

Endless 151

Chapter 151: Playing A Supporting Role In The Background

“Well, hello there, Miss Beautiful,” Chuck said to Nessia. “Has anyone told you that you look good in glasses?”

“...” Nessia blinked once, then twice, before shifting her gaze to Alex, who crossed his hands behind Chuck’s back.

“What’s wrong?” Chuck asked. “Has my handsome face made you fall in love with me? Oh... I’m really a sinful guy. It happens all the time, so won’t you forgive me?”

“Give me your name and room number,” Nessia replied coldly. “I’m going to file a harassment complaint to the Academy Office.”

“Oops! Look at the time!” Chuck hastily backed away. “I still have things to do. I’ll see you later, Alex!”

Without even a second glance, the teenage boy made himself scarce and ran straight back to the room he shared with Alex.

It was very obvious that he hadn’t known that Nessia was the Dorm Head of the first years and had the authority to punish them if they broke her rules.

After making sure Chuck was no longer in sight, Nessia fixed her glasses using her middle finger before turning her attention to Alex.

“Are you alright?” Nessia asked. “It seems that your luck has run out after the second trial. For you to have that kind of roommate...”

“Hahaha...” Alex laughed wryly. “Can I swap roommates?”

“... No.”

“Hah...”

The two sighed at the same time, feeling depressed about encountering an eccentric like Chuck on their first day in the academy dorm.

Suddenly, Nessia saw Charles and his sister, Vivian, enter the common room of the dormitory.

“Dim!” Dim Dim greeted Alex and Nessia from the top of Charles’ head.

“Looks like your partner is here,” Nessia remarked.

Charles and Vivian headed towards Alex and Nessia and greeted them both.

“Welcome back, Dim Dim,” Alex said as the Dim Sum God landed on his head after a short jump.

“Dim!” Dim Dim reported that its mission of escorting Eris back to the orphanage was completed.

After a brief conversation, Vivian returned to her own room because she had other things to take care of. Alex also accompanied Charles back to his room.

He didn’t want to return to his own room for the time being since Chuck was there.

“Do you know that Renard is your roommate?” Alex asked as they headed to the room Charles had been assigned to.

“No,” Charles said. “But since he is an acquaintance, I’m sure we’ll get along well.”

“Just remember, he has trust issues,” Alex reminded his friend. “Also, he packs a strong punch, so don’t get on his bad side.”

Charles smiled faintly. Actually, he felt that Alex and Renard were good people whom he could treat as his close friends and rivals.

He had seen how strong they were and wished to become just like them.

But Charles was too shy to say this to them upfront, so he quietly kept it inside his heart.

When they arrived at their destination, room number 33, Charles knocked on the door.

"Come in," a familiar voice said.

Using his key, Charles opened the door and found his roommate reading a book while lying on one of the beds.

Renard gave Charles a nod and Alex a glare.

It was very obvious that there was still bad blood between the two teenagers.

That didn't stop Alex from hoping. "Hi, Renard. Do you want to swap rooms with me?"

Despite their hostile relationship, Alex thought it wouldn't hurt to try his luck.

"No," Renard replied, going back to reading his book.

"Come on, my room is great! It has a great view of the garden, a perfect eastern sunrise, and this one bird that sings every morning like it's auditioning for a musical. Nature itself is trying to motivate you."

"...Then why do you want to escape it so badly? Is it cursed?"

"I'm not escaping. I'm generously offering a superior living space to a fellow academic." Alex chuckled nervously.

Renard squinted his eyes at the young man. "Who is your roommate?"

"His name is Chuck," Alex answered honestly. He hadn't expected Renard to identify the problem so quickly. "He does interpretive humming."

"Huh?"

"Interpretative humming. You know those guys who hum and make the world a better place to live in?"

"I'm not buying it." Renard raised his right fist. "Now get out before I knock you out."

Knowing that Renard was not going to budge, Alex left the room with a sigh.

"Dim Dim, let's wander around the academy for a bit," Alex proposed. "I don't want to return to my room just yet."

"Dim!"

The two then left Ironheart Dormitory to visit the training rounds.

Since Alex was familiar with the academy's layout, he didn't need to ask for directions.

There were three training grounds for the academy.

The Martial Training Ground for Knights and Warriors.

The Magic Training Ground for magic-users like Mages and Summoners.

Last, but not least, was the Combat Mage Training Ground for those who want to excel in both martial arts and magic.

This was also the place where magic swordsmen trained.

Since Alex was a magic swordsman of sorts, he headed to the Combat Mage Training Grounds to pass some time.

Since the academy was massive, the students often used mini-teleporters to travel within the academy.

This one-way means of travel was very useful, especially for people who didn't want to walk for half an hour or more to reach their destination.

Of course, these mini-teleporters were located in their designated locations all over the academy, granting students easy access.

When Alex arrived at the Combat Mage Training Ground, he was surprised to find a crowd surrounding the arena.

Out of curiosity, Alex took a peek to see who everyone was watching.

Two combatants were fighting in the arena, and both of them happened to be familiar to Alex.

They were two of the main supporting characters in the story. Like Alex and Renard, they really didn't get along with each other.

'I knew I would see them eventually, but I didn't expect it would be this soon,' Alex thought as he watched the two rivals duke it out with each other.

One was a barbarian who went by the name of Gaius. His opponent was a Sorcerer called Marcus.

Obviously, Gaius relied on raw strength while Marcus used magic.

The clash of the two Second-Years made the spectators cheer. They wanted to see a good fight, and the two combatants were giving them what they wanted.

Alex crossed his arms over his chest and watched the battle unfold with a serious gaze.

In the game, you could only choose either Gaius or Marcus to become part of your team.

The two of them never saw eye to eye, so whenever you put them in the same party, they would just attack each other instead of the enemies.

Of course, there was a way to make the two settle their grudges and become true companions.

However, that would only happen if certain conditions were met through a very, very, very long side quest.

Alex had no plans to make them his supporters, though. After all, the Heroes and Heroines would still need their help to deal with the events that would happen in the academy later.

As much as possible, Alex didn't want to get dragged into those events. He just wanted to focus on making himself stronger.

But he also knew that as long as he was in the academy, he would get involved in those incidents whether he liked it or not.

He would later have to help them overcome the adversities, turning his academy life into a living hell.

His only wish was that the real-life heroes of Arcana were competent enough to deal with the situation while he played a supporting role in the background.

Chapter 152: Cafeteria Trouble [Part 1]

The battle between Gaius and Marcus ended up in a draw.

Many were surprised by this outcome, having expected that Marcus would win since he was a magician. However, Alex knew better.

Gaius wasn't an ordinary barbarian. He was a genius of the barbarian race and had learned how to wield an aura as early as his first year in the academy.

Marcus' spells were certainly powerful, but they were useless as long as Gaius could evade and tank them with his own body with the help of his aura.

The two of them were in the middle stages of Rank 3, making them true powerhouses in their own right.

In comparison, Alex's master, Cairo, was on the cusp of breaking through into a Rank 4 Demon Slayer.

The Catkin's reason for traveling around the Kingdom of Avalon was related to this. He believed that gaining more experience while honing his swordsmanship could help with his progress.

Alex firmly believed that the next time they met, his master would be a step closer to becoming a Heaven's Sword.

As his thoughts drifted to his master, the crowd started dispersing since the amazing battle between Gaius and Marcus had already ended.

Several of the students were heading to the cafeterias to eat, so Alex decided to follow suit.

But just like how there were separate dormitories for the noble students and scholars, they also had their respective cafeterias.

In the cafeteria for scholarship students, food was served in a buffet.

Although the food was undoubtedly good, they were dishes easily found in the taverns and stalls lining the streets of the City of Harmonia.

The cafeteria for the nobility, on the other hand, was more refined, more spacious, and more luxurious.

All the food served there was of the highest quality. The noble students could even enjoy exotic dishes from neighboring kingdoms!

Alex knew all this, but he didn't really care.

For him, food was food.

During his time on earth, he had eaten unhealthy food, like instant noodles, nearly every day. Compared to that, the buffet food was more delicious and varied.

When he arrived at the cafeteria, he saw Lavinia, Nessia, Charles, and Phoebe sharing a table together.

They didn't notice Alex right away since they were busy chatting with each other.

The young man hurriedly filled his and Dim Dim's plates before joining his friends.

Just as he was about to reach their table, Chuck called out to him.

"Alex! Over here!" Chuck waved in his direction. "I'm the only one eating at this table. Come and join me."

Alex pretended that Chuck was speaking an ancient language he couldn't understand and promptly sat down beside Charles.

