

Endless 421

Chapter 421: Hey, How Long Are You Planning To Spectate?!

Alex glanced at his map and paid attention to the red blinking dots that were now trying to encircle.

Smirking, he summoned a magical shield before him.

Without any hesitation, Alex jumped on it and activated a skill.

“Shield Chaser!”

The shield flew in a straight line that cut across the incomplete encirclement while Alex stood above it as if riding a skateboard.

Seeing that their target was about to break out of their formation, the Demon Worshipers hurriedly launched their attacks in an attempt to hinder him from getting away.

Spells and projectile weapons flew toward Alex, but the young man only summoned more shields to block them.

Explosions resounded throughout the park, catching the attention of some of the city guards on patrol. They promptly headed towards the explosions to investigate.

But since Alex had deliberately led the Demon Worshipers far from other people, it would take the guards some time to get to the battle.

Suddenly, a Demon Worshiper appeared in front of Alex, his sword ready to strike.

The young man didn't hesitate to jump off his Shield and break his fall by rolling on the ground before standing back up again.

As soon as he regained his balance, he summoned four shields and used his Shield Chaser skill to make them attack the person who had tried to cut him down.

Without stopping to see the end of that swordwielding killer, Alex summoned another shield and activated his Shield Chaser to run away again.

Demon Worshipers gnashed their teeth in anger and frustration, finding the young man as slippery as an eel.

They had thought that they would be able to capture him if given the chance, but they had underestimated his escape abilities!

However, they understood that there was only one place where the young man would head to—Frieden Academy.

With that thought in mind, they spread out and moved accordingly to trap him.

But that was a mistake.

Lumi and Lavinia tag-teamed to defeat the Demon Worshipers at the rear.

Unbeknownst to them, Alex saw them on the map and was forced to change his plans.

Had he been alone, he would have been confident about escaping.

But now that the two ladies had engaged the Demon Worshipers, they had made themselves targets. The moment the enemies broke off the chase for Alex, they would turn to deal with this new threat.

“Hey, how long are you planning to spectate?!” Alex shouted. “A little help here, please?! ”

There was a green dot blinking on his map, not too far from his pursuers. Clearly, this person was an ally, but had not made a move. They seemed to be interested in seeing how Alex would handle the situation.

As if answering his complaint, a scream reached Alex's ears.

The ally represented by green dot finally made their move, eliminating the nearest Demon Worshiper within their range.

With someone so powerful backing him, Alex stopped running away and unleashed a barrage of magical shields that were enchanted with flames.

"Shield Chaser!" Alex roared as his shields shot out like missiles toward his targets.

Dozens of shields were launched every ten seconds, with some of them flying high in the sky and detonating themselves, as if to tell the guards where the fight was.

"Everyone, retreat!" one of the Demon Worshipers yelled after realizing they had lost their chance to capture Alex.

The sound of screams coming from their comrades were enough to tell them that there were more people getting in the way of their operation.

In order to minimize the loss of manpower, they had no other choice but to fall back and regroup to fight another day.

The moment Alex saw that the red blinking dots on his map were all moving away, he breathed a sigh of relief.

He then glanced towards a cluster of trees and saw Luthor holding the neck of one of the Demon Worshipers and snapping it without a shred of mercy.

The old man then tossed the dead assassin to the ground before tipping his hat in Alex's direction.

Before Alex could say anything, Luthor slipped behind a tree and vanished without a trace.

However, his green dot on the map got closer and closer to the dots representing the fleeing Demon Worshipers.

It was clear he intended to kill every last one of them as retribution for their attack on Alex during his date.

Just as Alex was about to relax, Lumi suddenly materialized in front of him and gave him a hug.

“Are you alright?!” Lumi asked. “Are you hurt?!”

The young lady meticulously inspected Alex’s body, looking for any signs of injury.

“I’m not hurt, Lumi,” Alex replied. “Thank you for helping me.”

Lavinia also appeared and walked toward Alex to take a closer look. Seeing that he didn’t seem injured, she finally allowed herself to feel relief.

“Are those people... you know what?” Lumi asked.

Alex nodded. “They are Demon Worshipers.”

Hearing this, Lumi and Lavinia tensed up. It was no secret that the young man had foiled the organization’s plans more than once. He was a particularly annoying thorn in their side.

