

# Extras 91

## Chapter 91 Surprise From Aldred

"Sir! It's such a pleasant surprise to see you!"

Rey was almost instantly greeted by a very excited Aldred Winsley.

The man was grinning sheepishly at him, almost the way a fan would react when meeting their favorite celebrity for the first time.

'He's literally gushing... ' Was Rey's impression as he nodded slightly, entering the room.

"I was just asking your subordinate here when next we can see you."

Rey glanced at Noah and noticed him giving an uncomfortable smile.

'Were they pressuring him to convince me to come? Is that why he took so long?'

It was just a guess, so Rey dismissed it.

"In any case, it really is good to have you here. We have a lot to discuss."

Rey sat on the sofa, and Noah went and stood behind him almost instantly.

'Good. He knows how to keep appearances without me needing to tell him...' Rey's thoughts trailed on relief.

Noah seemed to be able to handle himself in business now, but sometimes he was still an indecisive klutz.

Like just now, when he allowed his time to be delayed because of Aldred Winsley.

His discomfort was hidden behind a smile, but Rey just ignored it. These sorts of things were best experienced for one to learn from it.

'But this is going better than I thought. It seems like they haven't caught wind of the incoming saturation.'

Rey was relieved, to say the least.

This meant he had a shot here—to sell and be done away with what would soon become useless rocks given enough time.

"Before we get straight into business, I believe there is someone you should meet."

After Aldred said this with a smile, he raised his hand and spoke to a bracelet on his wrist.

"Bring him in." His voice echoed.

'Who? I wonder what this is all about.'

Ret didn't need to wonder too long, because a knock promptly echoed and the door soon opened before he was done making guesses.

Then...

"We have brought him, sir."

Rey's eyes darted at the door and he saw two hefty-looking men standing behind someone who looked absolutely miserable.

The man in front of them was tied up. And he had rags for clothes. Bruises covered his face, and he had an expression that showed he was desperately begging for mercy.

He couldn't speak, though, as his mouth was covered in a very thick gag.

His eyes, however, said all that needed to be said.

'What the hell?! Who is that guy?' Rey wondered in shock.

He caught Noah fidgeting from the side of his eye, which meant that perhaps it was someone he recognized.

'C-could it be...?!' Rey's eyes widened under the mask as the two men dragged the miserable man into the room.

"We managed to track down and capture the man who claimed to be our Affiliate. A lowlife like this, using our name to scam one of your esteemed subordinates... that strikes me as unjust."

Rey found himself nodding despite the state of shock he was in.

"And so, we decided to punish him for his acts. Of course, he regrets his actions and would like to say a few things to you."

Aldred then proceeded to look at one of the hefty men and nodded while saying "Untie him."

The constraints that bound the man were removed, and the gag was also done away with.

Once this was done, Rey was greeted with the desperate prostration of the badly wounded man.

"I... I am shawry... Sho Shawrry... Sharry for my a-ackshuns. Won't... won't do it again. P-pleashe... hab mershheyy..."

It seemed like the man's teeth had been broken, and his swollen lips got in the way of his words.

'This is brutal...!' Rey watched as the man repeatedly apologized for his actions and hit his head on the ground while begging to be forgiven.

'I feel bad for him. I even got my money back, so there's no need to be this extreme.'

However, this was the Black Market. He couldn't say something like this here—to these criminals and brutes.

"Hm. You didn't have to go out of your way..." Rey responded, turning to Aldred.

"Hah! Nonsense! This is the least we could do for your continued business with us."

Aldred was smiling the same way any bootlicker would.

'I've spent enough time with Billy in the past to know what asskissing looks like.'

Aldred Winsley wanted something from Rey, which was why he and his group went ahead and did this.

'Do I really strike them as someone who would enjoy this? Goddamn!'

Rey was both impressed and worried about this.

'At least, now I know that this persona works well in the Black Market.'

His black skull mask was crudely made, so he was thinking of getting something new, but with this entire thing, he knew he had to keep it somewhere... just in case,

"Well, it's fine. It seems he has learned his lesson, so he's free to go. We have more important things to consider anyway."

Aldred seemed very satisfied with this answer, so he turned to the hefty men and nodded.

"T-THANK YOUU! Thank you so muuusshhhh!"

As he was dragged off, the pitiful man thanked Rey with his broken teeth exposed and his bulging eyes nearly popping out of his sockets.

'Now I feel like a criminal overlord or something, how did things end up this way...?' He nearly sighed to himself.

Still, he Rey himself for the conversation about to go down.

"Alright. What do you want?" He went straight to the point.

It was better if he took the initiative and had the lead in this conversation.

"Oho! It seems you figured it out, Sir."

"You wouldn't have done something as unnecessary as that without an intention. So, I ask you again... what do you want?"

Rey felt it was a bit insensitive, if not downright rude, to refer to what they did to that man in such a light manner.

But he already knew how the game had to be played.

He wasn't about to slack off.

"Indeed. The thing is... Sir... we are in need of those Monster Cores you provide." Aldred began with an honest position.

He had a gentle smile, one so genuine you wouldn't believe he ordered that a man should be beaten so badly.

He leaned closer to Rey and had that look of excitement still radiating all over his face.

"I see. How many exactly?" Rey answered, his tone calm and unchanging.

However, something entirely different was going on within his thoughts.

'YES! Perfect! The worst-case scenario has been avoided!'

He had to hide his excitement very well, and he felt like his mask really helped with that.

'I just hope they need as much as I have. It would be suspicious if I try to sell them more than what they are asking for.'

That would ruin the value of his goods, per the law of demand and supply.

'But right now I'm desperate. I don't mind selling it at a slightly lower price if—!'

"As much as you have!" Aldred's loud voice interrupted Rey's intense thoughts.

It was so surprising that he was taken aback by the broker's words.

"Hm...?"

As if Rey didn't hear it the first time, Aldred repeated his words with far more fervor.

"We are willing to buy everything you have!"

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## **Chapter 92 The Cores To Sell**

'How will this go...?'

Aldred tightened his fingers that were wrapped around one another as he made a resolute stare at the man before him.

Despite his confident demeanor, he was quite nervous.

'He hasn't shown up to sell to us in a few days, so the expansion plan has been compromised because of him...'

There was a chance that the man before then had broken the Exclusive contract and sold to another party, but Aldred didn't want to think that.

He just didn't seem like that kind of guy.

But, even if he did break their agreement, what was he supposed to do?

'He had an S-Tier Skill. Father warned me not to make him our enemy no matter what...'

That meant he couldn't even be penalized for breaking the contract.

All that the Group could do was try to renegotiate and strengthen their bond.