The last thing he wanted was to have his food suddenly turn to charcoal! He wouldn't put it past Chuck to play with other people's food.

Just as Alex thought that he had managed to escape, Chuck stood up and walked to their table with a smile.

"Hello, everyone, I am Alex's roommate, Chuck No Rizz," Chuck introduced himself. "May I join your table? It's very lonely over there."

"You can join us," Charles replied.

He had always been a kind person, so he didn't hesitate to agree to Chuck's request.

"You're a good guy!" Chuck exclaimed as he sat beside Alex. "Can we be friends?"

"Why not?" Charles smiled. "My name is Charles Lambert. You can call me Charles."

"Good!" Chuck reached out to shake Charles' hand. "From now on, you are my second best friend in the academy!"

"... Second best friend?" Charles blinked.

"Yes." Chuck nodded. "I made Alex my first best friend so... Owwww!"

After hearing that the handsome teen had made Alex his first best friend, Charles accidentally gripped Chuck's hand harder, making the latter cry out in pain.

"I'm sorry!" Charles hurriedly apologized. "I didn't know what came over me. Are you hurt?"

“Kuh... Calm down, my right hand,” Chuck murmured as he grabbed his right hand with his left hand. “It is not time for the dragon to awaken. We must wait for the right moment and offer some sacrifices to make you descend on this world.”

“...” Alex facepalmed. He had forgotten that aside from being a troublemaker, his roommate was also suffering from a rather severe case of eighth-grade syndrome.

Seeing Charles staring blankly at Chuck, Alex lightly coughed.

“Ignore him,” Alex said. “He’s going through a... phase.”

Chuck gasped. “Phase? You dare insult the awakening of the Eternal Flame of my right hand?! It has a name, you know?”

Charles blinked again, unsure if he and Chuck were speaking the same language. He could understand Chuck’s words individually, but together, they made little sense. “I’m afraid to ask, but... what’s its name?”

Chuck narrowed his eyes, then whispered ominously, “Crimson Wrath, the Devourer of Souls. I usually seal the powers in my right hand, but sometimes it just goes out of control and starts to devour the souls around me.”

While chewing thoughtfully on a meatball, Alex looked at Chuck, then at Charles, then at Chuck again. ‘This is either the start of a very deep friendship... or a very weird sitcom. I just hope that Chuck will not be a bad influence on Charles.’

Dim Dim looked at this scene with amusement as it continued to eat silently.

It could tell that Chuck was a good person despite his... eccentricities.

“You know, I’ve been meaning to ask, but what’s this thing?” Chuck pointed at Dim Dim. “Is it a monster?”

“No,” Alex replied. “Dim Dim is a Nature Spirit.”

“Oh! This is the third time I’m seeing a nature spirit.” Chuck looked at Dim Dim with great interest. “It looks so cute and seems super dependable!”

“Ahem~” Dim Dim raised its body proudly as if affirming the teenage boy’s words.

“What is your name, little one?” Chuck inquired.

“Dim Dim,” the Dim Sum God replied.

“Nice to meet you, Dim Dim.”

“Dim Dim~”

“Do you have any special abilities?” Chuck asked.

“Dim Dim!”

“Oh! You can summon delicious food to eat. Amazing! I’ve never seen a Nature Spirit that can do that.”

“Ahem~”

Alex watched the two and smiled faintly. In a way, Dim Dim and Chuck had many things in common.

Both of them were innocent in their own way and liked to see the world in a positive light.

‘I hope they will be good friends,’ Alex thought. ‘Maybe Chuck had been a troublemaker because he was lonely.’

Since he hadn't played Chuck's character before, he had no idea what he was truly like.

Alex only knew of Chuck as a troublemaker since he often made some kind of trouble within the academy.

Regardless of what route a player took, as long as they were inside Frieden Academy, Chuck would always appear in their scenario.

Just as everyone was eating, a group of people entered the cafeteria.

All of them were wearing uniforms, and the person leading them had an emblem decorated with a golden lion on his left chest.

'I smell trouble,' Alex thought. 'That is the emblem of the Elite Class.'

Within the academy, students were also given Ranks.

Those who possessed the emblem of the Golden Lions were the "Elites" of the academy, and only those who possessed great talent, great wealth, and great connections had them.

The scholarship students didn't possess any emblems yet. They would only receive an emblem if they accomplished a great feat or if they were scouted by the division heads of the academy. Each division had its own emblem.

For example, the emblem of the Alchemist Division was a flame inside a potion bottle.

However, it was left to the academy's discretion as to who among the students was worthy to wear an emblem on their uniforms, signifying them as elites of their respective fields.

"All of you, don't do anything," Alex said in a volume that only his friends could hear. "We don't want trouble, right?"

Alex's friends all nodded their heads in agreement.

However, there was one person who had become surprisingly quiet when the group of people appeared.

It was none other than Chuck, who had lowered his head. It was as if he was doing his best to avoid being recognised by someone within that elite group. Unfortunately, they were now walking toward him.

Chapter 153: Cafeteria Trouble [Part 2]

"I thought that you were already eliminated, brother," a young man with short red hair, green eyes, and gold-rimmed glasses said. The haughtiness in his voice was difficult to ignore. "How did you manage to pass the second trial?"

A glance was enough to tell Alex's group that this person was one of those insufferable perfectionists who always wanted everything to be prim and proper.

"H-Hahaha... Hello, brother," Chuck replied. "What are you doing here?"

"What else?" the arrogant student, who went by the name of Caspian, sneered. "I want to see if the disgrace of our family is here."

"You've seen me now, brother," Chuck said. "You don't have to worry because I have successfully passed the academy's tri—"

In one smooth motion, Caspian grabbed the glass of fruit juice on the table and poured it over Chuck's head. His entourage snickered.

"Oh, sorry, what were you saying?" Caspian asked. "I didn't hear you properly."

"..." Chuck lowered his head and clenched his fists that were hidden under the table.

Seeing this scene, Alex couldn't help but frown. He didn't know that Chuck's relationship with his brother was bad.

Clearly, Caspian had come to humiliate his brother in front of everyone in the Ironheart Dormitory so he could never raise his head in the academy again.

"What's wrong?" Caspian goaded. "Aren't you going to say something? Or... have you forgotten your place, huh?"

Just as Alex was planning to intervene, someone else did it in his place.

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim shouted and glared at Caspian for bullying their new friend.

Caspian frowned after seeing the little creature, but his frown didn't last long and was quickly replaced by a sneer.

"Looks like you found a little friend," Caspian said as he flicked his finger at the Dim Sum God, sending an invisible Air Bullet in its direction.

But Dim Dim casually jumped to the side, evading the attack, which created a resounding thud as it hit the table.

In retaliation, Dim Dim took out a brittle vial. It didn't hesitate to throw the vial at the bastard who had come here to mess with their meal.

Caspian's sneer grew uglier as he created a wind barrier to block the brittle vial and send it back to Dim Dim.

The Dim Sum God caught the brittle vial and lunged at the teenage boy to headbutt him.

However, Alex grabbed his friend mid-air and pulled it back.

“Do you know,” Alex asked coldly as he turned towards Caspian, “that you can get punished for attacking your fellow students in the academy?”

“But I didn’t attack any students,” Caspian replied calmly. “This... trash... is my brother. This is a family issue, so I’d appreciate it if you don’t interfere.”

Although Caspian was a noble, he knew better than to mess with the scholarship students in public.

However, since Chuck was his brother, he believed he could get away by saying this was a family matter that outsiders shouldn’t get involved in.

“Family issue or not, you have attacked a student before the rest of us,” Alex stated. “Now scram before I report you to the Academy’s Office for disorderly conduct and destruction of private property.”

When Caspian and his friends did not move, Alex continued, “Not only did you mess with our lunch break, you also damaged our table. How are you going to compensate for that?”

“What are you talking about?” Caspian frowned. “I didn’t damage your table.”

Although he had shot an Air Bullet, he had made sure that the force wouldn’t be strong enough to destroy anything. He deliberately made it just strong enough to give Dim Dim a light injury and make it cry or yelp.

But when he looked at the table, he saw that it indeed had a few cracks in it. His frown deepened.

He didn’t know that while he had been occupied with Dim Dim, Alex had summoned a small hand shield and pressed it under the table.

The young man had then used the skill, Shield Bash, to create a little bit of damage without anyone noticing.

“Dorm Head, what is the punishment for the destruction of the academy’s property?” Alex asked Nessia.

“Destruction of the academy’s property is punishable by a fine, as well as demerit points,” Nessia answered as she fixed her glasses with her middle finger. “This is a serious offense, so if the Academy Office gets wind of this, it will cause trouble.”