“Let’s go back to the academy,” Lumi proposed, her tone making it clear that there was no room for negotiation. “They won’t dare follow us there.”

Alex agreed and allowed the two ladies to escort him back to the academy.

Meanwhile, Luthor continued to pursue his targets. There was no escape for them now that he had committed their auras to memory.

The old man had honed his remaining senses to their limits after losing his sight, allowing him to see what people didn't normally see.

Aware that Alex and the Demon Worshipers were at odds with each other, he had been monitoring the young man's movements.

When he had sensed Alex leaving school premises, Luthor had followed to ensure his safety.

He had no intention of losing Prince Aetherius a second time.

This was also the reason why he had asked Professor Rowan to give him a job in the academy. He wanted to protect the young man from the shadows.

That night, more than half of the Demon Worshipers who had tried to eliminate Alex disappeared from the face of the world.

The news soon spread within their organization.

Predictably, Alex's bounty increased once more, but this time it wasn't accompanied by a proportional increase in bloodlust among the younger generation. Hated and feared in equal measure, he was now truly public enemy number one.

Chapter 422: I Hope It Will Be A Good Night

Alex, Lumi, and Lavinia headed straight to Ironheart Dormitory after safely arriving at the academy.

Exhausted from the battle, Alex bade the ladies goodbye and quickly headed straight to his room to rest. Chuck and Dim Dim had arrived earlier than the silver-haired young man. The moment he opened the door, they presented him with food from their fish fest, which they had wrapped up especially for him.

"Did you have fun?" Alex asked the little bun, who jumped into his arms as soon as he entered the room.

"Dim!" Dim Dim smiled happily and enjoyed Alex's head pats.

"You should've really come, Alex." Chuck smirked. "Xenia had invited some of the nobles and set up a fishing contest. As soon as Dim Dim and I threw our bait, the fish just kept on coming!"

"Ahem!" Dim Dim raised its body proudly, earning more praise and head pats from Alex.

The young man listened to his roommate brag about his catch and the surprised looks of the nobles they competed against.

Only after Chuck finished his exaggerated tale of catching the Lord of the River did he ask Alex how his day had been.

Not wanting to lose, Alex bragged about his date with Evangeline, which made Chuck's ears perk up.

However, when he reached the part where the Demon Worshipers showed up, the troublemaker's face turned solemn.

"The Demon Worshipers also attacked you during your expedition to Oak Village, right?" Chuck frowned. "Looks like they're seriously after your head this time, Alex. Leaving the academy, even for lunch, is a bad idea right now. Don't even think about taking missions. You should lie low for a while, bro."

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim nodded in agreement.

Alex sighed, but he knew they're right. If Luthor hadn't followed him when he left, he might've fallen into quite a predicament earlier.

"I won't leave the academy for a few days," Alex stated. "So you don't have to worry about me for now."

"You better." Chuck shook his head and sighed. "Those Demon Worshipers are a troublesome bunch."

To lighten the mood, Chuck once again shifted the talk to the fishing competition, specifically when Dim Dim had caught its own fish, surprising everyone.

Meanwhile, Evangeline and Eleanora arrived at the gates of the academy.

And who was waiting for them but Lumi, who was tapping one foot impatiently.

"Alex is now resting in his dormitory," Lumi said, her arms crossed. "He asked me to tell you this so you won't worry about him. Since I have delivered my message, I'll be going as well. Goodnight to the two of you."

With no plans to hear their reply, Lumi disappeared and returned to the clock tower, where Latifa waited for her.

Since Latifa could access Lumi's senses, she got the gist of what had happened earlier during the day.

She had asked Lotte to go and help Alex, but the Alter had refused. Lotte had pointed out that if Alex had decided to face the Demon Worshipers alone, he had clearly already planned how to escape them.

And she was right.

If only Lumi and Lavinia hadn't joined the fray, Alex would have definitely escaped without fail. But since both girls had attacked the Demon Worshipers, he had no choice but to stay and ensure they would not be implicated for helping him.

"You heard her, right?" Eleanora said. "Now stop worrying about that guy. He's safe and sound in his own room. Let's go back to your room so you can rest."

