater was merely trying to manipulate the situation, but everything about him oozed genuineness. It began to seem as though Rey was the one being paranoid.

"I have observed your actions prior to your return from the Land of the Elves, and especially after. After watching you and thinking for quite a while, I have come to the conclusion that you have doubts about me."

Rey could not deny those allegations, because they were true.

Now that Ater said them out loud, it made the whole matter quite serious, and the fact that the usually smiling figure in the room was completely serious gave off a grim feeling in the air.

"Master... I want you to trust me. That is my desire."

As soon as Ater uttered those words, he fell to his knees and made a subservient bow that chilled Rey to his very core.

"Ater, I—"

"I recognize that it might be very demanding to ask of you, but I intend to make things easier for you to make your decision." Ater raised his head and lifted his hand, causing a black box to appear almost instantly.

Rey instantly recognized it as the Cursed Box that belonged to the United Human Alliance.

"The Dybbuk, Master. This allows multiple parties to enter a pact that can be enforced with a curse from this world. As you are well aware, I have no means to alter a curse, or I would have done something to help Alicia. Since that is the case, it appears this Item is most optimal in restoring the trust you have in me."

"What exactly are you driving at, Ater?" Rey blurted out.

"Let us enter a pact, Master. I will accept all of your conditions, including to be absolutely submissive to your words and to never betray you."

A lot of thoughts went on in all the layers of Rey's mind, but they could all be summarized into one thing—

'For real?!'

~Master, I'm surprised you didn't place him under a pact, but you placed me under one. Do you trust him more than you trust me?~

Emil's thoughts were also loud in his thoughts, so he had to address that too.

'Haha! Not exactly. We are sort of already connected by a bond, so there was no need for any kind of pact. At least... back then...'

Since Rey had no way to formally enforce their bond, it made it functionally useless. He also didn't have any Taming Skills, so he couldn't confidently call Ater a Familiar in a very strict sense.

Despite all of this, he remained very loyal—too loyal.

"Are you sure about this?" Rey asked, an eyebrow raised as he stared at the disturbing energy that the Dybbuk released from all around it.

Ater nodded his head, silence still remaining as his lips were tightly shut.

He simply stared in determination.

"Huu... fine, then." Rey finally said. "Who am I to refuse your heartfelt request?"

"I thank you, Master."

And so, just as with Emil, they set up standards for the pact—rules and punishment that would be followed by both sides.

The restriction placed on Ater were three;

One was to never act in any way that would jeopardize the interests of Rey or any of his allies.

The second was to obey any of Rey's commands, and to inform Rey of any action he would take that would affect those commands in any way.

The third and final one was to protect Rey and his allies if the case demanded for it.

To all of this, Ater nodded and readily accepted the conditions, as well as the only punishment for disobedience.

—Instant death.

## **Chapter 765 Meeting With Ater [Pt 3]**

'Haaa... why?'

As Rey stared at Ater, the Pact already formed, and the box now in his possession, he felt puzzled by a gnawing feeling that he had no control over.

'Why does something still feel off?'

The Dyubbuk was supposed to give Rey the avenue to trust Ater wholeheartedly, but the assurance faded almost instantly, and Rey didn't know why.

Was it because the curse from the item had failed before with Emil? Or could it be possible that Ater had a duplicate, or even a completely different item, that could break him from the shackles of his curse?

Ater was smart and resourceful enough to orchestrate something behind the scenes while making it appear as though he was perfectly docile.

Rey wasn't unaware of that fact, so it bothered him to no end.

'What if this subservience thing is just an act?'

Could he really be blamed for suspecting the master manipulator known as Ater?

"It appears you are still unconvinced." The Familiar in question spoke, breaking Rey out of his myriad of thoughts.

"Sorry, Ater."

"No, I perfectly understand. I would probably be the same in your situation, though I suppose I'd be more skilled at hiding my suspicions."

"You know you're not helping your case, right?"

Ater chuckled as he heard this.

"I know. I'm just being honest, though."

