

Extras 771

Chapter 771 To The Dragon Continent!

"Ohhh! So, basically, you used Time Magic to age yourself down, which explains your much younger form..."

Lucielle went over the complex process of how she was able to achieve her current results, and despite Rey understanding it enough to summarize her points in his statement, he still found himself stupefied by the result.

'How was she able to do that? She doesn't have a Skill like [Tempora], yet she made a Spell that could perfectly apply Time Magic to every component of her body and age them down proportionately, so she could become a particular age.'

Rey didn't even want to think about how many variables she would have to consider.

'This is insane, for real.'

"Don't make it sound so simple, Rey. It's a lot more complicated than that, you know? The actual..." She went on blabbing, forcing Rey to understand the complex rationale behind her Spells.

Perhaps she was hoping for some sort of intelligent discourse with him regarding Magic, but all he told her was—

"I see..."

Rey already knew, from his brief encounters with her, that this woman was far superior to him when it came to Magic.

Her knowledge and application, especially when it came to imagination, far exceeded his own. If he was a jack of all trades and master of none, she was a perfect Mage who completely mastered her craft.

Even then, she wanted to know more.

'I don't think she can get what she wants from me. The only reason I can do what I can is because I have Skills for it.'

Unlike her, who had to build all of this from the ground up, his method was far simpler.

Before Rey realized it, his respect for Lucielle rose once again.

"That doesn't explain your horns and all the other Dragon features."

"A-ahh! I modified my body so my Dragon form wouldn't be a mere illusion. I added a bit of Body Modification Magic—something akin to transmutation—when aging my body down, so all the processes synced together and produced my current state."

Once again, Rey was impressed.

'Using Self-Transmutation is harder than it sounds. Unlike applying it to inorganic targets, transmuting organic properties is far more complex. But, even using it on people is far easier than using it on yourself...'

In essence, Lucielle managed to pull off something so difficult, while making it appear simple.

'That's probably why she took so much time. Honestly, all the annoyance I had has pretty much vanished at this point.' Rey was far too impressed to harbor any ill will towards his soon-to-be comrade.

"Impressive."

"Hehe! Why, thank you!"

Her loud, optimistic voice, and her other child-like tendencies blended perfectly with her teenage form. As she twirled around, her silver-like tail danced around, and her wings with similar color flapped.

She truly was divine in her disguised form.

"What about you, Rey? What about your disguise?" She asked with a teasing smile, though her eyes were wide open in curiosity.

"Ah... well..."

He suddenly felt a little embarrassed upon realizing his half-hearted efforts towards the disguise he made for the expedition. In fact, if not for Ater's guidance, his Dragon form would have turned out even worse.

As such, he thanked his faithful Familiar as he activated [Perfect Veil], while using [Divine Persona] to bump it up to the [Perfect Divine Veil] he intended it to be.

Once he was done with that, he displayed his disguise.

Pitch-black hair, with bright azure eyes that seemed to absorb all the blue around it. His hair was longer than usual, so he packed it together in a falling ponytail. He was dressed casually, but cleanly. His wings were black—same as his tail, and the scaly remains on his body had a similar, but much brighter complexion.

"Ta-dah!"

Upon seeing his disguise, Lucielle appeared dazed for a second.

Her cheeks turned bright red, and her eyes seemed to glimmer—even if it was for a second—while she stiffly remained in her position.

"It's... flawless." She whispered.

Rey barely caught her words, but once he heard it, he felt relieved. Honestly, if not for the many revisions that Ater made on his design, it would have probably been a different story with Lucielle.

For that, he thanked his dear Familiar.

Though... he still felt a little guilty for taking credit that he didn't deserve.

'The last thing I want is for her to overestimate my abilities later on...' As soon as he thought that, he quickly looked for something to change the topic.

"Look at our color design. It's the opposite of each other. What a weird coincidence, right?"

"Right? It makes us resemble a couple!"

Lucielle's sudden declaration made Rey instantly regret shifting gears toward another topic. He wanted to say something, but chose to swallow his initial reaction to her completely unprovoked innuendo.

"Why... would you say that?" He maintained his smile and asked this instead.

"Opposites attract!" She beamed.

Black and White.

Their color schemes indeed perfectly encapsulated that postulation.

Still—

"Well, you shouldn't say stuff like that anyway..." He itched his cheek, looking in another direction to avoid looking at her bright smile.

Seeing how she was now, there was a chance he could take her seriously.

"Relax, man. It's just a joke." Lucielle fist-bumped Rey on his shoulders, causing him to sigh and look at her. She was giving him that intense smile of hers.

"Besides, don't you like Alicia already? I don't even compare."

'Eh?'

"I should probably look for some cute Dragon boys... maybe girls too... that are single in the Academy."