“Oh dear, what should I do?” Alex sighed deeply. “Do you know? Dim Dim is good friends with the Headmaster. If he heard you tried to attack it with an Air Bullet, you might get expelled, you know?”

“Hahaha! What a joke!” Caspian laughed. “How can that little thing be a friend of the Headmaster? Do you think I am gullible enough to believe that?”

Suddenly, Caspian felt that the cafeteria had somehow gotten extremely silent.

Everyone was looking at something behind him. Despite the sinking feeling in his stomach, he turned his head to see what everyone else was looking at.

There, he saw the Headmaster of the Academy, Professor Rowan, looking down at him with a displeased expression.

“H-Headmaster!” Caspian almost jumped out in fright after seeing the person whom no one in the academy dared to offend.

“Mr. Rizz, what is the meaning of this?” Rowan asked.

“I-I...” Caspian, who had thought that he could bully his brother without repercussions, now bore a remarkable resemblance to a fish out of water. His mouth opened and closed repeatedly as if he were gasping for breath.

Just as everyone thought that he was about to get punished, a chuckle reached everyone’s ears.

“Headmaster, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” Chuck stood up and bowed respectfully as if his hair and clothes were not soaked with fruit juice.

“My brother and I were just goofing around like usual. This isn’t a big deal. Also, this table, I was the one who broke it by accident. If there is someone who needs to be punished, please punish me instead.”

Rowan gave the teenage boy a long and hard look before nodding in understanding.

“Very well, turn yourself in at the Academy Office and pay the fine for the table,” Rowan said. “Also, you will have a credit of 100 Academy Points. You will need to pay it first before you can start earning them.”

“Yes, Headmaster!” Chuck replied.

But just as he was about to leave, Dim Dim spoke up once more.

“Dim Dim!” Dim Dim looked up at the Headmaster while holding a sigil in its hand.

“You want to exchange the sigil to pay for the damages?” Rowan asked with a smile.

“Dim!” Dim Dim nodded.

“Deal.” Rowan nodded as he took the sigil from Dim Dim’s hand. He then lightly tapped on the table, repairing it completely. “It is understandable that kids can be unruly from time to time. Since classes have still not started, I’ll turn a blind eye to this incident just once.

“Mr. Rizz, I expect you to be more diligent in the future, okay? Otherwise, that golden lion of yours might just disappear... if you catch my drift.”

The Headmaster chuckled and left. The atmosphere inside the cafeteria soon eased up.

Truth be told, Rowan had been planning to try his luck with Dim Dim and get all four Sigils back.

It just so happened that the incident had occurred at that time. But he hadn't made any move to interfere right away.

He had wanted to see how Alex's group would handle the matter. He had to admit that the young man had a cunning side to him as well.

Rowan had seen Alex damage the table and pin the blame on Caspian as payback for humiliating Chuck.

He felt that he was above meddling in the quarrels of children, but since he was already there anyway, he decided to step up and prevent the incident from spiraling out of control.

Although he didn't manage to get all four of his sigils back, having one of them wasn't a bad deal either.

'I think that young man, Alex, is perfect for that class,' Rowan mused. 'This year is going to be an interesting year for the incoming students. There are so many prodigies gathered in one generation.'

He was already looking forward to the start of classes, which would be in three days' time.

The Headmaster of Frieden Academy had a feeling that this school year would be different from the past school years.

"I'll remember this," Caspian hissed as he glared at Dim Dim and Alex before leaving with his entourage.

"Bleh!" Dim Dim stuck its tongue out at the annoying prick, while Alex gave him the middle finger.

Chuck looked at his two new friends with gratitude and felt something warm spreading inside his chest.

No one had stood up for him before, and he usually just endured the one-sided beatings and insults from his brothers.

But now, he felt that going to the academy was a really good choice on his part.

Maybe, just maybe, he would find the happiness that he was looking for in the academy, which could be found nowhere within the walls of the Rizz Family.

Chapter 154: A Very Important Decision

“Thank you for earlier, Alex, Dim Dim,” Chuck said.

“Dim Dim~”

“Oh? You helped me because I’m your friend?”

“Dim~”

“You’re the best, Dim Dim!”

Seeing Chuck and Dim Dim happily high-five each other, Alex smiled.

He had only known his roommate as a troublemaker, but didn’t really know his backstory.

But now that he had a glimpse of the other party’s relationship with his brother, Alex vaguely knew why. He couldn’t help but feel sorry for the teenage boy who was currently chatting amicably with Dim Dim.

After they finished eating, they returned to their room, as Alex wanted to list the things he would need during his stay at the academy.

‘First, I need the mimic lantern,’ Alex thought as he wrote it in his journal. ‘I need to put the mimic core shard to good use, so I will know whether a chest is a monster or not when I dive into dungeons.

‘Next, I need to replenish the brittle vials we used up during the test. If there’s still time, maybe I should check out the auction house and see if they have any decent items.’

Alex listed a few more things, which he planned to buy before classes started.

'I should also prepare for the Class Allocation Trials,' Alex realized.

At Frieden Academy, the First-Years must participate in a series of mini-trials that will determine which class they will join.

Those who performed exceptionally would be placed in Class A, and those who performed terribly would be sent to Class F.

The mini trials were rather straightforward. They consisted of simple tests that would earn the students corresponding points.

The academy had taken into account the varying Job Classes of their students, so they had prepared different tests for each. However, the cut-off point remains the same, and once a student reached a certain benchmark, they would be placed in a matching class.

The tests for Archers mostly consisted of shooting moving targets.

These targets could be anything from frisbees to summoned birds. One hundred of them would be released, and the more a student hit, the better their score.

For Mages, they would need to cast spells and aim them at a measuring device. The stronger their magic power, the higher their score.

For Swordsmen, they would need to fight against one of the Weapon Instructors of the academy. If they managed to land a hit on the instructors, they would be given corresponding points, which would determine their skill level.

For alchemists, it would be potion or pill crafting.

For blacksmiths, it would be crafting.

For performers, it would be either singing or dancing.

Students could freely choose which trials to take, preferably ones that would allow them to showcase their specialties.

Since Alex could be considered a Magic Knight, his trial would be to spar with the magic knight's instructor.

Of course, a student could also take as many trials as possible. If they performed decently in all of them, they might have a shot at getting sent to Class A for being a jack-of-all-trades.

"Chuck, what trial will you be taking for the Class Allocation test?" Alex inquired.

"I plan to take as many as I can," Chuck replied. "But I'll definitely be taking the magic trial test since I'm a Mage."

"You plan to take as many trials as possible?"

"Yep!"

Alex already felt pity for the instructors who would be assigned to conduct the trials Chuck planned to take.

Still, joining more than one trial wasn't necessarily a bad idea.

'Since I can use magic, maybe I should try the mage trials too,' Alex thought. 'Right, they also have a singing trial. Time to showcase my hidden talent!'

Alex didn't want to brag, but he was quite good at singing when he was still been on Earth. He had often visited karaoke bars and sang with his Guildmaster, Deathkiss, whenever they were together.

For some reason, she had liked to sing songs with duets. Alex wasn't left with much choice but to learn a few of these songs since his Guildmaster wouldn't allow any score below 95 points during their singing sessions.

The young man sighed after remembering the young lady who had added a bit of color to his dull life.

'It's no use thinking of the past,' Alex thought as he lightly tapped his face with his hands. 'Focus. Alex. You're no longer on Earth.'

Alex then listed some of the mini-trials he planned to join in order to get a higher score.

However, a thought crossed his mind, making him frown.

'The Heroes and Heroines would be in Class A, including Renard, who has trust issues,' Alex mused. 'That class is very competitive, so it might be a good idea to get into a different class...'

Suddenly, the young man's eyes widened in shock as he had forgotten something important.

'Why didn't I think of that?!' Alex thought. 'I'm so stupid!'

Since he was already in the academy, he should try to get into the class of one of his four queens.

'If I go to Class B, I'll be in the same class as Astrea and Lapiz.' Alex narrowed his eyes as he wrote Class B in his journal. 'If I go to Class C, I'll be with Fran. Then Class D... I'll be with Latifa.'

Astrea was the person whom Alex prayed to whenever he opened treasure chests or rolled gacha in the game.

She was a very lucky person, and the majority of ELO treated her as their Goddess of Luck. Although many call her a Goddess, she was actually just a human. She also liked to bully the weak and feared the strong. Oddly enough, many found that endearing since she was the one doing it.

Her only flaw was her extremely terrible sense of direction. There was not a single time she did not get lost when going on an adventure.