Rey truly wanted to trust Ater, especially after seeing the way he was genuine with him about his disposition. There was a chance that it was all a lie, but it wasn't like Ater was ever going to stop being Rey's Familiar either way.

'He could have ignored my distrust and kept doing things behind the scenes, but he instead confronted me. Doesn't that mean he's genuine?'

Or... 'Maybe that's what he wants me to think.'

In the end, Rey could not decide on what he could particularly believe and not believe about Ater—at least, not without some help.

"I think I'll have to resort to Skills..." He sighed.

"Skills?"

"Yeah. My Skills. If I place you under a few of them, then I think that would be able to put my mind at rest." Rey finally confessed.

He already had a few he had been wanting to try, and Ater was the perfect candidate for it.

"Alright, Master. I am ready whenever you are."

It still felt awkward having Ater kneel before him while he sat upright on the bed. Their positions felt a little awkward, but he didn't let that distract him. Instead, after placing the Dyubbuk in his new Inventory, he opened his Skill Window and looked at the list of Skills in his Arsenal.

[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)  
Divine Magic Interference (Active)  
Tempora (Active)  
Divine Persona (Active)  
Perfect Wish Fulfillment (Active)  
It Is Written (Active)

{Total: 20}

[S-Tier]

Dyubbuk: Cursed Pact (Active)  
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: 24}

[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]

'For the purposes of controlling Ater and easing my worries, the ones I'll be using are [Command Code] and [Perfect Divine Magic].'

[Command Code] could be used to give a person a particular set of instructions, and they would have no choice but to obey at any given time.

It could be pre-registered on any particular person, or made up on the spot. In a way, it was a much more advanced and calculated form of Mind Control. In a way... that made it incredibly scary.

'One could be under mind control and never even know it until the Command is given and they have to obey without realizing it.' It was also possible to control the body while leaving the mind intact.

'Using [Command Code] on Ater will allow me to enforce obedience, even if the curses from the Dyubbuk are gotten rid of. The Skill was previously A-Tier, but [Perfect Divine Growth] bumped it to S-Tier. I can also use [Divine Persona] to raise it even higher anytime I want to use a Pre-registered Command.'

Doing that would mean undoing his disguise made from [Perfect Veil], but it would be worth it.

Besides, he wasn't only going to rely on [Command Code].

'There's [Perfect Divine Magic]. Using [Divine Magic Supremacy], I can create advanced Spells that allow Ater to be bound to me—connected in every way, so I know his every location and what he is up to. This will allow me to keep track of him, but also control him through Magic.'

All in all, with these options that came from the function of his Skills, he was covered.

'I might not be able to use [Clairvoyance] on him, for some reason, but other Skills work on Ater. I've used quite a few in the past.'

"Do you accept all of the limitations I am about to place on you, Ater?" Rey asked, revealing the cards he was about to deal him.

It seemed strange that one would voluntarily desire to be controlled, but Ater was completely fine with it.

As long as he could regain Rey's complete trust...

"I accept them all!"

## **Chapter 766 Meeting With Ater [Pt 4]**

"All complete!"

Rey was done with all the restrictions and commands that he could think of in no time, and Ater accepted them all in full stride. There were no complaints about any of the Commands or restraints that he was placed under.

Even Rey felt like he was being unfair at a point, but Ater didn't raise any objection.

'It's strange, though...' Rey's thoughts trailed.

Why would the System warn Rey about Ater, and why would The Oracle do the same, when his Skills could perfectly keep Ater at bay and the Familiar in question was perfectly subservient.

'Is it because he's dangerous to everyone else, except his Master? I wonder...'

But if that was the case, then why wasn't [Clairvoyance] working on him? At this point, that was the last strand that his doubts were clinging to.

If that could be answered satisfactorily, he would be able to dismiss the genuine concerns of The Oracle, as well as his own.

'And who better to ask about this than Ater himself?'



Rey had contemplated this for a while—ever since he realized that Ater was exempt from [Clairvoyance]—but it was only until now that he felt he could make the informed decision to present the issue.

"Why can't I use [Clairvoyance] on you?"

"Pardon?"