'What the—?!'

"I wonder about their performance, though. Hehehe! I managed to capture one Dragon one time, and damn... he had quite the—"

"That's enough, Lucielle!" Rey couldn't take it anymore.

He was already beginning to wonder if Lucielle would behave like this throughout their time together, and that made him dread their journey a little.

Still, she had proven to be indispensable to the task, so it was a non-negotiable deal.

'That's enough messing around already.'

After taking a deep breath and returning the atmosphere to a rather serious one, he focused his gaze on the teenage Lucielle and spoke.

"It's time to depart—" Before he could finish his statement, she pushed her hand upward, jumping as she completed his sentence.

"—To the Dragon Continent!"

Chapter 772 Examination Center

F'arank was an Examining Officer.

His job required him to constantly sit behind the same desk, within the same building, every single day, for the arrival of Examination Candidates.

Administrative Professions were not the most respected in the Dragon Empire, but he and his colleagues weren't particularly scorned due to the role they played in one of the most important sectors of the Empire.

—Education.

The Entrance Examination Facility of the Empire was a massive structure that everyone throughout the land knew very well. It was visited by scores—if not hundreds—of Dragons every day, and remained the most popular way to enter the Academy.

In this place, young ones interested in further study in the Academy would apply as Examinees. As was trite, they would have to take an important exam known as the Entrance Exam, in order to test their capabilities and determine if they were indeed cut out for the Empire's only official and distinguished Academy.

Compared to what was practiced in other regions, the Dragon Educational System took a much different approach when it came to its potential students.

There was no restriction to the age and period which a student could apply to join the Academy. All they had to do was go to the Entrance Examination Facility and register themselves as viable candidates.

Once that happened, they would have to wait for the day of the Entrance Examination—which typically occurred once every week.

Hence, anyone could apply up to 52 times a year.

This system wasn't only restricted to Entrance Exams, but had a similar influence on the Academic Curriculum of the Academy itself.

Students could also move on to the next classes at no particular interval. As long as they distinguished themselves at any of the Academy Events and expressed their desire to climb the ranks—or class—they would be allowed.

In essence, education was all about ABILITY.

Those who lacked talent and skill would be left behind—though with the opportunity to get better and try again—while the truly powerful ones were throttled forward to achieve greater heights.

F'arank remembered how it took him nearly fifteen years to complete his own degree at the Academy, which was probably why he ended up being stuck in an Administrative Role, rather than as an official warrior for the Empire.

Despite being a Dragon Solider in Class, his role in society was nothing more than a clerk or proctor.

It sucked, but F'arank also recognized his role.

He—just like the rest of his comrades—was nothing more than a cog in this machine.

As long as his efforts made the Empire advance further, which would consequently please the Emperor, then he had to be fulfilled.

On this particular day—the Examination Date—F'arank was not required to sit behind his desk. Instead, he had to monitor the Examinees, as they completed their tests in order to prove themselves

worthy of the Academy. He had done this so many times that he had lost count already, and the same could be said about his comrades.

Well, except maybe for the newer recruits—though, those were few.

F'arank and his colleagues entered the Examination Hall that day to check on the progress of the Examinees, who had all been placed in the same massive expanse for one purpose and one purpose alone.

—To fight.

This was the final, most important test.

Dragons were natural predators and perfect fighters. They were the strongest on H'Trae for a reason, so the most important thing for a Dragon was their combat ability—especially in warfare.

This was why a Battle Royale remained the staple for the final test of the Examination.

It was also the one with the highest score.

In essence, this was truly what determined whether or not an individual would be accepted into the Academy or not.

It was F'arank and his colleague's job to observe the fight between the students and determine the ones who would make it into the Academy based on the last ones standing.

Since he had done this so many times, he could already estimate how many people would be left standing.

'At this point, a few hundred will still be up. Those are the only ones worth watching. The dregs will only be a waste of time...'

Which was why the Examiners were entering the hall later than usual.

This was the standard practice.

Out of the few hundred, only less than a hundred would be chosen.

On a good day, up to fifty could be selected that week, but it usually averaged around thirty or thirty-five. F'arank looked at his colleagues, and they had the same emotionless expressions on their faces.

Their jobs were predictable.

There was no real purpose to it, either.

Any of them could be easily replaced, and barely anything interesting even happened.

Besides, most of the students who passed the Entrance Exams would still be expelled due to the harshness of the Academy's grading system, so it felt like they were recycling trash a lot of the time.

Still... F'arank could not complain about his job.

This was his duty to the Empire—all for the pleasure of the Emperor.

'H-huh...?' F'arank found a sudden change in the expression of his comrades the moment they finally made their way into the hall.