'We've given him no reason to doubt our sincerity. And while it isn't much, by disciplining that lowlife, I hoped we could show just how useful and committed we are to him.'

The man's unimpressed tone told Aldred that this move wasn't as effective as he had hoped, but he couldn't give up.

'For the expansion to other markets... we need a bulk of goods.'

If possible; the same amount as what he brought last time.

No—even double.

It actually didn't matter the amount he could provide. The more Monster Cores he had, the bigger their profit would be.

Aldred just hoped their esteemed seller would cooperate with them.

'In all my years, I've never been pushed to this point...'

Aldred learned everything he knew from his father, and he had spent his entire life in the KariBlanc Group.

He knew the inner workings of business and he had long mastered the art of negotiation.

Bargaining Power, Equivalent Exchange, Demand and Supply, and various other concepts of business had been ingrained in his brain since he was little.

The only reason he was currently operating under his moniker of Alfred Winsley—a mere broker—was simply a final test his father concocted to see if he was ready for the larger business world.

Aldred knew he couldn't afford to fail here.

"Are you sure... you can handle what I possess?" The moment he was asked this question, Aldred froze in place.

He instantly realized the error he had made.

'What did I just say? How could I have been so stupid!'

By saying they would buy all the Monster Cores in their seller's possession, he had implied that the KariBlanc Group could afford all of it.

For an individual with an S-Tier Skill, one who had long exceeded the limits of humanity, that would be nothing short of an insult.

Aldred knew he had to correct himself.

"I-I apologize. What I meant was that we'd buy as much as you're willing to sell. We only hope you can sell as much as possible."

It was impossible to decipher the seller's reaction to this since he wore a mask, so Aldred could only hope it was effective while gulping.

"I see. Very well, then..."

Aldred beamed a smile as he noticed the man straighten his posture.

'Thank goodness!' He sighed in relief.

'Looks like we've almost got ourselves a deal.'

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'This... this is crazy!'

Rey couldn't believe his luck.

He had expected to be the one desperate to sell his stuff, but it seemed like he possessed all the bargaining power.

'It will be foolish of me to keep hoarding my stock now.'

It was clear that the KariBlanc Group was in need of Monster Cores of good quality. It was inevitable that word of this got out, so it would only be a matter of time before the influx of Monster Cores would come their way.

From what Rey could tell, these people had a lot of influence.

The fact that they were able to find a random scammer just to please him, and their readiness to buy so many Monster Cores proved they were very powerful.

'I can't miss out on this opportunity now.' freewebnov(e)l

If he hesitated, there was a chance he would suffer a loss unlike any other.

'Since I've been given the opportunity, I'll sell everything I have!'

Rey opened his [Inventory], bringing out a couple of sacks from each box inside.

[A/N: [Subspace] has been changed to [Inventory]. It was originally the latter, but I think it became the former at a point in the story, but now I'm switching back to [Inventory]. Sorry for the confusion]

Of course, they were full to the brim with Monster Cores.

However...

'One of these sacks is different.'

Rey smiled as he opened the small sack—more like a pouch, really—in front of Aldred, and within it were Spatial Rings.

'Thankfully, I was able to get a good amount of Spatial Rings and implemented a prototype of my grand plan before everything went awry.'

It was regrettable that he could carry out his full plan to drain the Hobs of their stash of Monster Cores, but he at least got somewhere with it.

And now... Rey was about to profit from that sliver of quick thinking.

"Within each of these rings are three sacks of Monster Cores." Rey began.

"There are fifty rings in this pouch."

That was a total of 150 sacks of Monster Cores.

Adding that to the forty-five other sacks that were on display, it was a total of 195 sacks.

"This is what I am willing to sell to you, Mr. Winsley..."

Rey could see the man before him salivate as his eyes nearly popped out of his eyes.

The broker certainly wasn't expecting such an absurd influx of Monster Cores from Rey.

"The question is... can you afford it?"

As Rey's voice echoed in the room, he studied Aldred's overwhelmed expression.

'He seems surprised, but not to the point of being unable to pay...'

Rey couldn't be certain, so he kept his fingers crossed and waited for an answer.

Fortunately for him... luck was on his side.

"YES! WE WILL BUY EVERYTHING!"

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### **Chapter 93 The VIP Section**

The deal was sealed after that.

Aldred Winsley used an Enchanted Item to calculate just how many Monster Cores existed in each sack, and by multiplying them with the agreed-upon price, they arrived at the selling price.

A whooping 4,650 Platinum Coin!

'I still can't believe this...'

Rey was trying his best to remain composed after hearing such an absurd number, but his heart remained unsteady.

Adding that to his balance of 1,051 Platinum Coins, he now possessed 5,701 Platinum Coins in total.

'I never thought I'd get this much in a single go... talkless of now!'

Rey felt like a scammer, but he didn't feel the slightest bit bad.

Why would he?

This was the Black Market for a reason.

'Once the influx of Monster Cores arrive, these guys will be at a loss. I should probably avoid coming here for the time being...'

Rey smiled internally, realizing he had made enough money for now.

Training was what came next, so distractions like this were unnecessary.

"As always, it is a pleasure doing business with you." Aldred's voice woke him from his deep thoughts.

The deal had been completed, but they were both still in the lounge.

Staff had come to take away the Monster Cores, and also give him his money. At this point, Rey felt like he was overstaying his welcome.

'I should be leaving now...'

He rose to his feet in a slow, dignified manner. Aldred's gaze was on him the entire time.

"Likewise. I'm leaving now." He said in a monotone.

At this point, Aldred jumped to his feet—almost as if he hadn't expected their dear seller to leave so soon.

"Please, why not stay a bit longer? I would like us to discuss further on—"

"There are other places I must be..."

Rey didn't want to be among the few who would be late for Adonis' stipulated time.

He was already in enough hot water as it was.

'It'll be bad for my Extra Image if I keep having attention drawn to me...'

As a result, he decided to leave as early as he could.

Besides, it would really suck if the influx of Monster Cores happened while he was still in this building.

For his own safety, he had to scram.

"O-okay, I understand! But before you leave, why not take a look at our newest products? You're our esteemed seller, so it would be our greatest pleasure to show you some of what we have to offer."

Rey could already tell that they were baiting him to be a customer of theirs.

That way, the relationship could go both ways.

'Well... there's no harm in seeing what they have, I guess.'

Frankly speaking, Rey was looking for good equipment.

He often heard how Enchanted Items were lifesavers for Adventurers, and that even a weakling could be unbelievably strong with the right Items.

'Right now, even with my many Skills, I have limitations...'

Having Enchanted Items to complement his current abilities and make up for his weaknesses would serve him best.