"I can't use [Clairvoyance] on you, despite it being an SSS-Tier Skill. Does that even make any sense? You should have an explanation for that, right?"

Ater sighed the moment the question was presented to him, almost as if he couldn't believe he was being asked something like that.

It almost made Rey feel stupid for asking the question.

"[Clairvoyance] is a Skill that grants the user sight and knowledge of the past, present, and future of everything and everyone within its domain. For your Skill, it seems you can detect everyone and everything in H'Trae—including their past, present, future. Of course, Memory has to be put into account."

Rey never told Ater any of these, so he wondered where he got it from.

"In case you're wondering where I got this knowledge from... it's from one of my previous worlds. I encountered someone with such an ability."

"H-hold on... it isn't just restricted to H'Trae?" Rey's eyes slightly widened as he said this, genuinely surprised by the revelation.

"What do you think Primeval Skills are, Master? They cut across the many worlds that exist? For a world to properly function, they require these Skills as building blocks. In essence, they are essential to any world under the System."

"Ohh!" Rey's eyes returned to normal as he processed the information.

"Indeed. Your Skill [Doppel] is an exception, though. I don't think it's supposed to be wielded as an SSS-Tier Skill the way you use it. But, I'm not sure..." 'Well, Seraph did seem a little concerned about me getting the Skill. I thought it was her being discriminatory, but the more I think about it, the more it makes sense. This Skill is too OP.' He smiled, once again feeling incredibly grateful that he got his hands on the Skill.

If someone like Adonis or Alicia had gotten [Doppel] before him, he would have been cooked.

'No... if I didn't speak back then—about Karma—my turn would have been shifted to the furthest end of the list. I would have definitely missed out on a host of Skills.'

Why did he speak up, though? It wasn't in his nature to just say something in a crowd of people—especially when such an authority figure like Seraph was overwhelming the crowd with her presence.

Rey remembered why.

'It's because of you, Adonis. During the field trip... no... several times before then, you consistently tried to make me more assertive.'

It wasn't like they were close or anything, and Rey often watched Adonis from afar, but the latter often talked to him and offered words of encouragement. Of course, Rey knew he wasn't special, as Ater did this with practically everyone.

Still... his words during the field trip really resonated with him.

"You're more exceptional than you think, Rey."

Perhaps those words were what prompted him to speak up during Seraph's explanation—especially after seeing Adonis and Alicia stand up to the rest of the class.

That mere stroke of luck—that decisive moment—was due to the few words that Adonis told him in passing.

'In a way, I suppose I owe all of this to you, Adonis.' Rey smiled, once again wondering where the Hero was during this period.

It was possible to use [Clairvoyance] to find him, but that would mean Rey would have to search the entire world—which would take an absurd amount of memory space.

He couldn't afford that.

At least, not at the current moment.

'The Alliance is currently stable, so Adonis isn't necessarily needed. I'm worried about him, but right now I have to look at the bigger picture.'

Yes... the bigger picture!

"Ater, do you know the other SSS-Tier Skills? Tell me about all of them!"

"A-ah..." As soon as Ater leaked out that sound, slowly itching his crimson hair, Rey already knew where the conversation was headed.

"... I can't remember. I'm sorry, but my memory is still—"

"Hmmmmmm..." Rey narrowed his eyes suspiciously at Ater, who leaked out a bead of sweat and sighed with exasperation.

Rey knew Ater was telling the truth, but wasn't this too convenient?

'How does he know about [Clairvoyance], but not the other Skills? I don't get it!' He screamed internally, almost out of frustration.

Still, he kept his cool externally.

"Forget it. Just answer my question regarding the reason why you don't seem to be affected by [Clairvoyance]."

"Oh, yes... that." Ater rubbed his chin, as if looking for the best way to explain away his current predicament.

"Maybe it's because I'm a Beast Summon from another world?"

"No. I can use [Clairvoyance] on Emil, so that can't be the right answer." Rey responded almost immediately.

After all, he had thought of that too.

'If Ater really can't give me a satisfactory answer, then I don't think I can trust him.'

## **Chapter 767 Meeting With Ater [Pt 5]**

"Emil is a different case, though."