Their eyes were wide open—almost bloodshot—and their bamboozled expressions were far from the stale and predictable kind that he had grown to expect.

It seemed they were all at a loss for words.

'Come to think of it... why is it so quiet?'

A few hundred were supposed to remain at this point, which meant the battle had to be reaching its climax.

Yet... 'Ahh.'

... There was no sound.

F'arank took his eyes off his comrades and cast his gaze on the massive center that had was supposed to have become a battlefield.

Instead, it was nothing more than a sea of bodies.

Fallen Examinees littered the floor, to the point where their unconscious, wounded, and completely battered bodies covered the hard ground entirely.

Only two, out of the thousands, were still standing.

The boy had jet black hair, while the girl was blessed with pure white hair—the two opposites resembling a couple designed by fate. They had completely demolished the competition by themselves—and in such an absurdly small amount of time.

'Ahh...' He had never seen anything like this in all his life.

F'arank knew at that instant... only they would be admitted into the Academy the following week.

'... Amazing!'

Chapter 773 Combat Exam [Pt 1]

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[Moments Earlier]

'Ater, you genius!'

Rey and Lucielle—both of them in their Dragon disguises—stood among the rest of the Examinees in a massive hall. They had neutral expressions on their faces, but their minds were racing with several things.

For Rey, he couldn't help but internally thank his immensely incompetent Familiar.

'I have no idea the kind of insight that guy has, but he really did make everything easier for us.'

Apparently, Ater was able to interrogate the two Dragon Generals who infiltrated the Capital over two weeks ago, learning all about the Empire's workings—including details of the Academy and how to get in.

It was all thanks to that information that Rey and Lucielle knew how to navigate their way in the Empire... which brought them to their current predicament.

—The Academy Entrance Exams.

'Getting past Customs wasn't particularly difficult, due to my Skills, though we still had to remain very lowkey...'

Entering enemy territory was a task that could never be downplayed.

He and Lucielle prepared every countermeasure possible in case something went wrong, and these were already measures he had discussed with Ater prior to his departure. He had to worry about every variable.

Thankfully, everything was smooth sailing—from their arrival at the Empire to their temporary accommodations—all leading up to this moment.

'I thought the biggest issue would be getting into the Academy, but I never expected the process to be so simple until Ater told me.' Rey smiled, both hands in his pockets as he observed the Dragons that littered his sight.

There were at least thousands of them present—some looking young, while others appearing a little too old to be going to school.

People belonging to various age groups could be spotted waiting, just like them.

'Well, I guess that's what happens when the Education System is non-discriminatory...' None of that was his business anyway.

Glancing at the excited Lucielle, who was doing her best to hide her excitement while looking at so many Dragons around her, Rey felt a bit of a sigh leaking out of his lips.

'I was worried that she'd be a little uncomfortable here, due to being surrounded by so many enemies and also because we're so far from home, but... she seems to be in a much better mood than even me.'

Lucielle's cheeks were slightly flushed with pink as her wide open eyes took in everything.

Honestly, she resembled a teenager more than an adult.

'Almost makes me think her disguise is real too...' He looked away, noticing that she had noticed his gaze on her and was now turning towards him.

To distract himself, Rey went over what had happened prior to their current situation.

'We've already gone through a few tests: the written exam, which is basically just basic comprehension and writing skills, the physical exercise exam, and the mana aptitude exam...' All of them didn't take very long and weren't very difficult.

Rey was initially worried that they would ask him something regarding the History of the Dragon Empire, or something of the sort, but just as Ater had assured him, it was nothing that complicated.

Neither he nor Lucielle had any issues with that—or any of the other tests for that matter.

'Physical tests were a breeze, though Lucielle struggled a little with that. And as for Mana, I had to severely limit myself in that category.' He smiled.

There was no way he could allow his true power to be exposed in such a place.

'I'm definitely stronger than a Dragon General, and I'm pretty confident that I could hold my own against a Lord—though, I won't be sure of victory until I actually fight and beat one.'

Such an entity had no place in the Dragon Academy, yet here he was.

'Still... still...'

He cast his gaze forward and noticed that a small crowd of Examiners had now joined the Examinees in the hall—most likely to announce the fourth and final part of the Entrance Exams.

This was also the most important.

'Everything else contributes ten points each, making a total of thirty. This one has a chunk of the points—seventy percent.'

Just as he thought this, the Chief Examiner stepped forward and explained exactly the same thing.

His voice was absurdly loud due to an Enchanted Item that resembled a microphone.

The massive expanse they were in resembled the inner court of a football stadium, but much larger than any stadium Rey had ever seen. There were also no spectator rings.