"Fine. Let me see."

Aldred seemed extremely pleased to hear that Rey was interested, and he didn't hesitate to show his satisfaction.

At this point, Rey felt like the man he had first been introduced to, and the new Aldred he was seeing were too different people.

'I guess this is what being around stronger and richer people does to you...'

It reminded him a little of Billy.

'I can at least respect Aldred for his actions. He's doing it for the sake of profit. Business works like this...'

As for Billy, his own motives were simply useless.

'In any case, I'm happy I got to cut away from that guy pretty early.'

Rey could only imagine if Billy was still his friend, and how he would have been limited in a host of ways as a result.

'I would have probably told him of my Skill, and my desire to go out... and even this whole Black Market thing—that is even if I make it this far...'

The problem with being friends with certain people is that they tend to rub off on you.



'Billy would most likely disapprove of my behavior and would try to force me into training with him and the big leagues.'

Rey could see his life being so much more different just from that single variable.

'I'm not sure which I would like best, to be honest. But like this, I have more freedom...'

He was richer too.

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Aldred led the masked fellow to their shopping area—the place reserved for only the most esteemed of customers.

Even in a High-End Store like this, there was no way to escape discrimination in some way.

Certain products simply weren't meant for all eyes to see.

They were special—meant only for the cream of the crop.

The masked seller was brought to the place where those products were kept.

"Welcome to our VIP Area. All items here were made with the highest-grade of materials available." There was pride in Aldred's tone as he spoke.

No Monster Core less than Grade 7 was used to make any of the Items here, and only the most refined of minerals and Mana Crystals were utilized in the manufacturing process.

Not only that, but the goods were one of a kind—unless they came in a set.

Still, you would never see more than one person carrying an Item within this place.

A truly luxurious place.

"Due to your continuous relationship with us, we would like to give you a gift." Aldred began, breaking the silence in the room.

This was the true reason he had brought the masked man to their establishment.

"You may take any one Item of your liking. No, make that two... since your guard there might fancy something too."

Aldred could see their seller's subordinate squirm a little. He couldn't help but feel proud of himself for employing that strategy.

'He often sends this man to do business with us. If we can get him wholly on our side, I'm sure that would work to our benefit.'

"I see. Then I shall take a look around." The deep tone of the masked man curtly interrupted Aldred's thoughts, causing him to straighten up instantly.

"Y-yes! Please do!"

And so, the seller advanced to the rows of Enchanted Items, with Aldred standing still and looking at him from his position.

'Hopefully, with this... we can have his goodwill.'

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## Chapter 94 Getting Freebies

'Holy fuck! These items are all crazy!'

Rey had been to a place that was somewhat of a luxury store, so he had seen the Items they had there.

That was where he had been able to get all those Spatial Rings and the current attire he was donning.

He had also checked out a few more items through Noah after the sales that he had done for him.

However, compared to those... the Items he was seeing here were on another level.

They made those other items seem like garbage.

'And what the hell are these prices?!'

In the VIP section of the previous store, the cheapest Item there cost a Platinum Coin.

However, here, the cheapest cost five.

'I can buy decent land for that much, can't I?'

It seemed like, in this world, buying power was more expensive than buying property.

When Rey thought of it, it all made sense.

Of what use was getting a property you wouldn't be able to properly protect? The owner of land could be maimed and robbed—stripped of everything they possessed.

But the ones with power? How could they be victims of such cruelty?

No... they were the ones who would maim and rob.

They were the ones who would strip others of all they possessed.

In essence, having power was far more beneficial than possessing mundane things like property.

'With enough power, you can even defy established governments and carve your own path...'

With the threat of Dragons looming, this only made the need for power skyrocket.

Rey understood all of this, so after his initial shock, he calmed himself down.

Besides...

'The effects look nice. They're worth it.'

Every Item had a price tag on it, and a plaque underneath that showed the abilities they had.

As a result, Rey could tell what an Enchanted Item could do from a single glance.

'This one can actually increase Magic Spells by 100 percent. That's insane.'

It literally meant double the firepower.

'Unfortunately, it only works for Spells in the average to low Tiers, so it's useless to me...'

Besides, Rey had Buff Skills that could do even better, so while he was impressed, he wasn't willing to purchase it.

'I can see how a weakling could get twice as powerful just from that Item, though.' He smirked.

Rey averted his gaze to Noah, who was just standing still the whole time. He had forgotten about him since he was so invested in the items.

"You heard Mr. Winsley. Get over here and choose an Item for yourself."

Noah's next reaction proved that the boy had been waiting for Rey to say the words.

He jumped from his position and excitedly rushed to the rows of shelves that pristinely displayed their merchandise.

'All these items are great and all. It's hard to pick one...'

Rey's began to wonder if he should just get one gift, try it out, and then come back to buy a set of them using his Discount Privilege.

'Or should I just get the whole set of stuff I wanna buy now?'

Knowing that there was a high chance that he might burn his bridges with the KariBlanc Group, wasn't it best to milk as much from this entire relationship as possible?

'But... what if I don't end up burning my bridges?'

What if the oversaturation never happened?

Right now, it was just a theory in Rey's head, so there was a chance that he could be wrong about it.

If that was the case...

'Getting all the items I want now will make me seem too eager. As if I haven't seen these kinds of things before...'

It would ruin his image.

'Besides, since Aldred Winsley wants to give me a gift, if I take a lot of Items, he might feel obligated to give me everything for free...'

Rey didn't particularly mind that, but he knew it wasn't good for business.

'I can't let them think I'm taking advantage of them. We just both have to feel like we're mutually benefiting...'

There was a thin line between interest and greed.

Rey didn't want to be the first one to display the latter, though he knew it was inevitable that the KariBlanc Group would show it.

'That won't happen anytime soon, though. I should try to be as careful as possible here...'

As a result, Rey decided to pick just one item.

As he made his decision, his eyes spotted a sparkling ring on the shelf adjacent to where he stood.

'Hmmm?'

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"Ahh... so these are the items you've chosen!"

In Noah's hand was a blade—barely three inches long. It looked like a real sword, though—styled like a Japanese Katana.

It had three effects.

One was the ability to grow in size within a single second, turning into a life-size blade.

The second was the ability to turn invisible. In essence, this blade could switch between visibility and the opposite, even in its full-length.

That was an extremely useful ability for a weapon to have.

Lastly, it always returned to the user after a set period—or the user could always reach for it, and like a magnet, it would be pulled towards them.

'Such a cool weapon!' Rey eyed the blade with envy.

He wondered why he never saw this Item when exploring.

'Well... there are other Items and Weapons with similar abilities, so it's all good.'