Evangeline nodded weakly and allowed herself to be escorted by her handmaiden to her own dormitory.

She felt quite disappointed that their date had ended in this manner, especially since she had been looking forward to the opportunity of drinking Alex's blood.

When they arrived in her room, Evangeline asked Eleanora where she could drink Alex's blood without worrying about being seen.

To this question, her handmaiden already had an answer ready.

"Take him to the old library," Eleanora replied. It might be her personal hunting ground, but she wouldn't keep such information away from her Mistress. "I'll keep watch to ensure that you two will not be disturbed."

Evangeline cracked a smile. "Thank you, Eleanora. You're the best!"

"Hmph! Save your praises," Eleanora scoffed. "Just remember this. If you're serious about having a relationship with Alex, you better act bolder or the others will get ahead of you. Heck, they are already ahead of you by several steps."

Eleanora had seen the way Lumi and Lavinia looked at Alex. Their reaction when he had fallen into danger was solid proof that they were willing to help him even at the risk of their lives.

Since the young man was the target of the Demon Worshipers, this meant that Evangeline should be prepared to face the members of their own organization to protect Alex.

"What happened today will also happen in the future," Eleanora continued. "So you need to make a choice here. Who will you choose—the Demon Worshipers or Alex Stratos? You're not allowed to choose both."

"Then I'll choose Alex," Evangeline replied without hesitation.

Her answer made her handmaiden pinch the bridge of her nose. If Evangeline's father, Nero, had heard her reply, people might have started dying then and there.

"Fine, have it your way." Eleanora sighed. "Just don't expect me to clean up your mess every time."

Evangeline nodded and asked Eleanora for some advice or topics to talk about while she and Alex were inside the Old Library.

The corner of Eleanora's lips twitched, wondering how Evangeline's questions were necessary. Did they really need something to talk about when Evangeline would just drink Alex's blood? Was it so hard to make small talk?

Out of respect, she gave her Mistress some advice and told her that she should tell Alex about the time that they had spent together as children.

Based on the information that Eleanora had pieced together, Alex didn't seem to know much about her Mistress, who was supposed to be his childhood friend.

She had no idea why he had forgotten about her, but that wasn't important.

If he forgot, she would just remind him. From there, they could develop their relationship even further.

"Anyway, just rest for now," Eleanora said after helping Evangeline take off her clothes and let down her hair. "Take a shower and relax a bit before going to sleep. I still have some matters to attend to."

"Thank you, Eleanora." Evangeline nodded. "Goodnight."

"I hope it will be a good night." Eleanora waved before closing the door behind her.

The vampire lady pondered whether she should report today's incident to her Master or not.

However, since there was a chance that the members of the organization would recognize her Mistress, she decided that it was better to report the incident rather than keep it a secret.

As to how her Master would react to this bit of information, Eleanora hoped he wouldn't get angry at her Mistress.

Their father-daughter relationship was quite complicated, but she knew that the Vampire Lord cared about his daughter more than he let on.

Eleanora still had some hope that if pushed to a corner, Evangeline would choose the organization over Alex. Of course, the vampire lady might not have been so confident had she known that Alex was currently dreaming about Evangeline biting his neck and drinking her fill.

Chapter 423: The Bearer Of The Crown Of Infinity

Since it was a Sunday, most of the students spent their time resting and relaxing. Some of those students who didn't have to worry about Demon Worshipers wrecking their romantic little dates were having a good time in the City of Harmonia.

As for Alex, he was heading to the northeast of the campus, where the Old Library was located.

Eleanora had come to look for him after breakfast and informed him that Evangeline wished to talk to him.

"I'll make sure no one follows you, but please do your best to avoid being seen on your way to the Old Library," Eleanora had said back then.

Keeping her words in mind, Alex made sure to pay careful attention to his surroundings by double-checking his map to ensure he wasn't being followed by one of Latifa's Alters.

Seeing that the coast was clear, he made his way to the Old Library.

When he arrived, he saw Evangeline curled up in an armchair, reading a book.

The library was dimly lit, but this wasn't a problem for a Dhampir like her. The moment she sensed the door open, she raised her head to look at Alex and smiled at him.

Alex smiled back and firmly closed the door behind him. He made sure to lock it properly, just in case someone suddenly came and stumbled upon the two of them.