Just enough space for thousands of Dragons to duke it out in a—

"Battle Royale! You will all fight each other until the time limit is exceeded. The last people standing are those who will be deemed to pass."

That meant it was possible for a varied number of people to pass. Most could pass, and most could fail—depending on how strong they were and how long they held on.

... At least, that was what it seemed like on the surface.

'But the time limit is arbitrary.'

"The Time Limit won't be disclosed to you all, so keep fighting until we inform you the time is up." The Examiner's voice roared in the hall, causing some to smile knowingly.

Rey was among those who did.

'That's because they won't stop the fight until a sufficient number of Examinees have fallen.'

In essence, this wasn't just about hanging on, but about knocking down the opposition as fast as possible so the round would end quickly.

'Veteran Examinees already recognize this. I can see a few faces that fall under that category already...' He looked around and found some rather confident grins among the uncertain or cautious ones.

He reckoned, from their Status Windows, that they were more likely to pass than the other inferior candidates.

'Doesn't matter in the current situation, though.' Rey and Lucielle had already agreed on how they would pass the final portion of this exam—and it was Ater's recommended choice too.

'We're the only ones passing this round!'

Chapter 774 Combat Exam [Pt 2]

The rules were given.

"No fatal attacks. You are all potential resources that will be useful to the Emperor in one way or the other, so do not take the lives of any of your competitors. Other than that, anything goes."

The stage was set.

"Knock your opponents out, and keep fighting here until the time limit is reached. We are recording everything, so make sure you contribute as much as possible to the elimination of your competition. That will greatly affect your score."

Everyone was ready for what was to come.

"The Examiners are going to excuse you now. The moment we leave this place and shut the doors behind us... the Exam Begins."

Once the Chief Examiner finished his statement, he gestured to the rest of his colleagues, and they all began to depart from the stage.

The Examinees watched with bated breaths—waiting with wide open eyes.

One by one, the officials bled out of the hall, until only few were remaining. However, it was only a matter of time before they all went out of sight.

Beads of sweat, coupled with the racing of hearts, evident by the nervous shuffling of the gazes of Examinees from one to another, afflicted a majority of the people present.

They sought their first prey with careful eyes, gauging them based on many factors; particularly an arbitrary assumption of strength.

—Or weakness.

Finally, the last of the Examiners left the room, forcing the door behind him to close automatically.

Once that happened... all hell broke loose.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

The determined Dragons rushed at one another in a frenzy, causing massive quakes and overwhelming explosions in the first few seconds of the battle's commencement.

Spells were chanted, and swift blurs of movement danced around the battlefield.

Foolish Examinees decided to focus on defense or evasion—an impossible task in such a pervasive landscape of battle.

Running away was futile.

Predators had already targeted prey—sometimes multiple at once—so rather than running or hiding, the best way to survive was to fight.

Fight as hard as possible!

The wiser Dragons ensured to properly defend themselves, while focusing most of their attention on offensive maneuvers. Magic and Skills were the central abilities of Dragons—the latter especially—so it only made sense that there were tons of chants bustling through the land battlefield.

More eruptions of power rushed through the air, and the echoes of groans, grunts, screams, and cries were drowned by the destructive reverbs.

Over and over again.

No matter what happened, everything was chaos.

Well—

"Ready?"

—Not to two people.

"Yeah."

Rey and Lucielle both glanced at each other, donning confident smiles, as they welcomed the commotion around them with excitement. Several opponents were already closing in on them, causing electrifying sensations to run through their bodies.

They couldn't hold it in any longer.

"Let's go!"

~WHOOOOSH!~

In an instant, both of them vanished from their positions, leaving nothing but a cloud of dust—as well as the unconscious bodies of those near them—in their wake.

Rey took the initiative by attacking first—summoning a blunt blade in his hand and opting for a more Martial Arts-based fighting model than the usual Magic and Skills type.

Not only would he have the advantage of speed in that regard, but he was also going to have tons of fun with the exercise.

Besides, it wasn't like Dragons—even those presently in the hall—didn't have a concept of Martial Arts.

A few were even utilizing it.

Unfortunately, compared to his own level of skill, they were... "Weak!"

~WHOOSH!~

Easily getting amidst a few enemies with his nimble movements, catching them off guard as he appeared in their center, he held his blade with tight precision.

"Gurhhk!" Most of them noticed him, trying their best to get rid of him first.

They were too slow, though.

In a blur akin to wind, he easily sliced through them with his dull blade, shattering their bones and knocking them unconscious in swift arcs.

As soon as he did this, however, he noticed a few projectiles being fired towards him.

"Hup!"

Easily kicking the ground beneath his feet, Rey leaped high into the air and voided the successive bombardments that radiated beneath him.

That wasn't enough to avoid his new and incoming adversaries, though.