Ater's response to Rey caused him to raise an eyebrow, but he still waited for an elaboration to be made on the matter.

"Emil is a Symbiote, and so she takes on a lot of your qualities as you take on hers. In essence, it's not like she's a distinct entity as I am. She's a part of you and you're a part of her. Ahh... how envious I am of her..."

Rey shivered slightly, definitely creeped out by Ater's words at the end.

The smile he rendered as he remained on his knees and looked up at Rey made the whole thing seem even weirder.

~Hehehehe! It's a good thing he knows his place!~

Emil's laughter of victory nearly deafened Rey's inner thoughts, almost drowning his worries. However, that couldn't completely silence the concerns that still littered his mind.

"Even if that is true, your argument for being from another world doesn't work."

"Hm? Why do you say so?"

"I'm an Otherworlder, and so are my classmates. Yet, not only could The Oracle use [Clairvoyance] on me, but I can also use it on any of my classmates."

In essence, Ater's excuse was refuted by its own logic.

If Otherworlders were still subject to the Skill, then how was Ater any different? What made him distinct from other Otherworlders?

"I should be considered a special case, though. After all, you Otherworlders were called by the world through a means that isn't strictly within the bounds of the System, while I was brought in here by a Skill under the System."

Rey could see that Ater was telling the truth, but he didn't understand how he could draw such an inference and make such a conclusion.

It all seemed quite absurd.

"The Interdimensional Summon was done through Ancient MajiK, or at least... some version of it. You spoke about seeing Seraph, an Angel, right? That means your travel was fully sanctioned by the world, and so your arrival here was completely registered by the world."

"I still don't—"

"Think of yourself as someone who got a permanent residency or citizenship in H'Trae, and me as something of an Illegal Immigrant." "You—"

"Yeah, I learned that from Belle as well."

"I see..."

"Since you were called by the World, you received benefits from the System—one of which was the ability to be subject to [Clairvoyance]. That way, you are recognized as official denizens of H'Trae that can be used by the world to push its agenda. In essence, you help the world and the world helps you."

Just as a permanent resident or citizen's case would be.

"But shouldn't you be the same? If you were summoned by a Skill, that means the System was involved... right?"

"You would think so, right? But no. Beast Summons aren't particularly accepted by the World. They are the tools of their Summoners, and so the one who summons them is responsible for their wellbeing and upkeep."

The way Rey understood it, getting into H'Trae the proper way was what gave he and his classmates the privileges they got, including H'Trae's welfare system—the [Clairvoyance] that came about by the System.

Beast Summons like Ater, on the other hand, were not given this welfare system.

At least, not completely.

"My Stats were reset upon arriving here, I lost some Skills that were incompatible with this world's set of Skills, and my Class remains that of a Beast. So, I am recognized by this world as a foreigner. Of course, Leveling Up remained something I can do, since EXP is something that has been common in all the worlds I've been to, but it's much more difficult for Beast Familiars to Level Up—especially an entity like myself."

The more Rey listened, the more he understood Ater's situation.

It sort of made sense in its own way, and Rey could hardly find any hole in his detailed explanation.

Perhaps this was because Rey didn't know much about the System and Worlds that Ater spoke so confidently about.

"To begin with, [Clairvoyance] is meant to keep track of the World's Assets and to lay the groundwork for its future. It measures all the constants and variables, calculating everything accordingly in order to arrive at its desired conclusion."

"You mean the destruction of every other race apart from the Elves?"

"... Is that what The Oracle told you?"

"Y-yeah."

This was the first time Rey was telling this to anyone. It felt a little nice to get this matter off his chest, but saying the grim future only made him more frightened about the possibility of its fruition.

"I see. Then, I suppose that is this world's objective."

"Objective?"

"Yes. Every world has one, and it makes sure the action of everything and everyone in that world functions in accordance to that directive."

"You mean—"

"Yes. This world will be destroyed, one way or the other. The Elves will be the only survivors, and its objective will be achieved."

"But why? Why would the World desire such an end?"

"I don't know. All goes in accordance to Nature, I suppose." Ater shrugged, clearly unbothered by the potential elimination of millions, if not billions of lives.