"I'm glad that you're safe, Alex," Evangeline said before standing up to walk towards him. "I was so worried about you after you left."

Without thinking twice, she jumped at Alex for a hug like they had always done when still living in that villa hidden in the snowy mountains of the north.

"I'm glad you trusted me," Alex replied, accepting Evangeline's hug.

He could feel her genuine care and worry for him, so he didn't pull away and allowed her to calm down for the time being.

The young man couldn't help but think that she was really different from the Evangeline in the game.

The Evangeline in the game was cold, proud, and domineering.

She was also the ideal character to start with when going on the Dark Path of the story due to her background as the daughter of the Vampire Lord.

But that coldness, pride, and dominance were nowhere to be seen.

Right now, Alex could only see a kind and caring young lady missing someone very important to her.

"Your heartbeat makes me feel calm," Evangeline commented. "Back then, whenever I felt anxious, you always hugged me like this, and I listened to your steady heartbeat to calm myself down. It's like magic. I don't know how it works, but it just works."

A few minutes later, Evangeline looked up and stared straight into Alex's eyes. A faint tinge of red was creeping onto her face.

He knew that if he lowered her head and gave her a kiss, Evangeline would accept it.

But he wasn't there to take advantage of her.

He wanted her to confirm if he really was the Prince in her memories.

He wanted to know if his Avatar, Alex Stratos, was really the Prince whom Luthor had been guarding and Evangeline had befriended as a child.

Once he had confirmed this fact, he would then think of what he needed to do next.

"Evangeline, please taste my blood," Alex said, softly but seriously. "But I don't want you to bite my neck. Can you draw blood from my finger instead?"

Alex raised his hand and showed Evangeline his index finger.

"Okay." Evangeline nodded and gently held his hand before sharpening her fingernail to draw blood from his fingertip.

As soon as she saw the blood pooling around the cut, the young lady's eyes turned crimson and her breath turned a bit ragged.

"Calm down," Alex said gently. "Just relax. You can drink as much as you want. I won't be going anywhere."

Evangeline nodded before putting Alex's finger between her lips.

The moment she tasted his blood, her eyes glowed faintly. The vampiric power she had sealed away inside her body started to react to the rich, familiar blood on her tongue.

As she consumed drops upon drops of Alex's precious blood, she once again confirmed that he was the Prince in her memories.

Still, after confirming that, she was reluctant to let go and continued feeding on his blood.

Before she could fall into a trance, a resounding pop escaped her lips.

Alex had pulled back his finger. She looked up at him, her eyes glazed over.

"That's enough for now, Evangeline," Alex said. "If you drink more, you might lose control over yourself."

The young man then opened a small bottle of Healing Potion and poured a few drops of it on the wound on his finger, healing the small injury.

"Well, then. How did it taste?" Alex asked.

"It was the best," Evangeline replied dreamily, still drunk on the feeling of finally tasting blood after so many years.

"I mean, have you confirmed that I am really the Prince from your memories?"

Evangeline nodded. "Yes. There's no doubt about it. You are Prince Aetherius. Even if you deny it, I will not believe you."

Alex wanted to say that she shouldn't say such things so readily, but he decided to let it go for now.

He refused to keep his eyes closed and shield himself from reality.

With the memory fragments inside his head and Evangeline's confirmation, he had no choice but to accept it.

Alex Stratos was Prince Aetherius.

The Prince of the Aetherion Empire, and a person whom many in power wanted to stay dead.

"Eva, do you know why I fled the Aetherion Empire?" Alex asked.

"Wasn't it because of a prophecy?" Evangeline answered.

"Then can you tell me about that prophecy and why they wanted to kill me?" Alex stared straight into her eyes.

Luthor would have clearer information about it. He did plan to ask the old man after this, but he didn't think it could hurt to consult as many sources as possible.

"After you disappeared, I did a bit of research to better understand why you were on the run," Evangeline said calmly. "According to what I gathered, you're born with the blood of the Celestial King named Valerius running through your veins."

Alex blinked. "Valerius?"

"Yes, he was the bearer of the Crown of Infinity. It's said that those of his lineage have the power to bend light, time, and soul," Evangeline explained.

"That does not sound like a bad thing."