Lapiz was an Elven Princess who was loved by many due to her diligence and desire to surpass her perfect sister, who was one of the Heroines of ELO. Obviously, her inferiority complex was developed by countless people constantly comparing the two of them.

Fran was a Dwarf. She had her own small farm inside the academy. Together with her brother, Finn, she was part of the so-called "Farmville Route." Animal lovers also found her quite hardworking and cute, making her a very popular side-character in the game.

As for Latifa, she was born from the union of a human and a fox spirit. She was quite a beauty, and Alex wanted nothing more than to fluff her fluffy tails and hug them to sleep.

'This is difficult,' Alex crossed his arms over his chest. After all, this was one of the most important decisions he had to make.

The four young ladies were the people whom he wanted to meet the most in the academy.

He might be in a fantasy world now, but studying had always been boring.

One of the very few ways to make academy life more fun was to have motivation. And what motivation was better than seeing your crush every day?

After careful thought, he arrived at a decision.

"Chuck, what class are you aiming for this year?" Alex asked.

He couldn't remember what class Chuck was in the game since he would just appear randomly in the academy. To make trouble.

“Of course, I will aim for Class A,” Chuck replied.

“Come on, man, be more realistic.” Alex shook his head. “You’re not Class A Material.”

“Fine, I don’t want to put in a lot of effort, so Class D or C is fine.”

“Choose one!”

“Oh, I see! You want to become my classmate, right? Since you want it that way, I’m aiming for Class D!”

Alex nodded. “Okay, I’ll do my best to not go to Class D.”

“Hey!” Chuck complained. “What happened to our friendship? Dim Dim, he is bullying me!”

“Ei!” Dim Dim raised its small hand, telling Alex not to bully its new friend.

“Dim Dim, whose side are you on?” Alex looked at the little guy with amusement.

“Dim Dim~”

“You can’t be on everyone’s side, you know?”

Dim Dim pretended that it didn’t hear Alex’s words and whistled innocently.

In the end, Alex sighed and decided to just go with the flow on the day of the trial.

Regardless of which class he ended up in, he would do his best to study in the academy, and do what he needed to do.

While the young man was busy thinking about his life plans, a certain young lady wearing a fox mask was meditating in one of the towers of the academy.

Black mist swirled around her like live snakes, which guarded her without fail.

“So you’re here, Himea,” Rowan, who had finished his stroll around the academy, said to his disciple. “Are you alright?”

“Yes, Master,” Himea replied, making the dark mist enter her body until nothing was left. “I have everything under control.”

“Good,” Rowan said. “But, you should spend more time around people your age. Staying cooped up here is bad for your health, you know?”

“I’ll take note of that, Master,” Himea promised before closing her eyes to restart her meditation.

Rowan gave her one last glance before teleporting away. Since his disciple preferred peace and quiet, he would leave her alone until the classes officially started in Frieden Academy.

Chapter 155: Alex’s and Dim Dim’s First Auction Adventure [Part 1]

“Welcome, what may I do for you today, dear customer?” an Artificer asked.

“Sir, do you make Mimic Lanterns here?” Alex asked the balding middle-aged man with glasses.

“Of course, we do. Do you have a Mimic Core Shard?” the Artificer, who went by the name of Paul, asked.

“Yes, I do,” Alex answered. “How much is it?”

“If you’re looking for quality, it will be fifty gold coins,” Paul stated. “If you want extra special features added, like seeing invisible things or creatures within five meters, it will cost you a hundred gold coins.”

“So expensive...” Alex frowned.

Although he could now be considered rich since he had over five thousand gold coins, he still didn’t want to be a spendthrift. After all, it was better to have money and not need it than to need money and not have it.

“Good things are always expensive,” Paul commented. “Of course, I can also add more features if you want, but the price will increase accordingly.”

After a bit of haggling, Alex paid Paul a hundred and fifty gold coins to make him a Mimic Lantern with special abilities.

There would be three enchantments that would be added to the lantern.

The first one was the ability to see invisible things and creatures within a five-meter radius.

The second one was to detect traps within the range of the lantern’s light.

Last, but not least, was an ability that Alex managed to get as a freebie after a bit of negotiating. This was none other than Pathfinder’s light.

When the lantern’s light shone over the ground, recent footprints, trails, and faint traces left by creatures or people would glow with a soft, bioluminescent light.

In short, the Mimic Lantern would now possess a tracking ability, which would be extremely useful during adventures or dungeon expeditions.

After finalizing his commission details with Paul, the young man and his little partner went to the market place to buy brittle vials, as well as the ingredients they would stuff inside.

Harmonia was the capital city of the Kingdom of Avalon. Naturally, it was a very lively place.

It was the central hub of the kingdom, so there was no shortage in the flow of materials inside the city.

After buying what they needed, Alex and Dim Dim took a stroll in the city while eating some barbecued skewers they had bought from a food stall.

“Dim Dim, let’s visit the auction house,” Alex proposed. “Maybe we will find something good.”

“Dim.” Dim Dim had no reason to disagree.

There was only one auction house in the City of Harmonia, making it one of the most important establishments in the city.

Its name was the Velvet Vault, and anyone could ask them to auction something as long as it was valuable.

People with gold to spare often visited it in the hope of securing some useful items that were being auctioned.

Auctions were held daily. During the weekdays, auctions began at eleven o’clock in the morning. But during the weekends were held at three o’clock in the afternoon.

‘Today is Friday, so there’s still an hour before the auction starts,’ Alex thought.

Since he wanted to get a decent seat, he hurried to the Velvet Vault. Upon reaching the entrance, a staff member supplied him with a mask to hide his identity.

“Dim Dim!” Dim Dim also asked for a mask from the usher. She giggled in response.

“Fine, I’ll make an exception for you since you’re cute.” The lady personally placed the mask on Dim Dim’s face, which automatically adjusted to its size.

“Dim Dim~”

“You’re welcome, little one.”

Alex was then led to the auction hall. He picked a seat that was near the aisle so that he could leave without worries.

There were a decent amount of people already. Some were seated in the VIP rooms, which had their own balconies. Alex could tell by the number of people on the balconies that the VIP rooms were about half-filled.

He didn’t have the money or influence to be able to get a VIP seat on his own, but that wasn’t important to him at all.

He continued to observe the people in his surroundings until the bidding finally began.

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for visiting the Velvet Vault,” a beautiful lady with long blonde hair, blue eyes, and a sweet smile greeted everyone graciously. “You’re in for a treat because we have some good items today. I am your host, Anya, and I hope all of us will have a good time.

Anya paused, letting the room settle before continuing.

“I’m sure that many of you are regulars, but for the sake of our new customers, allow me to tell you the rules, so that none of you will break them by accident!

“First and foremost, all bids are final. No refunds, no second chances. We pride ourselves on the integrity of our auctions, so please bid wisely.

“Secondly, bidding increments will start at ten gold coins, but it may vary depending on the item’s rarity and demand.

“Third, any disruptive behavior will lead to immediate removal from the premises, and possibly a ban from all future events.

“Lastly, if you win an item, payment must be settled immediately after the auction session at the cashier’s desk, located just outside this hall.”

The lady’s smile widened as she swept her gaze over the crowd.

“Now, without further ado, let the bidding begin!”

From the back of the room, two assistants carried in a long, polished wooden chest covered with fine velvet cloth.

Anya stepped forward and took off the cloth, revealing the item that would be auctioned.

“First item up for bidding,” she announced, “a rare enchanted dagger, said to have been forged in the fires of the Eldrin Mountains. Starting bid will be fifty gold.”

Murmurs ran through the crowd. Alex’s eyes narrowed as he watched a few wealthy bidders eye the dagger eagerly.

“Sixty gold coins!”

“Seventy-five!”

“Ninety!”

Alex was quite familiar with the bidding process in ELO, but this was his first real life experience.

All the bidders were calculating how far their competitors could stretch their purse and estimating whether the item would be worth the gamble.

As the first bids were called out, Alex's mind raced with plans. He wasn't just thinking about how he could acquire treasures, but how he might be able to find an edge in this game of wealth and influence.

After all, in a place like the Velvet Vault, every coin spent could be the start of a new opportunity... or a costly mistake.

Chapter 156: Alex's and Dim Dim's First Auction Adventure [Part 2]

Alex joined the fun by bidding on a few items. Unsurprisingly, he didn't win anything since the price would always spike above his means, and he was on a tight budget.

Little did he know that, in one of the VIP Rooms of the auction house, someone was paying close attention to him.

'Peasant,' thought Caspian, Chuck's brother, as he watched the young man downstairs once again fail to win an item he was bidding for.