He didn't care in the slightest.

"Let me guess... you've experienced the destruction of a world before."

Upon hearing this, Ater made a dark chuckle. His eyes glowed bright crimson as he looked at Rey with an amused grin.

"I have DESTROYED worlds."

A slight shiver instantly rushed through Rey's body as he heard this, forcing a period of silence between the two parties.

"But I'm completely unrelated to the fate that will befall this world. Unfortunately, I won't be having the pleasure of wreaking havoc here."

"Ater, you..."

"Don't worry, Master... I'm on your side."

"What does that mean?"

"You want to save the world, right? You want to prevent the predetermined path that this World should undertake, right?"

"Yeah..." Rey responded a little slowly as he watched Ater with slightly unsure eyes.

This response only caused Ater's grin to widen in satisfaction.

"That is also what I desire."

## **Chapter 768 Behind The Scenes [Pt 1]**

"...."

Ater had proven his case, and he didn't seem to be lying to Rey about anything. If he was, one of the Curses would have activated, and Ater would be dead on the ground.

Besides, Rey could tell if his Familiar was lying due to their bond.

'He's telling the truth about everything...' The details were still lost to Rey, but there was no doubt about it Ater was on his side.

"If you still have your doubts, there is a way to prove the validity of my claim." Ater spoke up, forcing Rey to look in his eyes as he made a confident proposal.

"Hm? What's that?"

"Alicia White. Have her summon a Beast Familiar so you can use [Clairvoyance] on it. That way, you'll be able to—"

"No." Rey's response was flat and final.

He had a serious expression on his face, though none of it indicated anger of any kind. "May I ask why?"

Ater's sincere voice wafted through the air, causing Rey to sigh and lean backwards a little, his gaze on the Familiar, but his thoughts far away.

"Alicia still hasn't gotten over her trauma. It would be selfish of me to make her summon a Beast Familiar just to satiate my curiosity." He mumbled. "Besides, I can already see that you're telling the truth, so there really is no need for that."

For a second or two, there was silence.

Ater then gave a silent chuckle and bowed his head in respect and satisfaction.

"Understood, Master. Thank you for trusting me."

Rey smiled.

"Yeah. I guess I fully believe you now."

This wasn't just for show either. Rey found no reason to doubt Ater, and was now instead questioning the validity of The Oracle's warnings. Both Emil and Ater had only profited him in one way or the other, and while he was yet to see the full picture, he determined that it was best to simply trust in his own camp.

"I trust you'll complete your task flawlessly, as you always do."

"And I trust that you will achieve your objective in the Dragon Academy, Master." Ater beamed back.

Both parties understood each other perfectly, and so there was not much more to be said. "You may rise, Ater."

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[Later That Night]

"You may rise, Frey'ja." Ater's voice echoed in the massive hall that was the White Dragon Lord's office.

He was seated very comfortably behind the desk—a place she usually occupied—while she was on her knees, paying homage to his magnificent presence.

The moment she heard his instruction, she rose from her subservient position and offered him her warmest smile.

The figures behind her also followed suit.

"Two students will be visiting your Academy next week. The details will be submitted to you prior to that moment, but I want you to make sufficient preparations to ensure that their transition goes smoothly."

"Understood." Without asking any questions, she responded.

"Other than their admission and entry into the Academy, also ensure that you look out for them. Make sure they're settled in perfectly, and that they do not enter into any kind of trouble. In essence, their stay in the Academy should be without incident."

"Pardon my question, but what if they cause an incident?"

"Ahh..." Ater smiled broadly, his eyes shining bright crimson as he narrowed his lids. "Then let them take care of it."

"R-really?"

"Indeed. I doubt an incident would occur without any thought placed in it. Besides, you'll be reporting to me about their life in the Academy, so I suppose if there are any changes to my initial instructions, I can let you know."

"Understood." The remnant tension in the atmosphere slowly began to dissipate as Ater rose to his feet and left the chair, only to rest his behind on the desk while maintaining close proximity to the White Dragon Lord.