Rey considered getting one for himself, but when he thought of it, he didn't really see the need to.

He had Skills that could replicate every effect that Noah's blade could do.

'But... well... Noah's blade doesn't cost Mana to use its functions.'

Even its invisibility didn't cost a single strand of Noah's energy.

'Well, it has Mana Crystals embedded within it, so it most definitely uses its own Mana Supply.'

That, of course, meant that it couldn't stay invisible forever. There would be a duration period and cooldown state.

'The Mana in it should recover over time, so it's not a one-time-consumable. That's good...'

Noah had gone to choose a great Item. Rey felt proud of him—

almost like a big brother would when their younger one told them they finally got a girlfriend.

Rey nodded behind his mask in support.

'The young shall grow...'

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## **Chapter 95 A Gift For Another**

"Sir Seller... are you sure this is the Item you desire? There are better Items we have to offer, and I'm not sure this suits you... style."

As Aldred said this, Rey took one more look at the Item that was resting on his palm.

The Enchanted Item that Rey got was a ring. It had a pure white surface, with an amber crystal affixed at the top.

The amber gleam it had reminded him of Alicia, which was when he remembered a big blunder he made.

'I totally forgot about her!'

They had both exchanged glances and smiles numerous times that morning, so perhaps she was expecting them to hang out.

'My mind was so swamped that I didn't even remember her!' Rey had thought in a panic.

That was when he decided to make the most irrational—but emotionally satisfying choice.

"It's not... for me." Rey answered Aldred with a fleeting tone.

He could already see Noah grinning from behind his hooded disguise, and he felt like punching his teeth out.

'So what if I got it for Alicia? It's normal for friends to get each other stuff...'

The ring was extremely beautiful. The craftsmanship on its white surface felt surreal, and the gem looked very pretty.

'Like her eyes...'

Many would fault him for making such a foolish choice, but he simply felt it was the right thing to do.

'I can just come back to get my items. But, I feel this would really suit her.'

The 'White Amber', as the Ring was called, had two major functions.

The first, and major ability, that it had was the [Automatic Healing] that it had imbued to itself.

As long as the Item was on, the wielder would constantly get healed if they sustained any damage.

Of course, this effect could be turned off, but it was a safe bet against surprise attacks and helpless situations.

'Alicia has a Healing Skill, but it consumes a lot of Mana. With the White Amber, she should be a lot safer.'

Then, there was the second function.

'Can boost the physical abilities of its user for a limited time, and can only be used once a day...'

It had the perfect effect for Alicia, who was a Tamer, and had weaker physical stats compared to her other qualities.

Rey had given this a lot more thought than simply its aesthetic.

"I-I see. It was my mistake to overlook the possibility of you having a significant other. Well, I absolutely understand." Aldred smiled in a knowing manner.

The kind of expression guys gave their fellow guys when it came to girls.

For a moment there, Rey felt like the two of them had become Bros.

"It's not... like that." Rey clarified, once again feeling Noah's smile pierce him from behind.

Something told him the boy was stifling a chuckle.

"I totally understand. She's very lucky to have someone like you who considers her safety."

Rey couldn't disagree with Aldred on that.

"By the way, Sir Seller... even with our solid business relationship, it hurts me that I have to address you in such a way."

Once Aldred said this, Rey's lips began to part.

'So that was his goal all along. To get close enough to me so I can tell him my name.'

"You initially introduced yourself as Yer, but I have to assume that it is a code name."

"That is correct."

"Then... I would like to know what to address you as."

This approach made Rey's grin widen even more.

Of course, he wasn't stupid enough to give Aldred his real name—though he doubted Aldred would know of his identity from just that.

Even if they were to meet later in the future, and someone called him 'Rey' in front of Aldred, he doubted the man would pay him a second glance once he saw how mundane he looked.

Aldred already had an image of Rey in his mind.

There was no way... no way in hell that he would ever suspect that he was actually the Masked Seller if they met in real life.

'Still... I don't feel comfortable sharing my real name.'

"Call me Ralyks." Rey spat out, generating the quickest name he could.

It was just his surname backwards.

"Ahh... Sir Ralyks. Understood..."

"Hm."

For a second, both stared at each other in silence.

Then—

"Well, I will personally package both Items for you, Sir Ralyks. It won't take long at all."

Rey and Noah nodded silently and waited to get the items they didn't have to pay for.

'I hope she likes it...'

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Rey and Noah walked down the street of the open-air market together, seeing chatters among buyers and sellers.

The ambiance of the public marketplace seemed to mostly consist of noise and the constant smell of spices.

Rey could see people haggling for their goods, and he observed some commotion in other areas.

'They'd never try something like this in a luxury store...' He found himself thinking.

After receiving the VIP treatment a couple of times, he couldn't see himself haggling like this.

'And then... there's the unpleasant side of this place...'

Rey could see beggars all around the marketplace.

Kids, adults—poverty did not discriminate here.

It reminded him of his own world.

'I guess even fantasy worlds have stuff like this too...'

It was heartbreaking to see the dirty beggars, with their desperate eyes and scrawny bodies, seek out scraps.

They made sure to stay in the shadows, considering the Capital's policies on vagrants and beggars.

'Life is harsh wherever you go.' Rey sighed, deciding to ignore them.

He indeed had enough money to make all of them set for life, but Rey knew he would never dispense a single Coin for these strangers.

It was a bit funny, though tragic...

All these people needed to survive in a day were a couple of Bronze Coins.

A single Bronze Coin could fill the belly of a beggar.

'Yet I just got Items worth millions of those in a single hour...'

"So, how exactly are you going to give her? Have you thought of it yet?"

Noah's voice interrupted Rey's thoughts, causing him to look at the boy in puzzlement.

He knew Noah had also noticed the beggars, but the fact that he chose to bring up this topic showed that he had noticed Rey's discomfort with the whole thing.

'He's trying to change topics for my sake? How cute...!' Rey couldn't help but grin.

"I don't understand what you mean. I'll just give it to her... normally." I responded with a slight shrug.

"And how will you explain where you saw the ring? It looks very expensive, you know? Too expensive for the Gold Coin we were given."

Noah made a valid point, but it wasn't like Rey hadn't thought of that.

"I don't need to overcomplicate it." Rey smiled as he told Noah of his grand plan.

He planned on lying that he won it in a game where he had to stake some money. In essence... gambling.

"And I'll tell her that I got it practically for free, compared to its value."

People would assume that he meant that exchanging a single Gold Coin for something like this was what he meant, not knowing he meant it literally.

"I'll also tell her not to tell anyone it's from me. But, even if she does, and I am placed before a Truthseeker, all I have to do is be honest."