Although everyone was wearing a mask, the little white bun resting atop a mop of silver hair gave Alex's identity away.

It was impossible for Caspian to forget those who had wronged him, especially Dim Dim, who had openly defied him.

'I almost got in trouble with the Headmaster because of these mongrels.' Caspian gritted his teeth in anger.

Unfortunately, the Velvet Vault was a special organization he couldn't afford to mess with. He might be from a Ducal Family, but the auction house was managed by the Royal Family of Avalon.

Anyone who dared to cause trouble within its premises could forget about ever entering it again.

As Caspian cursed the pair internally, Alex sighed for the umpteenth time. Bidding on a budget was more difficult than he had assumed.

Dim Dim, on the other hand, was having fun. It held Alex's number and raised it whenever the young man made a bid.

Although Dim Dim felt a little down that they hadn't managed to win anything, it didn't let the disappointment get to it. After all, it understood that this was just how an auction was conducted.

"And now, we have another special item to show everyone," said the lovely hostess, Anya, with a smile. "We will be completely honest—we have no idea what this item is. However, we have still decided to auction it because its owner is in need of money."

Two ladies pushed a small cart up the stage. As usual, the item was covered by a velvet cloth.

When Anya took it off, Alex's eyes widened in shock. If his eyes weren't deceiving him, the item was that thing he had only managed to obtain three times in his entire gaming career!

That item was a rainbow-colored gem. It gleamed like the eye of a cat.

In the eyes of ordinary people, it looked like a colorful gem. Something that collectors could add to their collection and display proudly to friends and peers.

While Alex couldn't confirm if the item on stage was indeed the same item he had only seen thrice as a player of ELO, he was ninety percent sure that it was called the Eye of Kaleidos.

Just to be certain, the young man opened his Arcana Shop and checked the consumable area.

Sure enough, the Eye of Kaleidos could also be purchased there for a whopping 300,000 Arcana Points.

"As you can see, this gem is truly one of a kind. To be perfectly honest, I've never seen anything like it in my life," Anya admitted. "There will be no starting price, so feel free to bid as high as you wish. However, all bids must increase in increments of ten gold coins."

What Anya didn't tell the audience was that the Velvet Vault wanted to get rid of the gem as much as possible.

Their in-house appraiser had stated that although the gem looked colorful and mysterious, it couldn't be made into jewelry or other accessories.

At most, it was priced at 100 gold coins.

Anything higher than that would be a profit for them.

Somehow, the audience must have realized something was off despite Anya's favorable description. The moment she declared the start of the bidding, no one made any bids.

Even the gem collectors hesitated because the gem looked like a cheap knockoff of the gems in their possession.

Sure, it might look beautiful, but even glass could be made beautiful in the hands of an expert.

Some even smirked, convinced that the item must be a fake. They didn't plan on bidding for it because they might get ridiculed by their peers. Instead, they waited to see which poor fool wanted the item.

Alex, who had no idea why no one was bidding, asked Dim Dim to raise their number and bid for ten gold coins.

"T-Ten... gold coins." Anya did her best to prevent her smile from faltering because this was lower than the price that their appraiser had assumed. "Is there anyone else who would like to bid? Anyone?"

Unlike the previous bids, where the beautiful lady would hasten her call to close the bid, she was looking at everyone, as if desperate for someone to bid a higher price.

As if the heavens decided to answer her prayer, an arrogant voice came from one of the VIP Rooms.

“A hundred gold coins.”

Caspian didn't want Alex to have his way. The rich brat joined the bidding “war” out of spite. He didn't really need the gem, but a hundred gold coins were still within reasonable bounds.

“One hundred and ten.” Alex then asked Dim Dim to raise their number, which it obeyed.

“One hundred and fifty,” Caspian sneered. “Do your best, peasant.”

Some of the people inside the auction house chuckled, while some simply smiled lightly.

Taunts were very common inside the auction house, especially when rivals or enemies ended up bidding on the same items.

Although his face couldn't be seen, many assumed that Alex was a young man.

The voice that was challenging his bid also belonged to a young man, causing many audience members to assume that the two knew each other.

“Dim Dim.” Dim Dim narrowed its eyes as it looked at the balcony of the VIP Room where the annoying brat was getting in its way.

The Dim Sum God told Alex that the one bidding against them was Caspian. Alex suddenly felt his head throbbing.

“Caspian, stop being a pain in the butt,” Alex retorted in an attempt to intimidate the young man who held a grudge against them.

“This is an auction house, and money does the talking,” Caspian replied, not even bothering to hide his identity. “If you don't have the money, then scram!”

“Who says that I don’t have the money?” Alex scoffed. “Let’s see who has more pocket money! You or me!”

“Bring it on, peasant!”

“You’re on, you twat!”

“Dim Dim!”

This was confirmation for the other audience members that the two young men indeed knew each other. They decided to lean back and enjoy the show.

“Three hundred!” Alex declared.

“We have three hundred!” Anya already managed to reach the auction house’s target price for the Eye of Kaleidos, so she decided to hype things a bit between the two rivals. “Going once... going twice...”

“Five hundred!” Caspian announced.

Five hundred gold coins was his limit, but he still acted every bit as arrogant because he didn’t want to appear weak in front of Alex.

“Five hundred and twenty!” Alex said with a pained expression.

Seeing his reaction, Caspian was sorely tempted to raise the price a bit more. However, he was also worried that Alex had reached his limit just like him.

If he ended up winning the useless gem, wouldn’t he be the one on the losing end?

“Hahaha! You can have that useless gem!” Caspian mocked. “Say bye-bye to your five hundred and twenty gold coins!”

Anya felt a bit sorry for Alex, but since no one had made a counterbid, the Eye of Kaleidos was finally sold for the price that the young man had declared.

Alex sighed loudly, making sure that everyone saw his look of depression and desolation.

He then stood up and shook his head helplessly, looking every bit like a defeated bidder who had allowed his temper to get the better of him, resulting in a costly mistake. This was, after all, a common enough sight at the Velvet Vault.

The people watching him head to the other room to collect his bid sympathized with him.

What they weren't aware of was, the moment Alex closed the door behind him, a smile that was as unhinged as Lloyd Pr*ntera's appeared on his face.

""Kukuku!""

Alex and Dim Dim both cackled like third-rate villains. Like Alex, Dim Dim was well aware of the true value of the Eye of Kaleidos.

After securing their item, the two headed back to the academy as quickly as possible.

Only when they were back safely in their room did Alex take out the jewel from his storage ring and admire it with a satisfied expression.

'It seems that the people of this world don't know how to use this thing,' Alex mused. 'Good for me. I have gotten something with an astronomical price for only five hundred and twenty gold coins.'

The Eye of Kaleidos was one of the most sought-after items in Endless Leveling Online.

Why?

Because the rainbow-colored cat's eye was actually a treasure map!

But it wasn't any ordinary treasure map.

The treasure that could be found using this map was guaranteed to be either a Unique or Legendary Item!

Sometimes, you could even get more than one of them!

In Arcana, items were ranked Common, Uncommon, Rare, Super Rare, Unique, Legendary, or Divine.

This proved how precious the Eye of Kaleidos was. After all, a Unique Item could be sold for tens of thousands of gold coins.

Some Unique Items could even be sold for hundreds of thousands.

Legendary items were considered priceless, but they would sometimes appear in Auction Houses, where they would be sold for tens of millions of gold coins.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle as he stared at the gem in his hand. The reason the Velvet Vault had been unable to gauge the true worth of the Eye of Kaleidos was that the previous owner and staff didn't have the special key needed to activate and use it.

Alex didn't hesitate to purchase the rainbow-colored key from the Arcana Shop for five hundred Arcana Points.

It was a small investment for something with a huge return on investment. Without much ado, he inserted the key into the center of the gemstone, where the cat's eye effect was located.

A moment later, a beam of light shot out from the gemstone, displaying a projection.

The young man and the Dim Sum God looked at the map that appeared. They couldn't help but gasp because the map that was being shown on the projection was none other than Frieden Academy!

Chapter 157: Silent Is The Hunt, Certain Is The Kill

Alex didn't know if he should be happy or depressed, knowing the treasure that he was looking for was hidden in Frieden Academy.

He was happy because he didn't need to travel far to look for the treasure.

But he was depressed because the treasure was located within one of the Forbidden Zones of the academy.

There were only three ways to enter that restricted area.

The first one was to gain enough academy merit points to exchange for a ticket to pass through it.

The second way was to wait for an event, exam, or exercise training, when students would be allowed to enter the Forbidden Zone for a brief period of time.