From any distance, one could see how gorgeous she was, but an appreciation of her beauty only amplified the closer one got to her. Ater could see it all.

Her flawless white hair only matched her pale skin and pure white gown. Her voluptuous chest nearly spilled out of her outfit, with cleavage that would make any man run mad. Her face was flawlessly beautiful, and the nervousness she displayed in his presence made her appear even more attractive.

Anyone who laid eyes on her body would desire her, but Ater was different.

His eyes were disconcerted, and the excitement he displayed was directed at none other than the incoming incident, rather than the Dragon Lord before him.

In a way, that made the dynamic opposite.

Ater did not desire her. She desired him.

"You've been a good girl so far, and as a result... I am willing to return your wards to you." Ater gently placed his hand on her chin and lifted her head so she could stare him in the eyes.

His crimson eyes drowned her face in its glowing radiance, reflecting the passionate gaze she used to look at him.

"R-really?"

"Yes. Shai'ya and Kat'erin..." He muttered, his eyes slowly drifting away from Frey'ja to two of the five figures who stood behind the White Dragon Lord.

"Yes, Sir Ater?"

They both stepped forward, appearing no different than the Dragon Generals that they had been. Flawless Skin. Regal Attires. Perfect Forms.

They were the real deal.

"You will now return to serving your Lord, as I promised. Your loyalty to her must never waver, and your devotion to her cause must remain. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Sir Ater."

He returned his gaze to Frey'ja, whose body was now slowly trembling as she kept her eyes on his own face.

His corrupted darkness heavily contrasted the purity that she represented.

It was alluring.

"Thank you, S—I mean, Ater."

"Yes... that's it." He drew his face closer to hers, causing her trembling to increase, and her face to become much hotter than usual.

Frey'ja's breathing became uneven as she remained still in his presence, and steamy clouds flowed from her lustrous lips and nostrils.

All of this only caused Ater to smile even more.

"Your eyes... they're wonderful." Gently stroking her face, he whispered those words passionately.

For a moment, the world seemed to stand still, but he broke the silence easily.

"How are you enjoying your new eye?"

### **Chapter 769 Behind The Scenes [Pt 2]**

Frey'ja, the White Dragon Lord, was an epitome of beauty.

Among the Dragon Lords, there was none who rivaled her in beauty and sheer prestige—at least, that was what she liked to think.

Of all her features, there was one that she was most proud of, though.

—Her eyes.

They were beautiful, like the depths of a crystal sea, or a boundless sky. The immaculate mix of blue, with white sparkles, made them glorious to look at.

They weren't only for decoration as well.

Her Skills involved her eyes a good deal, so they were her greatest assets in every sense of the word.

... Until the Great Old Dragon Lord plucked one out.

Frey'ja had sunk into despair after that. She thought her beauty had been forever tainted, and that she would forever be denied the full power that used to be hers. Her ambition would be forced into a standstill, and she would lose all the respect of her peers.

Even though she was grateful for being spared, her life was never going to be the same.

Then... Ater came along.

He changed everything upon his arrival, starting with her new eyes. That single act was more than enough to make her enamored by him.

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"How are you enjoying your new eye?"

The moment he asked this question, the pink hues on the cheeks of the White Dragon Lord intensified, almost turning bright red.



'He's close...' Not only did he get closer to her, his chest nearly rubbing against hers, but she could feel his chill drawing close to her steaming body.

She did her best to be composed, but Ater wasn't making it easy.

"I-It's amazing! I can see much better than before, and my abilities are also much stronger. Then, there's also that new Skill that I have." She honestly spewed these words, despite being tensed.

Her syrupy smile made it clear how giddy and clumsy she was being. Still, she didn't stop.

"From the bottom of my heart, I thank you." She would have bowed her head, but Ater was too close to her, so she couldn't.

In an attempt to give him her utmost respect, Frey'ja tried to take a step back and properly show reverence, but Ater wrapped an arm behind her and drew her closer to him.

"Eeeep!"

Her face instantly turned beet red.