They had surrounded him, all coated in what resemble blazing energies of varying colors—their Mana, no doubt.

While still in the air, they completed their chants and launched destructive blasts of fire, lightning, winds, cyclones, etc.

The abundance of their projectiles guaranteed them a surefire win, at the very least.

Right? RIGHT?

—Wrong!

~VWUUSH!~

A wall of energy surrounding Rey easily blocked all of them while he twisted his body in the air and thrust himself in the direction of his opponent.

"W-wai—!" Before any resistance or plea could be made, the blade came crashing down.

~SWUSH!~

The enemy instantly fell to the ground, and the rest met similar fates as Rey ricocheted in the air and sliced them all while bouncing away to his next victims.

All of these happened within seconds, and he was smiling throughout.

As he darted back to the ground to resume his fun, he noticed a lone figure hanging in the air.

'Lucielle...? She hasn't attacked anyone yet?'

She was staying still above, watching everyone with a wide smile as she clasped her fingers together.

There was no doubt that she was planning something.

'Oh well... I'll leave that to her.' With a maniacal grin on his face, he bolted downward and spread destruction around him with his landing.

—Completely unaware of the devastation that would soon follow.

"Now then... where to begin?"

Lucielle's white hair flowed in the air as clasped hands remained in place, inhaling slowly while she watched the commotion beneath her.

'Rey is having all the fun. At this rate, there'll be nothing left for me. In that case... he wouldn't mind it if I went a little rough, would he?'

"Furnace Spell Activation... and Blizzard Spell Construction."

As she began to part her hands from each other, crackles of lightning began to roar, followed by the loud howls of wind and the rising heat of unmatched proportions

Bursts of blue electricity trapped in a torrent of bright white winds manifested on one side, while the other side was occupied by the brilliant red energy that simmered like molten magma and brightly burning flames.

Lucielle shifted her hands and began to aim, drawing the two opposing and equally destructive elements together; all while her eyes remained glued on the targets beneath her.

As they merged, purple energy danced around, filling the air around her with an electrifying sensation and vibrations that would make anyone shiver.

Once it was done, the purple mass stood at Lucielle's fingertips, an over-expanding orb that was ready to burst wide open and spill out its contents.

The sound was enough to stop everyone in their tracks, as they all paused and looked in the direction of the fast-approaching blast of destruction.

In a split-second, its power dispersed, forcing everyone to feel the combined sensations of heat, cold, electrocution, and finally... dispersion.

It felt like a distant reverb that kept reducing its volume as time passed. The injured that leaked out painful groans soon lost consciousness, and the ones resolute to continue were knocked out cold. Once the dust settled, only two were left standing.

The two were surrounded by badly injured students, but since Lucielle reduced the overall output of the Spell—with the goal to stun and not kill—none of them suffered any fatal injuries.

"That was quite impressive." Rey smiled as he looked beside him to find the Grand Mage grinning with delight.

"I was about to say the same to you. You were so fast, beating so many people by the second. I figured I had to do something drastic, or you'd steal all the glory."

They both chuckled and giggled as she said this.

Despite merely using a portion of his strength, and not relying on any Active Skills, he still managed to decimate so many. It was an effortless attempt, and yet to everyone who witnessed his might, they would only be able to describe it as overpowering.

'I'm sure Lucielle also wasn't putting her all into that Spell...' Rey was partially curious about what a full-powered version of the Spell would be, but he could probably figure it out himself.

'I was able to keep it as a Skill, but I could also just replicate it with Magic...'

Speaking of keeping stuff as Skills, his [Doppel] really had a massive feast when dealing with the Dragons in his sight.

'Most of the Skills or Magic they displayed were in the C or D Tier, with a few exceptions in the B Tier. But, thanks to my [Perfect Divine Growth], they were mostly promoted to the A-Tier, at the very least.'

Some even reached S-Tier, which was incredibly crazy.

Of course, due to [Doppel]'s limit, he couldn't have all of the Skills—but it wasn't like that was his intention from the start.

His true motive dwelled in [Sacrifice].

'I constantly fed my new Skills to [Sacrifice], just to boost my Stats. Just as expected, the value of Stats I got per Skill wasn't too high, but... they added up greatly once I put in thousands of Skills.' He smiled to himself.

The funny part about his current circumstance was that he never even expected the Exams to be a haven for growing stronger, but alas! It had made him considerably stronger than ever.

"Status Window."

[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: 99,500

- 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]

'Crazy!' Rey grinned widely, noticing the Skills in his [Doppel] Slot were also a bit higher than they were prior to the Exam.

That was because he made sure to keep a few Skills he thought could be useful in the future. If he fed them to [Sacrifice], he wouldn't be able to get them ever again.