This was similar to the deserted island domain that Rowan had used as a testing ground for the trial takers who had wished to qualify for the academy's scholarship.

The Paragon of Space, Rowan, could theoretically go anywhere in the world of Arcana in the blink of an eye.

This made him a very powerful—and dangerous—enemy. His target could run or hide all they wanted, but he could instantly arrive at their location if he wished to.

One of Rowan's hobbies was to create portals connecting to forbidden zones, dungeons, and other unusual places that could be used to train the students of the academy.

Not many knew that Frieden Academy itself was built upon one of those forbidden zones, which Rowan had compressed into a dungeon.

Alex couldn't help but grit his teeth in frustration. The treasure was so near yet so far from his reach!

"Dim Dim." The Dim Sum God patted Alex's head comfortingly while telling him that there would be an opportunity in the near future to visit that place.

The young man agreed with his partner, so he handed the Eye of Kaleidos to Dim Dim, who would be able to keep it in a safe place.

Alex's storage ring could be stolen or taken by someone by force.

On the other hand, Dim Dim's dimensional storage was for it—and it alone—to access.

Clearly, the rainbow-colored gem was safer in Dim Dim's hands than Alex's.

"Dim!" Dim Dim nodded and kept the Eye of Kaleidos in its dimensional storage.

With the adrenaline rush gone, Alex sighed and lay down on his bed.

The image of Caspian's arrogant face appeared inside his head.

Instead of being angry, Alex was in the mood to gloat and smirk. Although he couldn't use the map right now, he still had something that far surpassed the gold coins that he had spent at the Velvet Vault.

'Still, Caspian will be a constant annoyance in the academy,' Alex realized.

Caspian, being a year older than them, was their senior in the academy.

He was also part of the Elite Class, which was composed of children from high-ranking noble families.

Children of Earls, Marquesses, and Dukes were usually automatically added to the “Elite Group,” which had been around for hundreds of years.

Technically, it was like joining a club.

A club for the elites, and it was called the Lionheart Society.

Just as Alex was thinking of ways to deal with Caspian, the door of his room opened, and Chuck entered with a smile.

“Alex, I found the one,” Chuck said.

“Huh? What are you talking about?” Alex frowned.

Chuck tossed a folded pamphlet onto Alex’s bed.

The emblem on the front was simple but striking—a sleek black wolf etched in obsidian ink, head raised in a silent howl, set against a crescent moon.

Beneath it, the name, Obsidian Fang, was written in bold and powerful strokes.

“They’re one of the Twelve Crest Clubs,” Chuck explained. “Not loud or flashy like Caspian’s circle, but don’t let that fool you. The Obsidian Fang is made up of tacticians, duelists, and elite dungeon scouts. People say their members graduate straight into guild command or royal recon squads.”

Alex narrowed his eyes at the emblem. There was no golden flare, no ostentatious banner. Just quiet power.

“And they will take in a couple of scholarship kids?” Alex inquired.

Chuck smirked. "They don't care about status. They care about potential. You pass their entrance test, and they'll show you the door to power."

Alex's gaze lingered on the wolf for a moment longer.

Beneath the emblem was their motto, "Silent is the Hunt, Certain is the Kill".

He liked that. It was direct with no misleading speeches.

"Alright," Alex muttered. "Let's make them look our way."

Chuck grinned. "Thought you'd say that. Just don't hold back."

Alex was familiar with the Twelve Crest Clubs of the academy. The Lionheart Society was one of them, and players could freely choose which one they wished to enter.

Each club had its own advantages, which would allow a player to gain benefits, connections, as well as protection from the other clubs, especially the Lionheart Society, whose members liked to bully loners and unaffiliated students.

Alex also liked the fact that the Obsidian Fang was an expedition club that could also be regarded as a treasure-hunting club.

Although there was a treasure hunting club in the academy called El Dorado, which was also part of the Twelve Crest Clubs, Alex wasn't too keen on joining them.

He preferred flexibility, and the Obsidian Fang sounded like the perfect place for him.

"Any idea who is leading them this year?" Alex asked, glancing at Chuck.

Chuck shrugged. "They have a tradition of keeping their leader's identity hidden. However, one of their executives is one of the top duelists in the second year. People call her the Radiant Valkyrie. Word is, she once took down a full party in a trial match... alone."

The smile on Alex's face stiffened because he knew who the Radiant Valkyrie was.

She was none other than the Elven Princess, Aeris Sylarin, who belonged to Class A of the second year.

Aeris was the older sister of Lapid, who was one of Alex's four queens. Alex had played Aeris in Story Mode, and she was indeed the "perfect heroine".

She was often used as the banner girl of ELO, enticing many to play the game.

Beauty, boldness, and brains, she had it all.

However, Alex wasn't able to relate to someone as perfect as her.

He preferred Aeris' younger sister, Lapid. Just like him, Lapid had flaws, making her feel more human than her older sister.

Alex pondered. 'Right. She is an executive of Obsidian Fang. It's quite unfortunate that Lapid didn't join her club because she didn't want to be compared to her perfect older sister.'

After a brief pause, the young man finally made his decision.

"The Obsidian Fang sounds like an all-around club," Alex commented. "I like it."

"Exactly." Chuck leaned back against the door frame. "They're the only club that mixes scouting, solo ops, and tactical fieldwork. It's hands-on practical training. If you do well, you will rise. But if you fail to meet their expectations, you might as well fade from the group."

Alex exhaled slowly.

He had to choose well. Sense of belonging was one thing. The most important was to choose the training field that would sharpen him, allowing him to stay two steps ahead of people like Caspian.

"When will their entrance test begin?" Alex asked.

"One week from now," Chuck answered. "So, are you in or out?"

"I'm in, of course."

"Dim Dim~"

"Great!" Chuck patted his best friend's shoulder. "Now, how about we invite your other friends to join? You know what they say! The more, the merrier."

Alex thought about it. It didn't seem like a bad idea. With Chuck and Dim Dim in tow, he left the room and went to find their friends to tell them about the mysterious Obsidian Fang.

Chapter 158: Class Allocation Trials [Part 1]

A few days later, all the students were gathered at the grand auditorium of the academy.

The first years sat at the very front and the second years sat behind them.

The third years sat at the right side of the auditorium while the fourth years sat at the left.

The Headmaster of Frieden Academy, Rowan Vademont, stepped up to the grand dais, his deep green robes rustling softly even though there was no wind.

His calm and commanding voice resounded across the vast auditorium filled with students.

“Welcome to Frieden Academy,” Rowan said with a smile. “A place where legends are made, and the sanctuary of those who will leave their marks on the pages of history.”

He paused, eyes sweeping the sea of young faces.

“You stand where countless heroes once stood. Some became kings, some became scholars.

“Others vanished into the wilds of history, their names whispered in stories, and sang through bardic songs. But all of them began... just like you, in this place. Unproven. Unknown. Unready.”

The gaze of the Paragon of Space sharpened as he eyed the students who were paying attention to every word that he said.

“You will not remain here for long,” Rowan stated. “This academy is no mere learning institution. It is a gate. One that opens only for those willing to challenge the world and themselves.

“You will face trials that test more than your strength. Rest assured that your courage, your resolve, your heart, and all that defines you will be tested throughout the years of your stay here in the academy.

“Some of you may rise like dawnfire. Others may falter. That is the way of growth. But know this—no one leaves Frieden Academy unchanged.”

He lifted his right hand, and faint arcs of magical light shimmered behind him, revealing symbols that only those who had stepped into the ranks of Paragon fully understood.

Alex looked at one of the thirteen Demigods of the world, wishing that one day, he would be able to join their ranks.

“To those who burn with ambition, may you blaze a trail the world cannot ignore,” Rowan declared. “To those who seek truth, may you find the light that endures.

“To those who walk in shadow, may you uncover the strength to face it.”

The light faded. His tone softened.

“You are no longer children of chance but students of Frieden Academy.

Let your trials begin, and may all of your stories be worth remembering.”

A powerful cheer reverberated in the auditorium as the students gave the headmaster a round of applause.

All the First-Years who heard his words couldn’t help but feel their blood boiling and their passions reignited.

The Second-Years and Third-Years, although already used to the Headmaster’s speeches, still looked at him with awe as he delivered the opening address for the school term.

As for the Fourth-Years? They had once been in the place where the First-Years sat.

They had once been filled with dreams, hope, and ambition.

Some of them managed to get what they needed in the academy, while some learned valuable lessons that they would carry even after they left these ancient halls.

Rowan Vademont was right.

No one leaves Frieden Academy unchanged.