Noah raised his brow as Rey said this.

"I'll tell them that I won it in a game and got it practically for free."

Noah didn't seem to understand how Rey could equate what had just happened to the lie he had concocted.

However, in response to his skepticism, Rey only broadened his smile.

"In the end, isn't business just another game?"

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## **Chapter 96 The Rendezvous**

Profit and Loss

Buying and Selling.

Stakes and Rewards.

Business was simply a complicated game where the players were the buyers and sellers.

In the end, both sides wanted to win, and it was often the case that only one party became ultimately victorious.

The seller would desire to sell at the highest price possible, while the buyer desired to get the product or service at the cheapest rate available.

In the end, the one with the lesser bargaining power or skill ended up losing and compromising their positions.

That was how Rey saw it.

"It's not technically a lie..." He smiled at Noah, who didn't wholly understand his thought process.

"Don't worry. I doubt it'll get to that level."

The United Human Alliance was in a precarious state. Rey doubted they would have the luxury of worrying about where Rey got a single Enchanted Item.

'I even asked Aldred, and unless the item is appraised, there's no way of telling what it really does...'

Why would the United Human Alliance go to all the trouble of yanking off and appraising the property of one of their strongest assets?

It was never going to happen.

'It's a relief we're able to use Enchanted Items now, though.'

Rey wondered what his classmates had gotten with their Gold Coin.

'I doubt they'd spend it wisely...'

\*\*\*\*\*

'Ahh... I was right!'

As Rey joined the gathering students at the agreed-upon rendezvous point, he could see the junks they were proudly holding in their hands.



From the words he could make out from all their chattering, he realized that those were the things they got with their Gold Coins.

'Bunch of idiots...' Rey wanted to slap his face and say, but he controlled himself.

It wasn't their fault that they weren't financially literate in this new world.

'Oh wait... it is!'

Rey was certain that if his classmates had taken their time to study the economics of H'Trae, or at least that of the United Human Alliance Capital, they would not have made such poor financial decisions.

'They don't understand the value of a Gold Coin. Look at how they're all treating it as if it's a Silver Coin.'

Rey could imagine the grinning faces of merchants who had taken advantage of his classmates.

He was very sure they had just popped up in stalls and asked "Hey, what can I get with this Gold Coin?"

As a result, they got ripped off.

And the worst part?

"I can't believe things are so cheap here!"

"I got so much just from a single Coin!"

"I ate till my belly was full!"

"I got a lot of dresses!"

... All the students were so impressed with what they had gotten that they felt it was too much.

'You can get your belly full with less than a silver coin, idiot!' Rey wanted to yell out, but he maintained his manners.

Sure, high-end restaurants were way more expensive than regular kinds. But, from what he was hearing his classmates say, they didn't go to such places.

At some point, he grew exasperated with hearing their adventures that he shut his ears off from their noise and focused on his thoughts.

'I wonder what Adonis bought...'

The blond boy at the center of the group didn't seem to have anything in particular, so it got Rey curious.

'He really resembles that stranger I saw back then, though.'

Rey tried to picture Adonis with a mask, and it fit perfectly.

He had heard stories of people who had met someone who looked exactly like them—or who resembled them to a fault, so it wasn't all too strange to him.

'I guess doppelg?ngers and lookalikes exist in this world too...'

"Hey, Rey!" A feminine voice startled Rey, causing to nearly jump in surprise.

He had been so focused on Adonis, blocking everything out, that he didn't sense the one who was right behind him.

"A-ah..." He glanced behind him and saw Trisha standing there.

"... You startled me, Trisha." He rubbed his head as he laughed nervously.

'What does she want with me?'

Trisha's confident smile, and her very seductive body already put Rey on edge.

He fought to maintain a balance between his teenage hormones and his rational mind.

'She's wearing a tank top and very tight jeans today...' His eyes did their best not to be too noticeable.

He had often wondered why Trisha liked wearing stuff like this, but after hearing her talk to one of her new friends about it, he finally got his answer.

'It's apparently easier for her to move in, since to her it feels like she's naked. Hmmm...'

To Rey that wasn't any better!

Sure, training for her was pleasant since she had no extraneous material hindering her movements and fluidity, but Rey considered the greater implications.

'That means... she currently feels like she's naked right now...'

Every time she walked or trained... in her mind she was...

'Ahh... stop thinking about that, Rey!'

"Oh? What's that poking out in your trousers, Rey?" The moment Rey heard Trisha say this, he panicked and placed both hands around his crotch.

To his surprise, though, he was pretty flaccid.

"Haha! I was just messing with you!"

Red hues stained his face as he looked at the tomboyish girl. He had never been so humiliated in all his life.

He remembered how Aldred treated him with so much respect, and imagined what the same man would say if he saw him now.

It was not a pretty picture.

'She probably saw me ogling her. But was I really...?' Rey didn't know anymore.

He only knew how pathetic he felt.

"Anywayyy... what do you think?" Trisha flashed out a blade seemingly out of nowhere.

It was a longsword, and there was a sort of black glow about it as it gleamed in the sunlight.

She tightly gripped the hilt and her proud expression said plenty about the blade she currently wielded.

'Oh?'

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## Chapter 97 Trisha's Blade

"Hey! Don't just flash your sword like that!"

"Be careful when unsheathing!"

"Come on...!"

Trisha hurriedly turned and apologized to the passersby who complained about her sudden unsheathing.

As she did so, Rey noticed a thin wooden casing that hung behind her. It was placed so vertically that no one would notice it if she stood before them.

'A-ah! The hilt was behind her, huh?'

"It looks great, right?" Rey's attention returned to the blade as Trisha presented it to him.

'Hmm... ' Rey's eyes thoroughly observed the blade, and a pleasantly surprised expression took over his face a moment after.

'This... this looks really nice!'

"May I...?" He asked, placing his hands forward to collect the blade.

"S-sure. Just be careful."

Rey nearly yanked the blade from the surprised Trisha, closely looking at the entire sword—from the hilt, to the edges, and everything else about it.

'It's not the best I've seen, and it doesn't have any Enchantment, but... the workmanship is really good!'

Rey wasn't an expert in swords at all, but after checking out a ton of weapons—from the ones that the Hobgoblins wielded, to the more sophisticated kind ... up to the most expensive ones in the capital—he had developed an eye for these things.

His developed taste told him that the blade in front of him was of high quality.

~WHOOSH!~

~SWOOSH!~

He flapped his hand slightly and swung the blade a few times, immersed in the weapon.

Once he realized how he was obsessing over the sword, Rey cleared his throat and handed it back to the stunned Trisha.