To avoid such a situation, he kept them anyway.

'In any case...' Noticing the arrival of their Examiners, Rey made sure to hide his excitement and put on a stoic front.

'... Time for our results, I suppose.'

"R'ai and Luc'ia... you have passed this portion of the Exam, and by extension, you pass the entire Entrance Exams."

Just as the two expected, they had scaled through in flying colors.

While it still felt weird for them to hear their disguise names, none of them showed it as expressions on their faces. Instead, they nodded and gracefully accepted their victories.

Based on standard procedure, they would have to return after a few days for their ID Card, Uniforms, and a bit of Orientation. Once all of that was done, they would resume school a few days later.

In essence, it took a week more to resume school after the Exams.

Rey and Lucielle understood this perfectly, so they patiently waited for those few days and returned to the Center for their ID, as well as every other thing they would be needing for the Academy.

The best part about all of this was the seamless transition they had.

Because of the prestige of the Academy, a Student ID Card served as more than enough of an identity, so neither of them needed to forge any other kind of ID for the purpose of their stay in the Academy.

The Academy was also in the same city that they were, but since it existed as a community of its own, they would have to leave for the place from the Center.

As such, a few days after Orientation, they were to return for a trip to the Academy—being escorted by staff from the Center.

Everything—from the procedure, to the journey itself—was seamless.

The Dragons were so technologically advanced that they used Teleportation Chambers for rapid transport. This was installed in all the major areas of the Academic City, so even the lay people of the Empire could use this for extra convenience.

Due to this, no one ever came late for work, so it aided in the efficiency of the Empire's workforce. Though, to be fair, even without teleportation... there would still be no latecomers.

All Dragons were loyal to the Emperor, and their only purpose was to please him.

—Always.

"Welcome, you two... to the inner walls of the Academy." As Rey and Lucielle were brought into the amazing world that dwelled within the tall and heavily guarded walls of the new school they would be attending, the Official escorting them raised his hand and showed them the school's true beauty.

"Whoa!" They both exclaimed, glancing inconspicuously at each other with knowing smiles.

They had successfully infiltrated their target, after all.

'Just wait for me, Adrien. I'm on my way!'

Chapter 776 Class Introductions

The Draconic Imperial Academy.

It was a haven of greatness, sponsored directly by the Emperor, and supervised by a Dragon Lord. No other institute, besides the military, boasted of such prestige in the entire Empire, which spoke volumes of its importance.

Most Dragons either went to Centers or were homeschooled for their primary education, but the Academy was only attended by those who had the potential to be of proper use to the Empire through official means.

Those who attended this were the ones who had the most respectable jobs in the Empire, and the ones who excelled were the ones who had access to the most prestigious occupation a Dragon could ever have.

—A Military Officer.

It was the dream of every Dragon to serve the Emperor on the battlefield, so it was the highest standard.

Not just anyone could go to the battlefield.

It was only the best of the best.

To reach such heights, however, the bare minimum would be to graduate with sufficient merits accrued within the Academy.

This meant graduating in as little time as possible, and also in the highest possible Class.

In the Academy system, each Class was divided into Rank A to F, and depending on the results of the Entrance Test, students were placed in their respectively ranked Class. Points were allocated per week based on results and challenges, and if the students in a particular Rank Class fell short, they would be demoted to a lower ranked class. Those who failed to meet up at Rank F were naturally expelled from the Academy. In essence, the Entrance Exams were merely the beginning. There were 3 Basic Stages in the Academy, and once one passed all 3, they became a fully fledged Soldier. One could also take the Advanced Stages—also 3 in number—and be promoted to a Commander.

Then, only the exceptional ones could climb the ranks once more and take the Final 3 Stages to become a General.

This meant the Imperial Academy offered a total of 9 Stages.

Some could clear these 9 in a decade or two—signifying great talent and potential—while others could never hope to accomplish it in a century.

Even among Dragons, the strongest race in the world, there existed unfairness in status and power.

"Hey, are you excited for this batch of newbies?"

Within the grand central building of the Basic Stage's Classrooms, on the first floor of the massive structure, was Class 1-A.

It was a considerably large room, especially when considering the number of students that were inside—a total of thirteen—and just how neatly arranged and properly spaced their seats were from one another.

The white and black walls shone like marbles, and the seats—both empty and occupied—were arranged in a neat format of five rows and four columns.

A total of twenty seats.

With most of the students standing and gathered together in a group, talking constantly about the new students they would be getting that very day, the classroom seemed even more spacious than normal.

It was also noisier as a result.

"Am I excited? Is that even a valid question? It's crazy, right? It's been a while since we've had someone pass the Entrance Exam and straight up advance to Class A, yet we're getting two of them."