For better or for worse, it had once been their home. They would always carry the memories of their time here within their hearts.

The Headmaster then raised his hand, and the applause slowly died out to allow him to speak once more.

“To the First-Years, you will all start your Class Allocation Trials,” Rowan continued. “However, there will be a few changes this year. In previous years, anyone could challenge any trial to gain some points so they could enter the class they wanted.

“But this year, things will be different. You can only challenge three trials, and the maximum points that you can earn in each trial is five thousand points. In order to enter Class A, you will need twelve thousand points.

“In order to enter Class B, you need ten thousand. As for Class C, you will need eight thousand. Class D is six thousand. Class E is four thousand. Anything below that will be Class F.

“However, remember this—do not feel down even if you have to start from the bottom. Once you’re there, the only place to go is up. So, as the Headmaster of the Academy, I wish all of you luck.”

Rowan then raised both of his hands and created a portal in front of him.

“I hereby declare the start of the Class Allocation Trials! Enter the portal, and may fortune favor the daring, for only they move the world.”

The First-Years stood up and entered the portal one by one.

When Alex stepped into the portal, he found himself in a very spacious place, where over a dozen golden portals surrounded him and the other First-Years.

Above each portal was a sign that indicated which trial it led to.

“Well then, time to challenge myself.” Chuck gave Alex a thumbs-up before entering the portal below the sign that read “Trial of Magic.”

One by one, the students entered the trial they wished to challenge, hoping they'd get a high score that would let them enter a good class.

Alex pondered for a bit as he looked at the different portals around him.

Suddenly, Lavinia lightly tapped his shoulder.

"What do you plan to challenge first?" she asked. "And which Class are you aiming for?"

She wanted to know just how many points she needed to earn to be in the same class as Alex.

"Anywhere aside from Class A," Alex replied. "But if possible, I want to be in Class B."

"Class B..." Lavinia muttered. "I understand. Good luck in the trial, Alex."

After knowing his target class, Lavinia entered the Trial of Swords, which perfectly suited her fighting style.

Alex thought over his options for a few more minutes before asking Dim Dim if it had any recommendations.

"Dim Dim." The Dim Sum God pointed at a portal, which made Alex smile.

"I was planning to save it for last, but since you recommended it to me, I'll take it first," Alex replied before walking towards the portal leading to the Trial of Defense.

Since he was a tanker, this was one of the three trials that he had planned to take.

But just as Alex was about to enter the portal, a young lady accidentally bumped into him, pushing him over to a different portal.

“S-Sorry!” the young lady apologized hastily, but it was already too late.

Alex only had enough time to look at the student who had accidentally bumped into him.

She was a beautiful young lady with long purple hair and purple eyes. His heart skipped a beat.

He recognized who she was because she was someone very dear to him and to the players of ELO, who relied on luck.

She was none other than Astrea Nocturne.

A clumsy young lady who was remarkably bad at directions.

As Alex disappeared within the portal, Astrea panicked.

She quickly looked up to read the sign above the portal. Instead of calming her down, the name made her flinch.

Trial of Alchemy.

“Sorry, but I hope you know something about alchemy,” Astrea pressed her hands together in prayer.

A moment later, she entered the Trial of Music, which was one of the things that she specialized in.

Chapter 159: Class Allocation Trials [Part 2]

“Welcome to the alchemy trial, everyone!” Professor Selwin Myrr said with a smile.

With her luscious black hair and twinkling brown eyes, she was one of the loveliest professors.

Moreover, her tall, curvaceous body was one of the main reasons why alchemy was a very popular subject in the academy even if most students did not have an affinity for alchemy.

“I’m sure that all of you are very excited to start alchemy, so without further delay, I want you all to create the best alchemical product that you can create at this point in time,” Professor Selwin stated.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s pills, potions, or any other diabolical creations. I will grade you depending on how your products turn out. However, remember this: Each of you will only be given three opportunities.

“Once you mess up—maybe by accidentally burning your creation—thrice, it means that you have failed this trial and will not get any points from me. Does everyone understand?”

“”Yes!””

Alex blinked and looked at his surroundings.

‘Who am I? Where am I?!’

Those were the things that he wanted to shout out loud, but he knew that if he really did that, he would die of embarrassment on the spot.

He had studied the books of alchemy and knew how to create simple healing potions and salves.

But they were very basic and obviously not enough to give him the points he needed to get into the class he wanted.

Still, since he was already there, he had no choice but to just go with the flow.

With Professor Selwin’s permission, all the students went to the shelves to get some ingredients for their alchemy work.

Dim Dim thought that everyone was going to do something fun, so it also took a few things from the shelves before lighting up a small furnace beside Alex.

Professor Selwin couldn't help but smile when she saw the adorable little bun throwing some herbs and mushrooms into its small pot.

Dim Dim was even humming Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star as it tried its hand at alchemy.

Alex was worried that the Professor might reprimand Dim Dim. But seeing that she was amused by his partner's antics, he stopped worrying and instead focused on his own alchemy.

Fortunately, he still remembered the step-by-step process for crafting a low-quality healing potion, which he was currently making with great care.

Half an hour later, Alex breathed a sigh of relief as he poured the contents of his pot into a small vial.

Dim Dim had also finished whatever it was working on. After looking at Dim Dim's handiwork, Alex blinked a few times. The little one hadn't made any alchemical product.

Instead, it had cooked what looked like mushroom soup! The delicious smell made Alex's mouth water a bit.

"I'm done, Professor." Alex raised his hand to get her attention.

When the beautiful lady arrived at their table, Alex saw the corner of her lips twitch after seeing the mushroom soup that Dim Dim had made.

"Dim Dim~" Dim Dim raised its body proudly, and even asked Professor Selwin to try what it cooked.

Professor Selwin chuckled. "Thank you. I was feeling hungry, so this snack is perfect. But I'll eat it later, okay?"

"Dim!" Dim Dim nodded in understanding.

Professor Selwin lightly patted the Dim Sum God's head before shifting her attention to Alex's potion.

"A low-quality healing potion," Professor Selwin said. "It's not bad, but nothing outstanding. I give you one thousand points for it. Would you like to create something better, or is this the limit of what you can do?"

"I'm sorry Professor, but this is my limit," Alex answered honestly.

He didn't want to say that he was only here because Astrea had accidentally bumped into him as he was about to enter the Trial of Defense.

"Understood." Professor Selwin said before shifting her attention to Dim Dim's mushroom soup.

The Professor held a necklace with a blue crystal above Dim Dim's creation.

The necklace was a magic tool that could detect poisons. But since it wasn't reacting, it meant that what Dim Dim made wasn't poisonous.

Summoning a small bowl and ladle, the Professor took a scoop of the mushroom soup and started to eat.

"D-Delicious!" Professor Selwin hadn't expected much, but she was really blown away by Dim Dim's cooking.

"Although this is the trial of alchemy and not the trial of cooking, I'll give you a bonus of one hundred points for cooking something very tasty. Alex Stratos, you get one thousand and one hundred points here in the trial of alchemy."

"Thank you, Professor," Alex replied. "Let's go, Dim Dim."

“Dim Dim.” Dim Dim waved goodbye at Professor Selwin before jumping on top of Alex’s head.

The young man then walked towards the portal, which would take him back to the spacious platform, where the portals to other trials were located.

There were other students on the platform. Some of them were chatting happily with their friends and acquaintances.

It seemed that some of them had gotten good scores during their trials, making Alex feel a little anxious.

“This time for sure.” Alex didn’t hesitate and headed towards the Trial of Defense in a hurry.

But, just as he was about to step inside, he heard someone calling out to him from behind.

“Wait!”

Alex turned around to see Astrea running in his direction.

“I want to say sorry for what happened earlier!” Astrea said when she was only a few meters away from the young man.

However, she suddenly tripped on her own foot despite being on flat ground and “accidentally” pushed Alex into another portal.

The portal that the young man entered this time was the Trial of Music, which Astrea had challenged earlier.

Alex blinked once then twice as he found himself in what seemed to be a concert hall.

There, a lady wearing a minstrel dress smiled warmly when she saw him enter.

“Welcome to the Trial of Music!” Professor Arienna Lyrell greeted. “Well then, what do you plan to do? Are you going to play a musical instrument, dance, or sing a song?”

“Um... is this the Trial of Music?” Alex inquired.

“It is.” Professor Arienna replied. “So, what will it be, Mr. Alex Stratos?”

The Professors automatically knew the names of the students who entered their trial room

This time, Alex wasn’t disappointed. Although he was, once again, not in the Trial of Defence, the Trial of Music was actually one of the three trials he had intended to attempt.