Evangeline nodded. "Yes, it sounds like a good thing, but it is feared by the Royals of Aetherion. I am not entirely sure about this, but there's allegedly a prophecy hidden within the diary of the founder of the

Aetherion Empire. It warned that if the blood of Valerius appeared in the world, it must be eliminated or the Aetherion Empire will crumble.”

“You mean the bloodline of Valerius will destroy the Aetherion Empire?” Alex frowned. “How does that make sense for me to be the only one targeted if this is supposed to be hereditary?”

The young lady sighed, as if expecting this question. “Well, that’s a big reason why I am not sure about my findings either. As outsiders, we don’t have access to the exact words of the first king either so who knows what he really said. However, the Royal Family does seem to believe that Valerius’ bloodline will end the empire.”

Alex pondered for a bit and realized that there were two people and a little bun who probably held the answer to his questions.

Luthor and Professor Rowan should know about the Prophecy.

As for Dim Dim, it was the encyclopedia of Arcana, so maybe it knew what the Founding King of the Aetherion Empire had written down.

Now that Alex had decided to embrace his identity, he first needed to understand more about the Aetherion Empire. And the first step to do that was to get to the bottom of this prophecy that had, without his knowledge, affected his whole life.

Chapter 424: The Butterfly Effect

Alex thought that he was already used to hugging someone, but he was wrong.

Evangeline seemed to want to hug him forever. Because of this, he became more aware of her in more ways than one.

Her softness, her fragrance, and her warmth.

With such a beautiful lady in his arms, it was simply not possible to remain calm.

She was one of the three Main Heroines of ELO, so being able to hold her like created all sorts of complicated feelings within Alex.

Also for some reason, he was getting the strong urge to hold her tighter and kiss her cheek... and her lips.

But he endured and simply held her, allowing Evangeline to calm down from her recent awakening.

She hadn't consumed a lot of blood, but that was more than enough to awaken her dormant Vampiric Powers.

Since she was a Dhamphir, she was stronger than ordinary humans. From now on, she would continue to grow stronger.

But there was a catch. In order to stabilize her strength, she must regularly drink Alex's blood.

He had accepted this condition the moment he had allowed her to drink his blood in order to confirm if his Avatar, Alex Stratos, was really Prince Aetherius.

"Have you calmed down?" Alex asked nearly half an hour later.

"Yes," Evangeline replied. "Please, just ten more minutes."

She hugged Alex tighter, as if wanting to become one with him.

Suddenly, he felt a shiver run down his spine. Instinctively, he raised his head to look at a corner of the library.

There, he saw Lumi staring back at him.

The young lady drew her thumb across her neck before disappearing through the wall.

Alex could only sigh internally because he had kept his map earlier after arriving at the Old Library.

He had thought that he was safe from prying eyes, but it seemed that he had been wrong.

Still, what's done was done. Alex felt no regret.

Ten minutes later, Evangeline looked up and planted a kiss on Alex's cheek.

"Thank you very much," Evangeline said with a smile. "Should I continue to call you Alex? Or should I call you Aetherius in private?"

"Just call me Alex," Alex replied. "I prefer that way."

"Okay." Evangeline nodded. "If you need any help, don't hesitate to talk to me. I'll do my best to help you, whatever it may be."

"Thank you." Alex beamed. "Then can I call you Eva from now on?"

"Please do so!" Evangeline's face lit up. "Just like old times."

After some more idle talk, Alex and Evangeline parted ways.

Instead of returning to his dorm room or heading to the clock tower, Alex went to look for Dim Dim.

Whenever it wasn't with Alex, the Dim Sum God was either at Fran's farm or patrolling the campus with Daisy and Rex, the Forest Wolf.

After asking a few students if they had seen Daisy or Dim Dim anywhere, Alex confirmed that they had already finished their morning patrols.

Since that was the case, the young man headed straight to Fran's farm to see if the little bun was still there.

As soon as he arrived at the farm, he saw Fran and Dim Dim planting some seeds in the garden. The little bun was humming the theme song of Endless Leveling Online.

Since the two were busy, Alex thought that he should chip in before asking his questions.

"Hello Fran," Alex said with a smile. "You're doing a good job helping her, Dim Dim."