She could feel the rate at which her heart was beating, and it was dangerous. She was trembling again, feeling all sorts of emotions, and yet couldn't remove her gaze from the predator that had caught her in his webs.

Her chest pressed on his, and she felt an electric sensation flow through her body.

'Rough. Too rough...' No man had ever been this way with her.

Frey'ja had always been a goddess since she was born, so most Dragons sucked up to her. She was talented in everything she did, and her physical qualities matched her overwhelming combat abilities.

Ultimately, there were only very few who could be considered her equal or superior.

But none of them had any interest in women.

None of them looked at her, or touched her, or spoke to her... the way Ater currently did. The White Dragon Lord felt bliss at that moment.

"Surely, you have some form of dissatisfaction. Tell me..."

Once again, Ater could see right through her. She couldn't fight the almighty effects that his words had on her.

In the end, she gave in.

"S-sometimes, I just think it's a shame that I can't show off my newfound strength to the other Lords. Maybe... maybe if I show them how great you are, you could even have more allies among our ranks."

"Ahh..." Ater smiled, pulling his face close enough that his lips grazed hers.

'Oohh...!!!'

Her knees went weak, and her legs nearly gave out.

She remained firm, though.

"That is unnecessary. I do not require anyone else but you, Frey'ja." The way he spoke, especially how he said her name, made her heart leap many bounds.

Frey'ja loved it.

"Besides, isn't it good that only you have access to this power? You'll be able to serve the Emperor well, surpassing those who were once your equals."

"Yes... you're right."

Serving the Emperor was ultimately the goal of every Dragon, and Frey'ja was no exception to that. She told herself that the only reason she was allied with Ater was because he would aid in her efforts to do so.

Yes... that was the only reason.

"I am grateful for your overwhelming assistance." She smiled warmly, though a hint of sadness still flickered in her eyes.

"...."

For a moment, silence existed between the two.

Then, without any notice or warning, Frey'ja felt herself sink into the entirety of Ater's body.

He had embraced her, branding himself on her entire body, as she became tainted with his unending darkness.

Strangely, it brought her comfort.

"What troubles you? Talk to me, Frey'ja." He whispered to her ears.

"I... I guess I'm just worried about a lot of things right now. There's a lot on my plate..."

"Like what?"

"W-well, for one... I'm concerned about the performance of my girls in the coming Exhibition."

The Squads and Lords undertook an Exhibition before the Emperor every year, and she could feel the growing pressure as the days drew nearer.

Even though she had grown considerably stronger than before, she couldn't say the same about her two subordinates who made up a Squad.

"Then there's the fact that I am very much behind on a lot of academic decisions due to the time I had to take to acclimate to the eye. There are so many things I need to do, like finding a place for the field trip of the students, as well as preparation for the upcoming events."

The only reason The Great Old Dragon Lord spared her was due to her importance in the Academy.

She couldn't screw that up now.

"Don't worry about all of that." Ater said with a smile, pulling away from their embrace so she could see his confident face.

"Ater..."

"I know the best way to resolve the weakness of your Squad, and while I know you are more than capable enough to handle the Academy events, I have a mild suggestion regarding the upcoming Excursion."

The glint of mischief in his eyes told Frey'ja that he had many interesting things in his mind.

She wanted to know so badly.

"Tell me!"

## **Chapter 770 Day Of The Mission**

[A Few Days Later]

"She's late..."

Rey stood at the courtyard, his brows furrowed in annoyance as he constantly beat his feet against the floor in anger while waiting for his partner.

He had been waiting for nearly an hour now, and she still wasn't at their rendezvous point.

It was slowly eating away at his never-ending patience.

Unfortunately, anytime it reached the threshold, all of his anger would vanish, leaving him back where he started—as a patient man waiting.

'Ater and his team already left yesterday. I can't be late on my very first day, can I?' He sighed, both arms folded.

He was all alone in the courtyard too.

An hour earlier, the Royal Council Members, as well as the Frontline Members were all waiting for her. However, upon seeing that their schedule would be affected if they delayed any longer, they decided to head out first.

And so, Rey had to transport them to the battlefield.

He had already gone there a day prior so he could observe the place and make sure it was conducive for Alicia and his other classmates.