He was quite confident with his singing ability because his Guildmaster had dragged him into karaoke bars to sing duets with her.

However...

“The song that I want to sing may not be known here in the Kingdom of Avalon,” Alex explained.

“That’s fine!” Professor Arienna replied. “Just place your hand on this orb and think of the song. The orb will automatically play the tune and you can just sing along.”

“Oh! That’s very convenient!”

“I know, right?”

“Dim Dim?”

“You want to try singing as well, little one?” Professor Arienna asked.

“Dim!”

“Okay, you go first.”

“Dim!”

The Professor then handed the orb to Dim Dim because she was very curious if the little one could really sing.

Dim Dim then closed its eyes to imagine the song that it wanted to sing. A few seconds later, the orb hovered above its head and transformed into small musical instruments that started playing.

Professor Arienna sat and prepared herself to listen to Dim Dim’s performance.

Dim Dim then started to sway its little body, becoming one with the music.

“I’ll sing you a song, it’s a song of the sea

Row, me bully boys, row.”

“Oh, I’ll sing you a song if you’ll sing it with me

And it’s row, me bully boys, row.”

And it’s row, me bully boys

We’re in a hurry, boys

We got a long way to go~

And we'll sing and we'll dance

And bid farewell to chance,

And it's row, me bully boys, row

Alex, Professor Arienna, as well as the other students inside the concert hall, all clapped as Dim Dim sang, making the atmosphere very lively.

Seeing that everyone was having fun, the little white bun smiled, swayed its body, and sang happily.

What many didn't know was that Dim Dim was singing one of the favorite songs of its best friend, Eiko, who was known as the Pirate Princess of the seven seas.

Chapter 160: The Trial Of Music

"That was amazing!" Professor Arienna said as she clapped her hands. "Bravo!"

The other students who were around also gave Dim Dim a round of applause.

The little guy's heart swelled in happiness, and its smile grew so wide that the beautiful Professor was very tempted to pinch its cheeks.

"Now it's my turn to shine," Alex said with confidence as he activated the orb in his hand. "Are you all ready?!"

"Yes!" The students cheered in unison.

Unlike the Trial of Alchemy, the Trial of Music was actually one of his choices, so even though Astrea had accidentally pushed him in this direction, he was fine with it.

'Time to show them the power of the Karaoke King!' Alex flipped his hair as the music started to play.

He was very confident in his singing ability that he already thought that he got this one in the bag.

Everyone looked forward to his singing, even Professor Arienna.

Alex was very handsome, which was already a plus for a performer. If he could also sing, dance, or play any musical instruments well, he could easily create a musical band that would take the academy by storm.

With perfect timing and poise, Alex started to sing.

The moment he sang the first word, Professor Astrea was overwhelmed.

Not by the young man's talent, but by his tone deafness!

Even Dim Dim, who was Alex's most loyal supporter, flinched involuntarily after hearing his singing voice.

"O-Okay, that's enough!" Professor Arienna was doing her best to remain nice as she attempted to stop Alex from singing. It proved rather hard, given that he sounded like a dying goose making its last honk.

Unfortunately, Alex was laboring under the delusion that everyone enjoyed his singing.

He ignored the Professor's attempts to stop him and happily started the chorus.

"Dancing on the hood in the middle of the woods

On an old Mustang, where we sang

Songs with all our childhood friends.

“And it went like this, say...

Oops, I got 99 problems singing ‘bye, bye, bye’

Hold up, if you wanna go and take a ride with me

Better hit me, baby, one more time!

“Paint a picture for you and me

On the days when we were young, uh

Singing at the top of both our lungs

“On the day we fell in love

Ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh

On the day we fell in love

Ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh~”

One of the students finally managed to summon his voice back and shouted.

“Don’t stop me!” the young man roared. “I’ll stab his lungs so he can’t sing again!”

“We won’t stop you!” replied a chubby boy. “We’ll help you stab him!”

“Go! Kill!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

Just as Alex was about to continue singing, he suddenly felt a wave of killing intent directed at him.

‘W-What’s wrong with these guys?!’ Alex thought. ‘Are they envious that I am such a good singer?! Should I have kept my talent hidden?!’

The young man narrowed his eyes, mistaking the murderous chant for some sort of mad cheer for his amazing performance.

“Ah!” Alex nodded sagely before winking at the audience. “Guys, calm down. I know that I’m a good singer, so please don’t feel jealous of my talent, okay? I dedicate this song to all of you!”

Professor Arienna didn’t know if she should laugh or cry. She didn’t know it was possible for someone to misread a room so badly, and yet, Alex was doing just that effortlessly.

“Alex, they are literally forming a mob to stab you!” Professor Arienna exclaimed as she activated the shield on the stage to prevent the audience from beating the crap out of the young man. “Please, for the love of the Gods, don’t ever sing in public again! Just look at that child over there. He is foaming at the mouth!”

Alex glanced at the direction that the Professor was pointing at. He noticed that aside from the boy, there were also several other students sprawled on the ground, their faces pale and ashen.

However, Alex thought that the Professor was just teasing him. Who would've thought that such a gorgeous Professor had a mischievous side too! Because of this, he decided to address some of the students directly to get their feedback.

The young man pointed to the back of the hall where a poor student had fallen to his knees in agony.

"You there! Yes, you!" Alex shouted. "You're crying. My singing voice moved you, didn't it?"

The student let out a howl.

"YES! IT MOVED MY BOWELS!" the teenage boy shouted back. "Damn you, I almost... almost..."

The tears in his eyes wouldn't stop falling as he tried his best to stop himself from doing a number two in front of everyone.

One of the shyer music teachers raised her hand nervously to catch Professor Arienna's attention.

"C-Can we," she asked meekly, "just give him a passing grade if he promises never to sing again?"

"No!" Professor Arienna rejected firmly. "We are a respectable academy! We must have standards!"

Her resolve was immediately tested when Alex reached for the orb a second time.

"Don't worry, guys. That was just a warm up," Alex said. "This time is for real! I dedicate my second song to all of you!"

A brief moment of silence descended inside the concert hall before all hell broke loose.

“Oh my gosh! That was just a warm up?!” Professor Arienna’s teaching assistant screamed. “Does that mean that this time he’s going to kill us for real?!”

“Noooo! I’m still too young to die! I don’t want to die!” a young lady shouted tearfully. “I still haven’t even gotten a boyfriend yet. Someone... anyone... Please, save me!”

“Guys, if we’re going to die, we’re going to bring him down with us!” a young man declared, his bloodshot eyes locked on Alex. “Kill!”

“Kill!”

This time, none of the students held back. They all charged at Alex with the intention to kill.

Professor Arienna subconsciously gripped her sword tightly, already affected by the same bloodlust powering the other students.

However, the sight of the audience swarming toward Alex snapped her out of her daze, and she quickly waved her hand, forcing him out of the Trial of Music.

The young man was sent rolling out of the portal, only coming to a stop when he was back at the centre of the platform.

Around him, students whispered.

“Did he... get kicked out?”

“No, no... maybe he passed in a special way?”

“Look at his eyes. He really believes he’s famous now.”

“Should we clap? Do we clap for trauma?”

Alex blinked once then twice before propping himself off the floor. He ignored the muttering around him.

The students looked at him with curiosity because this was the first time they had seen someone get “evicted” from the Trial of Music.

A moment later, Dim Dim came out of the portal, holding a small tambourine in its hand.

The tambourine was a gift that Professor Arienna had given Dim Dim before sending it out of the concert hall.

“Did you see that, Dim Dim?” Alex smiled confidently. “I’m so talented that the Professor had no choice but to send me away to give a chance to the other students.”

It took all the willpower in Dim Dim’s little body to stop its eye from twitching. The Dim Sum God really wanted to ask Alex what the heck he was smoking to be that confident in his singing voice.

“Dim Dim.” Dim Dim said.

(Translation: You have a great talent, Alex. You should have kept it hidden.)

“You’re right,” Alex brushed his hair backward. “I should have been more discreet.”

With a sigh, Dim Dim jumped on top of Alex’s head. It lightly tapped its tambourine, making the young man chuckle.

“Right, let’s go to the Trial of Defense,” Alex said, still smiling with confidence. “Do you think we should create our own background music? Like when we enter a room the music will play to make our presence known.”

“Dim!” Dim Dim once again tapped its tambourine, agreeing with Alex’s idea.

With his second trial done, Alex walked fearlessly towards the Trial of Defense.

This time, he passed through the portal without getting bumped, but only because the young lady responsible for the unfortunate disaster was now frozen in shock after learning about his antics during the Trial of Music.