"W-well, when you put it that way..."

"Of course, I'm excited!"

"Hahaha! Right?"

"How long do you think they'll last, though?"

"Well, we'll see whether or not they're worth their salt once we see them, right?"

"True... true..."

"But, I really can't wait. It's been so long since we've had fresh blood here—ah, well, not so long, but that one doesn't count."

"Shhh! You're too loud."

"Ah, yeah... well, I can't wait! I think I hear footsteps."

The students instantly scurried to their seats, not waiting before their instructor got too close before they did the needful.

"LET THERE BE DECORUM, EVERYONE! THE INSTRUCTOR IS—!" "You're the only one raising your voice now, Class Rep!" A few students whispered to the girl who stood on her feet to organize the class in response to the Instructor's arrival.

She cutely looked around her and realized the whispers were right.

She was the only one who was standing, and only her voice echoed loudly in the classroom, causing a pink hue to appear all over her cheeks.

"A-ah... sorry..."

Before she could sit, though, the Instructor entered the classroom—and with him, the two transfer students.

She couldn't even properly process this information before a certain voice echoed forth.

"Mi'ja... why are you on your feet?"

It came from the Instructor, whose stern demeanor and somewhat scary face caused the girl to shriek internally and tremble.

"Eeep! Well... I just... you see... erm... n-nevermind... I'm sorry, sir..."

Like jelly, she seemed to melt as she collapsed on her seat.

All students in the Base Stage were regarded as Newts, which was essentially the bottom of the food chain. Class 1—A or not—were the lowest of the 3 Stages, so this fact applied to them the most.

With an Instructor that was already a Commander, they had no choice but to show respect.

Hierarchy was everything in Draconic Culture.

Usually, the presence of their Instructor would demand utter silence, but the students couldn't help but gasp as he walked in, and that was due to the two who trailed behind him.

Even the flustered Class Rep was affected.

The jet black of the boy contrasted heavily with the pure white of the girl, creating a cathartic harmony that made them all shiver in silence as they watched the two face the class.

Gaping mouths and wide eyes instantly presented themselves to the newcomers.

"These are the only two who passed the Entrance Exams this time, and they have been deemed to be Class 1-A Material. Introduce yourselves, you two."

The two students stepped forward, and as they took turns speaking, hues of pink filled the faces of most students present.

"Hello, everyone. My name is R'ai... and it's a pleasure to be here."

"I'm Luc'ia! Nice to meet you all."

It wasn't merely the voice of the students that made them stand out, but their overall ambiance that was on full display.

—Especially their beauty.

Most of the Dragon Newts had to agree that these were exceptionally attractive students that had graced them on this very day.

R'ai was beyond handsome, and Luc'ia was the epitome of beauty.

Plus, since they were the only ones who passed—and were instantly d in Class 1-A, they had to be very strong.

All of this was enough to make everyone frozen as they stared.

But... they weren't the only ones who were surprised.

'W-what... in the world?'

Rey's eyes were wide open as he faced the class in absolute shock.

He wasn't stunned by the adoring eyes of the Class, nor was he bothered by Adrien's absence in the Class he was brought to.

What took him by storm was the presence of a familiar individual—made all the more clear by the Status Window he was now staring at intensely.

'So this is where you were...' He controlled his expression, but that did very little to quell the feelings that swirled within him as he looked at the boy with golden locks.

There was no mistake about his identity.

'... Adonis.'

Chapter 777 A Quirky Welcome

"Settle down in your respective seats. Over there." The Instructor pointed Rey and Lucielle in the direction of their seats, to which they nodded and obediently walked towards. Since the chairs and desks were arranged in five rows and four columns, there was sufficient space for Rey and Lucielle in the fourth and fifth column. Per the instruction of the Instructor, though, they ended up seated right beside each other.

It was a very convenient arrangement, and Rey found both himself and his partner sighing in relief as they ventured to their seats.

Once they settled in their respective chairs, the three-horned man proceeded to speak.

"Welcome to Class 1-A, which I already assume you've already been briefed about in your Orientation. We're the best among Stage 1 Students, which is why both the number of available seats and students here are the smallest."

Indeed, Rey and Lucielle already knew all of this.

The other Classes, from B–F, had a lot more students in their classrooms. They were also doing their very best to ascend to Class A—though such a venture was nigh impossible.

"Consider it a privilege you made it here. But, also remember not to be too conceited and get comfortable. We have weekly assessments that get to determine a student's compatibility with their present class. If you fall short in overall points, you'll be demoted. And if a student gets sufficient points in a lower class... they can take your here. Hence, it's important not to underestimate anyone or feel invincible in your elevated status."

As the two heard this surprisingly insightful message from the Instructor, they nodded slowly and gave him all their attention.