"Ahem!" The little bun stood tall and proud, enjoying the praise for its hard work.

"How are you, Alex?" Fran replied. "Have you already eaten?"

"I'm fine, but I still haven't eaten lunch," Alex replied shamelessly because he knew that Fran was inviting him for lunch, which was something that he wouldn't want to miss.

Between his Four Queens, Fran was the one who was proficient in household chores.

Lavinia was competent enough, but her cooking abilities mostly revolved around grilling.

As for Latifa... She would rather sleep than cook her own food.

Astrea might be a very lucky girl, and that was why she never had to suffer bad food even though she had no affinity for cooking.

In the game, the Protagonist asked Astrea to fry an egg and she performed the miracle of turning the egg into a lump of charcoal.

This would happen ten times out of ten.

As Alex smiled at the memory, he remembered that Dim Dim still had the treasure chests from Slime Paradise.

Opening any of these chests might reveal Rare, Super Rare, or even Unique Items.

(A/N: Item Rankings are Common, Uncommon, Rare, Super Rare, Unique, Legendary, Divine.)

If Astrea was the one to open them, the chances of getting good items were practically set in stone.

'On that note, I still have that Lucky Lingerie I got from the auction.' Alex sighed helplessly.

He had been teased a lot by his club members after they had found out about the lingerie. It had been in his storage ring since the auction because he meant to give it to Astrea.

'Wait, her eighteenth birthday will be coming up next month,' Alex thought. 'Should I gift that to her?'

Alex immediately tossed this idea aside because giving her a gift like that might make Astrea think of him as some kind of pervert. Actually, it might make many people think of him as some kind of pervert.

Worse, her brother, Cassian, an infamous siscon, might fight him to the death if he discovered that Alex had given his sister such a gift. And most people would surely side with Cassian.

"Alex? Yohooo, Alex?"

Fran's call broke Alex out from his daze. He scratched his head in embarrassment.

"I'm sorry, I was thinking about something," Alex explained. "What we're we talking about again?"

“The proposed Field Trip to the Solara Kingdom,” Fran answered. “I heard that the First Years are going to vote where we will be going on Monday.”

“Ah...” Alex fell silent because the Field Trip that Fran was talking about didn’t happen in the game.

When he had first learnt about the field trip, he had been confused about how it fitted into the narrative.

Then he remembered that his actions would surely have consequences. What he chose to do would create new events and possibilities.

While he already knew about and was expecting the so-called butterfly effect, experiencing it firsthand worried him quite a lot. He was not used to not knowing what he would be facing next.

“Well, I’ll just let the others decide on where we will go.” Alex shrugged. “I don’t want to think too much about it.”

“I see.” Fran smiled. “That answer is so like you.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

“Dim Dim!”

Alex didn’t want to remain idle, so he also volunteered to help Fran plant the seeds in her garden.

Since the young lady would often invite him to have lunch with her and Finn, he thought that it was only natural for him to help her as well.

With three people working on the farm, they were able to finish their work earlier than expected.

Alex then took the opportunity to ask Dim Dim to have a private talk after lunch so that he could confirm some things about his origin, which the little bun might know about.

Chapter 425: A Musical Disaster

“Dim Dim, do you know about the Prophecy of the Aetherion Empire?” Alex asked.

“Dim Dim?”

“Um, I’m talking about the prophecy that involved someone named King Valerius, who once held the Crown of Infinity?”

Dim Dim nodded its head. “Dim Dim!”

“Oh, you know about it?” Alex sighed in relief. If Dim Dim knew about the prophecy, he would have a much easier time uncovering his past.

“Dim!”

“Then can you tell me about the Prophecy? Also, any detail about King Valerius will be greatly appreciated!”

Dim Dim stared at Alex for a few seconds before it shook its head.

“Dim!”

“You’re not going to tell me? Why?”

“Dim Dim!” The little bun then pointed at Alex. “Dim Dim!”

“The current me is still not strong enough to know the truth?” Alex frowned. “You will only tell me everything once I reach Rank 4?”

Dim Dim nodded. “Dim!”

Alex picked up the little bun, and patted its head a few times, hoping to butter it up. He then tried to coax Dim Dim to loosen its tongue and share something with him, no matter how small.

But Dim Dim was firm.