"A-ahem... This is a good sword."

"R-right?! I can't believe I got it with just one Gold." Trisha beamed as she stuttered.

When others talked about this, Rey had gotten mad. But the same couldn't be applied to Trisha.

'This sword is probably worth more than 1 Gold. If it was Enchanted, it would enter the realm of Platinum Coins...'

Rey wondered how Trisha was able to get the sword.

"Where did you buy it from?"

"Just a smithy in one corner before the road. I saw it on display and thought I just had to get it."

"Ahh... and how much was the initial cost?" Rey asked with even more intrigue.

"Three Gold Coins."

'Sounds about right... ' Rey nodded internally.

"And? You haggled so hard he brought it down to one?"

Trisha shook her head the moment Rey asked the question.

"I didn't have the heart to haggle. The guy who was selling it made the sword himself, and both of us knew the value it had..."

'Well, I should have expected that.' Rey nearly leaked out chuckle

Trisha was a martial artist to the core. The kind that believed in chivalry, honor, and all that junk.

Frankly, Rey didn't care for any of it, but he still respected Trisha's continuous dedication to her ideal.

"So how were you able to get it for 1 Gold?"

"Well... I was going to go around and ask my friends to lend me their money, and I'd pay later. I told him I was definitely going to come back for the blade, but..." a warm smile radiated her face at this point.

"... He decided to sell it to me for the money I had on hand."

As Trisha finished her story, she sheathed the blade.

"I see..." Rey could only mutter.

'The guy must have sensed the true Martial Artist spirit that Trisha exudes, and decided to sell it to her at a great discount.'

Rey chuckled internally as he looked at the ebony before him.

'I guess it sometimes pays to have that kind of mindset.'

It was also possible that the guy knew that Trisha had the prospects of being a powerful warrior and would feel indebted to him for this act of benevolence, so she would patronize him in the future and even introduce others to his shop.

'It IS the place she bought her first sword. Martial Artists and Warriors dig that kind of stuff.'

Trisha could eventually lead a lot of customers his way through word of mouth, and the more her influence would grow, the more he was bound to have more people patronize him.

'In essence, it's a business strategy.'

Rey didn't know precisely what it was, since he hadn't been there himself, but he thought he was probably just overthinking it.

'There's nothing strange about a blacksmith giving out their prized creation to a Warrior they feel deserves it.'

This was the irrational part of business that Rey knew existed.

'It really is a good sword... ' At this point, Rey didn't hide his smile.

As Trisha kept bragging about her sword and the other adventures she had in the town, Rey could see the excitement on her face.

... In her eyes.

'Seems like she really had fun. The more I listen, the less apprehensive I become of her.'

Rey began to see Trisha in a different light.

She wasn't just some girl-boss who sought after strength and nothing else. She also wasn't so stern that she couldn't be lighthearted—though Rey considered her attempt at humor to be a little too extreme.

He still felt a tingle under his pants once in a while.

Overall, though, Trisha was ultimately a girl.

A really nice girl.

'Still... I have to wonder...'

Rey glanced around him and saw that most of their classmates were already present. A lot of Trisha's friends were around as well.

'... Why is she talking to me about all this stuff?'

At this point, Rey's eyes caught Alicia, who seemed to be walking away for some reason.

'When did she arrive?' He thought, realizing he never saw her until just now.

'She looks a bit upset...' Alicia didn't glance in his direction even once. .c(o)m

'I guess she's mad that I ditched her.'

Rey knew he had to apologize properly later, and perhaps give her the gift he held deep in his [Inventory].

For now, though, he had to continue his conversation with Trisha.

\*

## **Chapter 98 The Library Incident [Pt 1]**

Much to everyone's relief, no one was late to the rendezvous spot.

The last couple of people to arrive only did so three minutes before time was up, so there were no issues at all.

The students had shown just how responsible they could be in their adventures.

"I see this as a frequent thing."

"I saw a lot of things I want to check out tomorrow."

"Adonis, you better tell them how much we cooperated."

The students all had refreshed, excited expressions on their faces.

Truly, letting everyone go off on their own was the best choice Adonis could have made.

And it paid off tremendously.

The students returned to the Royal Estate without issues, and as they were gracefully greeted by the Royal Guards, they submitted their 'Pass' to Adonis, who was going to make sure they ended up where they were supposed to.

The students didn't doubt him, and they were also assured that they would be able to frequently leave anytime they wanted.

They just had to have a Royal Badge and a Pass to do so.

Every student got to keep their Badge, but their Pass was to be submitted once they got back to the Castle.

The rationale behind the latter being mandated was simply the Council's way of indirectly monitoring the Otherworlders that they summoned.

By granting Passes, they could know the total number of students who went out, and the time at which they did so.

This was necessary for order, and since the regulation wasn't really infringing on the livery of the students, no one complained.

Once the students arrived in their Living Quarters, they all went to shower.

All... without exception.

It was a fun day, but walking around for hours inevitably caused sweat to form all over the body.

After showering, a lot of the students chose remained in their rooms or the living room, discussing how they spent their time in length.

Only a few chose to go outside.

Billy, for one, went to train.

Trisha went to try out her new sword.

Alicia went to the library, and not long after, Rey also trailed along.

Justin and one or two boys went out to test out the 'toys' they bought from their adventures outside.

And Adonis went to report the entire day to the higher-ups, not just as a matter of protocol, but also to assure them that everyone was well-behaved, and that future excursions weren't going to be an issue.

The Otherworlders weren't wild beasts that had to be tamed.

They were reasonable people.

Sure, as teenagers, they wanted to have fun. However, they also had good hearts and wanted to help.

Adonis hoped to present that image to the Royal Council.

And, as always, he would succeed.

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Night had fallen already, and hours had elapsed since the excursion was concluded.

Most students were already in their rooms, enjoying the much-needed sleep they required before the next day's expedition.

However, out of the few who remained outside... two were awkwardly seated in the library.

Alicia White, with a book shoved in her face, and Rey Skylar... who also had a book shoved in his face.

Both of them were yet to say a word to each other since they returned from the excursion.

No, that wasn't quite right.

Rey had tried, on many occasions, to initiate a conversation. However, he was only met with Alicia's cold response.

Since he was something of an introvert, it didn't take long for him to stop trying and retract into his shell.

The result was the current air of awkwardness that didn't want to leave the library.

It was a wonder how both of them were able to read despite the obvious tension that pervaded the room.

The truth was that they weren't reading!

Both of them were distracted by the presence of the other—to the point where they could simply not focus on any other thing.

And then...

"Are you mad at me?"

... Rey's loud voice echoed across the library.