"Now then... why don't we all introduce ourselves to the new students since they've been so courteous as to introduce themselves to us? I'll start first."

With a hand on his forehead, and one on his stomach, he bent slightly as he uttered his name.

"My name is Isra'il, a designated Dragon Commander and former war veteran. I chose education after serving the Empire for decades and paid my dues to the Emperor. I consider this a much more impactful and fulfilling occupation, which is why I am here now."

It was amazing how Isra'il wore his heart on his sleeve in his introduction.

He spoke with a warm smile, with a look of pride on his face as he listed his past accomplishments, as well as the honor he felt to be an educator to the current generation of exceptional talents.

Everyone in the class was also smiling as he spoke, which meant he wasn't exaggerating about anything. Their reactions also displayed that he was both beloved and respected by his wards—something that wasn't easy to accomplish.

"You'll find your stay here amazing, as long as you do not slack off. I certainly hope you maintain this prestigious position and continue to soar high as you were always meant to be. As your Instructor, I hope to inspire you and contribute greatly to that journey of yours. R'ai and Luc'ia... welcome once again."

A round of applause echoed in the classroom, causing Instructor Isr'ail to get a little flustered.

"H-hey, that's enough!" Their exaggerated claps made him slightly blush, but he quickly controlled himself and sighed.

Once they ceased the loud applause, he was finally able to get another word in.

"It's time for everyone else to introduce themselves."

Just like that, each of the thirteen other students in the classroom rose to their feet and began to introduce themselves.

"Call me Y'ama. It's nice to see new faces." This first guy seemed like a model student, with smooth black and grey hair, and a very neat uniform, and a polished demeanor.

He had a serious face, and it was clear he took education as his top priority.

"My name is Mor'ucho. I hope we can be friends!" Having a sharp contrast to the first guy, this guy had spiky blonde hair, with what resembled whiskers on his cheeks.

He had a playful smile, but everything about him screamed of sincerity and kind-heartedness.

"They call me G'eraiya. Consider it an honor to be in the same class as me. Don't worry... I'll make sure to look after you two."

This one just looked like an entitled asshole.

"M-my name is Din'ah! I-I think you're both really pretty... I mean... pretty amazing!" She was very pretty in her own right, but her flustered speech made it so she swiftly got her word out and returned shyly to her seat.

"I am Ph'irabel." Yet another girl—her appearance as plain as her introduction—spoke up, before returning to her seat.

"Chi'go is my name... balling in swag is my game. I suppose I should also look out for my juniors, so come ask me anything if you need anything." He had chains, earrings, and all manner of piercings on his body. Apparently, that was allowed in the Academy, so he didn't get into any trouble.

Still, despite his best attempts to act cool, he just felt a bit weird.

"A'manda." The female version of Y'ama spoke up, with her serious demeanor and her round glasses. Her no-nonsense attitude instantly caused the air to stifle a little bit.

"I am called Lu'ffa. My dream is to be the strongest Dragon Lord in history, and serve the Emperor on his right hand! Remember my name!" For some reason, this guy was wearing a straw hat indoors, with strands of his white hair leaking out of it.

His energetic crimson eyes nearly matched Lucielle's, though he simply appeared goofy.

"My name is Ad'oni... and it's a pleasure to meet you all." He was easily the most handsome person in the room, with golden hair and sparkling golden eyes.

As soon as he was done with his rather brief and courteous introduction, he returned to his seat.

For a moment, there was silence... but the introductions soon continued.

"Hi. I'm Mi'ja, and I'm the Class Representative. It's good to have new faces, and I hope you excel greatly here." A rather sweet-looking girl spoke up.

Her short pink and lime green hair swayed as she grinned brightly at the newbies.

"My name is Cyn'dy. Please go out with me, R'ai!" An oddly energetic girl said loudly, bowing and smiling creepily at Rey.

"My name is Man'dy. Please go out with me, Luc'ia!" An oddly energetic boy said loudly, bowing and smiling creepily at Luc'ia.

Yes... they were twins.

"Forgive the ramblings of my classmates, will you? I'm Geo'rge, and it's a relief to finally have normal classmates for once." This one in particular had glasses, and he flexed them while he spoke, having a mysteriously distant smile on his face.

Something about him—perhaps even more than that—seemed far from normal.

"Haha! Well, I hope to get along with everyone." Rey said with a smile, and his words were followed by Lucielle's voice practically reiterating what he said.

Thankfully, the class received their response well, so there was hardly any awkwardness present.

And so, after the rather interesting names burst forth, and each student exhibited their quirky personalities—enough for even Rey and Lucielle to nearly cringe at times—the rather lively welcome by the most elite class in their Stage came to an end.