Much to his surprise, a lot of preparations had already been put in place for their arrival.

It was clear they were expecting the Otherworlders and Chief Warrior.

'Accommodations and every other thing seem rough, but not terrible. They should be able to make do. After all, it's much better than the Grand Calamity Class Dungeon experience...' He even found himself musing.

Before leaving the battlefield that day, Rey ensured to make his own preparations.

That was all he could do, after all.

'Bottom line is that everyone else has gone to their respective locations... except me.' He wasn't in any particular hurry, considering the process that awaited them in the Dragon Continent, but it simply felt awkward to be the last person remaining—especially since he was the one who suggested their current formation.

'Well, being alone did give me enough time to think about... everything else...'

He had to say goodbye to Alicia in a very heartfelt way, and despite her concerns for him regarding his journey to the Continent, she didn't say or do anything negative.

She had chosen her path, and he chose his.

In fact, she didn't even seem very upset that Lucielle was tagging along with him.

'Alicia was more understanding than I expected. Well, I suppose she has no choice, given that the main reason I'm doing all of this is for her sake.'

Of course, Rey didn't tell her any of that.

He didn't want her to know the details of his mission, but the more important reason was because he didn't want to make her feel burdened in any way by his choice.

'There's a chance she'll feel guilty or something.' Rey sighed.

He didn't want that at all.

'I'll miss her, though... and I really hope she's safe.'

Of course, he had already taken measures to ensure she wasn't ever going to be in any kind of danger—not if he could help it.

And, if the danger was so severe, he would completely abandon everything to save her.

—Everything!

'Then there's Trisha...' There was no way he could forget his farewell with Alicia without remembering his other classmate.

They had both exchanged awkward glances throughout the experience, but she finally spoke to him before departing to the Camp, she finally spoke to him.

They ended up wishing each other luck before everyone entered the portal.

'I guess this means we are cool now...' He smiled awkwardly.

He checked her Status Window, just to be sure, and it seemed she still had feelings for him. He felt bad about the whole thing, but there was nothing he could do.

... Or was there?

'I mean, Alicia wants to leave, and my relationship with Esme will probably never remain the same again. Maybe being with Trisha is really the best option here.'

She liked him, and he clearly found her attractive. Best of all, she seemed to have a very strong attachment to this world, so there was a chance that she wouldn't want to leave—just like him.

'T-then, should I—'

No.

Rey already knew he couldn't follow through with that thought, and it was for one single reason.

'I can't be that unfair to her.'

There was no way he would treat her like a consolation prize, or a rebound, after not getting with the main girl that he wanted to end up with. No way... 'I can't intentionally do that to her.' After

sighing about it and shrugging, he shut his eyes and contemplated on his rather bleak and lonely future.

Right then—at that very moment—Rey heard a voice and felt a presence at the same time.

"REYYYYY!"

He opened his eyes and saw a particular girl a short distance from him.

'H-huh...?'

She had long white hair, with a single horn protruding from her forehead like a unicorn. Her eyes were crimson, but had a hint of purple within them. She had pale, clear skin, and her absolutely stunning dress complimented her perfectly.

Most importantly, she was petite.

Her chest was quite bountiful, and her figure was immaculate, but she was considerably short. All of this added to her charm, of course, especially her child-like smile and sparkling eyes.

She looked about Rey's age—no, perhaps a year or two younger.

'Ahh...' Everything about her appearance made Rey's eyes widen as she ran towards him—though he perceived everything in slow motion.

It seemed like forever before she finally reached him.

"Tah dah!"

"...." He was initially speechless at her grand presentation and overly familiar attitude.

If he wasn't aware of the context of their mission, he would have mistaken her for someone else. But, Rey had no doubt about it after seeing her up close.

"Lucielle...?"

"Yup! In the flesh!" She grinned brightly, flashing her signature smile while giggling like a kid.

Rey couldn't express how stunned he was—not just about her beauty, which was a great deal, but also the disguise itself.

Lucielle's form was completely different from how he remembered her.

'How did she pull off something this perfect?!'