It had a trembling tone to it, almost as if he was afraid to ask.

Afraid that she would say "Yes."

"What makes you think that?" After moments of silence, Alicia's voice filled the room.

The hearts of both students were racing.

They could no longer even see the letters that were strewn over the pages of their books.

"Because... I ditched you today?" Rey responded, his tone clearly depicting how he was treading carefully into uncharted territory.

"And?"

"A-and...?"

At this point, Rey's face twisted into something akin to confusion.

"What else makes you think that?"

He hadn't thought beyond those actions of his. What else could he have done?

"Not apologizing sooner...?" He finally let out the only thing he could think of.

"And?"

Beads of sweat began to form on Rey's face at this point.

What else was there?!

His heart racing and his brain was panicking. Neurons fired within his skull as he pleaded with his mind to tell him the answer to the puzzling question.

No Skill in his arsenal could answer this question, so Rey felt stuck.

He didn't give up though.

... He couldn't!

'Think... think... think...!'

Then, as if his life was flashing before his eyes, Rey had an epiphany.

A small smile formed on his face as he figured out the answer.

"It's Trisha, isn't it?" His voice echoed out.

"W-what? What are you talking about?"

"You saw me with Trisha and got mad, didn't you?"

"What? That's not what happened!"

At this point, Alicia turned to Rey and she had flushes of red all over her face.

Rey had never seen her look like that before.

It was cute beyond compare.

"Come on! Don't lie! Your face says it all!" Rey doubled down on his words, slowly coming out of his shell.

The fear and anxiety from early now vanished, replaced by a newfound confidence whose origin was unknown.

"S-so what if I was mad? You ditched me and went out with Trisha instead!"

The moment Alicia said this, Rey realized what the entire issue was.

'She's misunderstanding everything!'

\*

## **Chapter 99 The Library Incident [Pt 2]**

Two students stood in their respective chairs and respective desks within the expansive Library.

One would expect this haven of silence to remain that way, especially since only two people occupied it.



However...

"N-no! You misunderstood—!"

"Since when did you two start... ahh, never mind. You're both in Beta Class, so I should have already known."

"Hey, relax..."

"I thought you were a loner and all, but I didn't know you had such friends. Noah... Trisha."

"No, Alicia, I—!"

"So you were such a ladies man and I had no idea. What a—"

"ALICIA!"

Rey's voice was so loud in Alicia's ears that it startled her to another degree.

The book she held flew out of her hands, falling to the floor... right beside Rey's feet.

Rey was right in front of her now, causing her heart to race to an extreme degree.

Alicia had never heard him shout that loud before.

Even his current expression... how he creased his brows and stood so imposingly in front of her... she had never seen this side of him before.

"Alicia..." Rey's voice grew softer.

How he had managed to close his distance from where he sat before was a mystery to her, but all she knew was that he was close.

... Too close.

"I'm sorry I ditched you like that. I went with Noah to get something, and I didn't want things to be awkward for you since we already had an earlier arrangement."

Rey wasn't particularly lying, but he conveniently left out the part where he forgot about her entirely.

"So it wasn't awkward for Trisha to tag along? I guess it's fine for you three since you're in the Be—"

"Trisha didn't come with us."

"E-eh...?"

"It was just Noah and me."

"A-ah...?"

"I only saw Trisha once we met at the rendezvous spot. She was showing me her sword, since I have an... interest in it. That's all."

"You... like swords?" Alicia's soft and curious tone told Rey that she was no longer upset.

Still, he knew he wasn't out of the woods yet.

"I do. Not to an extreme level, but... I think they're cool." Rey was now awkwardly scratching his face with a finger.

A tinge of red appeared on his cheeks.

"Pfft! I see. Sorry for misunderstanding..." Alicia burst out into a small chuckle.

That was enough for Rey to heave a sigh of relief.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Argh! I can't believe I misunderstood. I feel like an idiot..."

"N-no, I can understand why you thought that." Rey smiled with understanding.

The both of them sat beside each other now, and after calming down and sharing their side of the story, the truth became clear.

"No. No. I should have confirmed it with you. It's just... argh.. never mind!"

Alicia's embarrassed face made Rey want to burst out into a loud chuckle, but he suppressed it.

He hardly ever saw her uncomposed, and even when she chose to be casual with him, there was still this air of elegance—unparalleled pristine—around her.

She had most of the control in their conversations.

... Especially when it came to her cats.

But now... she was a total wreck.

And Rey liked this side of her more than he expected.

'Am I a bad person for feeling this way?' He wondered to himself.

Alicia took successive sighs to calm herself—deeply inhaling and exhaling periodically, while also gently placing her hand on chest.

Before long, she was fine.

"A-ah... I actually got you something."

Rey swiftly activated his [Inventory] behind him and yanked out the pristine box that contained his gift.

"Y-you did...?"

"Yeah!" Rey popped out the box and dropped it on the desk that they both shared.

"Whoa! T-this is...!"

Alicia's surprised expression when she saw the box alone pleased Rey.

He instantly felt like everything was worth it.

Rey pushed the box closer to her, so the pure white thing slid across the desk and reached her.

"Open it." He said.

Alicia stared at him for a moment with her stunned expression, and then proceeded to do as she was told.

"T-THIS IS...!"

She exclaimed in both shock and immense joy.

Throughout her stay in this world, she had never seen anything like the ring that gleamed before her.

"You like it?"

As Rey's question came in a whisper, she turned to smile at him.

"I love it!"

"It's called the White Amber. I won it in a game... for you."

Pink hues instantly appeared on Alicia's cheeks as she heard those words.

"R-really...?" She murmured, carrying the pure white ring and observing it thoroughly.

"The gem it has... reminded me of your eyes." Rey went on to say.

"Oh, stop exaggerating. My eyes don't look as great as this."

Despite Alicia's attempt to shrug off Rey's comment, he moved even closer and continued

"No. They look even better."

"S-stop it! You're embarrassing me..."

"Nothing embarrassing in stating the truth."

Alicia's cheeks grew even redder as she tried to look away from the boy beside her.

"Rey, stop. Please..."

"Stop telling the truth? My goodness... you want me to lie?" Rey gasped playfully.

"You know what I meant."

"No, I don't! You tell me!"

"You..." A small pout formed on Alicia's face, causing Rey to burst out laughing.

"Hahaha!!!"

Alicia heard him laugh and could not control her own reaction to it.

"Hahahaha...!!!"

Before the two of them realized it, they had burst out into laughter, forever changing the ambiance of the Library.

\*\*\*\*\*

Alicia wore the ring in front of Rey, flexing her ring finger in front of him.

"How does it look on me?" She beamed, her beauty complimenting the gem on her fingers.

Or was it the other way around?

"It looks amazing on you."

"Awww! Thank you..." She grinned and stylishly curved her hair around.

Rey and Alicia instantly burst out laughing, absolutely oblivious of the watching gaze of someone who stood right outside the library.

This bulky silhouette had glowing blue eyes that seemed to show hints of green envy.

His deep glare screamed with rage, and his clenched fists tightened so hard that his fingers dug into his palm.

"Rey... you... it's all your fault."

As the young man growled, the grating sound of his teeth made an unpleasant noise around him.

He didn't care, though.

He was too focused on the sounds the two were making within the Library.

"You're the one confusing Alicia..."

As his eyes sharply glowed even more, portions of his face were revealed.

It was Billy McGuire.

He was deep in thought, remembering the offer he had received earlier that day... and how he had refused it.

"I don't think I'll accept your proposal." He had told Evals Redart.

"I don't need such an elaborate scheme to make Alicia fall for me. It's only a matter of time..."

Those words came to haunt him now.

Billy had come here to apologize to her—to tell her he was sorry for how he raised his voice earlier in the day.

He had hoped that doing that would calm her down, and they could begin building a solid relationship from there on out.

He didn't mind if they started out as friends, since he already knew the destination of their relationship.

But how... how could he have expected this outcome?!

"It's all your fault, Rey..." Billy growled, hate completely consuming his soul.

"Everything that happens next... is all your fault!"

\*

## **Chapter 100 Introduction To Practical Training**

The next day came in no time, and the students who had been preparing their minds to go on the Dungeon Expedition were greeted with the most shocking news.

"The Dungeon Expedition has been put on an indefinite hiatus."

As Grandmaster Conrad said this, surprise overtook the expressions of all the students.

Once again, he was accompanied by both Brutus and Lucielle, and his attire was regal.

However, the forlorn expression he had was new.

No one had ever seen him this serious... or anxious before.

The same face was given by both Lucielle and Brutus.

It was a grave, disappointed face.

In contrast to this, however, the twenty-eight students had multifarious expressions on their faces.

Some were relieved that the Expedition was canceled—either due to the fear of going there, or the prospects of spending the day exploring the town.

Others—mostly the boys, and a few girls like Trisha—appeared disappointed to hear the news.

They were most likely looking forward to fighting real Monsters, so it was a major bummer to hear what Conrad was saying.

'Adonis doesn't look surprised. He must have already known...'

Rey had this thought as he stole a glance at the stoic Hero.

The rest of his classmates were buzzing with shock, so he joined them in it. However, Rey wasn't the slightest bit surprised.

The last ounces of his shock had been exhausted the previous day. This news was already expected, especially when he thought about it rationally.

'They suspect that a very dangerous monster is on the loose within the Dungeon, so it's currently not very safe for us.'

The reason why Brutus and Lucielle went to check out the Royal Dungeon the previous day was to make sure there would be no surprises waiting for the students.

And now, there was.

'I'm sure those two are strong, and they are capable of protecting us within the earlier Floors...'

But, Rey was also certain that they doubted their ability to look out for every single variable and prepare against surprise attacks.

Dungeons were largely unpredictable, which was why scouting was essential.

Right now, neither the Grand Mage nor Head Warrior could explain what had caused so much carnage within the Royal Dungeon.

Unless they figured it out, or at least determined that the Dungeon was largely safe, then it was no place they would allow their biggest prospects into.

"There have been some complications in the Dungeon, which make it unsafe and unfit for training. Brutus and an elite few will have to thoroughly investigate the Floors to ensure your safety." The Grandmaster explained further.

Rey smiled as he noticed how Conrad skirted around the details, choosing to be vague on purpose.

'He probably doesn't want to scare us. I can understand why...'

If the students truly knew how terrifying monsters could be, and the current unknown threat that was supposedly lurking within the Dungeon, most of them would be discouraged from ever wanting to participate .

... Even after everything was finally resolved.

'I personally don't think a Monster did this. It's probably the mastermind who's pulling the strings here...'

The actions that were involved here—like looting and harvesting—could only be done by something very intelligent.

It was simply more reasonable to believe that a human did it than some unknown monster.

'By this goes to show that the malefactor is powerful and very resourceful. They have more resources than me at this point too, so I have to be extra wary.'

Rey could almost guarantee that Brutus and his team wouldn't be able to find a single clue about the monster, so they were probably going to explore the Dungeon very soon.

'I just need to gain an edge by killing SOME and not ALL the Monsters in my free time, so I can Level Up faster. There's also THAT issue...'

Rey could feel his lips curling up when he heard something else that he should have expected.

"In the meantime, Lucielle and a select few others will be giving you a practical course." As Conrad said this, Lucielle managed to force her signature smile and waved at everyone.

"I'll... erm... let her explain."

Conrad appeared to take a step back, and Lucielle bowed slightly before moving forward with her staple cheerful look.

"Okay, everyone... this is what we're going to do!"

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The alternative to Dungeon Exploration wasn't a particularly terrible idea.

It involved Lucielle and the few Summoners of the United Human Alliance.

This practical session would take place in a massive stadium that resembled a gladiator ring—still situated within the Royal Estate.

It was more than large enough to contain thousands of people, but for the purposes of the exercise, only twenty-eight students and about twelve instructors—a total of forty individuals—occupied the expanse.

And what exactly would they be doing here?

Well, it was both simple and complex.

"As I explained before, all of the instructors here are capable of using Summoning Magic. So, we're going to be summing Monsters for you to fight."

It was that simple.

Unlike Tamers, Summoners couldn't control the mind of whatever they summoned, hence the beasts had no allegiance to them.

They also weren't limited to the summoning of living things, but for the purposes of their Otherworlders, that was essential.

"Fighting Monsters will give you a better understanding of how to fight against creatures who aren't humanoid. Killing them also gives you EXP, though to a limited degree..."

Summoned Monsters possessed less EXP due to the nature of their Summoning. They were also considerably weaker than the real thing, so it was only a natural conclusion that the EXP they gave wouldn't be as lucrative.

Still... since they were still Monsters, they could serve their purposes well.

.... To be cannon fodder for the Otherworlders who desired to grow.

"This will replace your Dungeon Expedition in the meantime, so try your best, okay?"

As Lucielle flashed her smile, a lot of students reacted with wide grins.

Rey was among them, though his reason for doing so vastly differed from theirs.

'I know I shouldn't be excited since this is just a playground version of the real thing...'

And yet, his smile didn't stop growing.

That was all because of one thing.

'I can't wait to test out my new Class!'

\*