“Dim Dim!”

“Knowing too much too soon will not help me and might even become detrimental to me because I lack the strength?” Alex was very tempted to pinch the little bun’s cheek, but he knew that Dim Dim was not teasing him.

Since it was his partner-in-crime, he understood that the little bun only wanted what was best for him.

“Then can I ask Luthor about it?” Alex asked. “That’s not against the rules, right?”

Dim Dim nodded. “Dim Dim!”

The Dim Sum God was confident that no matter how much research Alex did and how many people he asked about King Valerius, he would only learn what was written in history books.

History books that were written to hide the truth of the Crown of Infinity.

Perhaps wanting to cheer Alex up, Dim Dim took out the treasure chests that Eiko had given it from its Dimensional Storage.

All in all, there were eight treasure chests. Six of them had the Slime Emblem emblazoned on their lids.

The other two were made of bronze and had no insignia.

“Dim Dim!” Dim Dim told Alex that the treasure chests were all for him.

“Thank you, Dim Dim,” Alex said, cracking a smile despite his worry.

He had no intention of opening these chests now because he planned to ask Astrea to open them for him.

These treasure chests from Slime Paradise might give Special Limited items, but that’s far from guaranteed.

And since Luck was needed, who else but the luckiest girl in the game should do the honors?

But Astrea didn’t do favors for free. Alex decided to give her one of the items obtained from the eight chests as payment for her help.

‘Now I just need to find her,’ Alex thought as he opened the map of the academy and typed her name in the search function.

Immediately, he saw a yellow blinking dot marking her location.

‘She’s in the Music Room?’ Alex mused. ‘I guess it’s time to go there to meet her once more.’

Among his four Queens, meeting Astrea had been the most difficult one.

She was in Class 1-A, where the best students of the First Years had gathered.

Princess Xenia and Mary were her classmates. From what Alex knew, they had a good relationship with each other.

Just like Chuck's father, Astrea's father was also a Duke.

This meant that they had very close ties with the Royal Family. It was natural for her to be a friend of princes and princesses.

With Dim Dim snugly perched on top of his head, Alex headed to the Music Room with a determined expression.

When the Fairies who were lounging in the lobby of the Music Room saw him, they became ecstatic and flew towards him.

"Alex! Are you planning to put everyone in the Music Room into an indefinite coma?" Doh asked, her wide smile almost splitting her face apart.

"Alex, how about we open the Academy's broadcast intercom just for you?" Reh asked with a mischievous smirk. "You can sing as much as you want. Don't worry, we will handle the consequences!"

"Have you come to plant your flag in the Music Room and turn everyone into your mindless slaves?" Mii wondered. "Don't worry, I'll support you a hundred percent!"

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim crossed its little arms into an X to veto the proposals of the fairies, who just wished to see the world burn.

"Girls, I only came here to meet someone," Alex said. "And what do you mean make everyone fall into an indefinite coma? That's so scary, you know?"

Doh, Reh, Mii, Fah, and Sue, all clicked their tongues in disappointment at the same time.

Alex's songs had corrupted these fairies to the core. Instead of giving high scores to beautiful songs and lyrics, they now judge performances by how impactful they were.

The more impactful the song, the higher the scores.

This was why even Elves, with their heavenly voices, received low scores from the Fairies.

Still hoping that Alex might make a mess of the Music Room, the Fairies flew beside him. If something fun was going to happen, they would certainly fan the flames and ensure that they would have front row seats while witnessing the suffering of others.

When the Music Professor, Lady Arienna, and her teaching assistant saw Alex, both of them flinched at the same time.

They had also been the victims of Alex's singing. They would never forget his honking melody till the day they drew their last breath.

"A-Alex, what are you doing here?" Professor Arienna hastily called out to the young man before he could disrupt her students, who were busy preparing for a special performance a month from now.

"I'm just here to observe, Professor. Please don't mind me," Alex answered as he leaned on the wall with his arms crossed over his chest.

'But I do mind!' Professor Arienna all but shouted in her own mind, but she held herself back. She signalled her teaching assistant with her eyes.

The teaching assistant nodded, her lips fixed in a determined line. She looked more like a soldier who was going to a war where there was no chance of survival than an educator who had to keep a close eye on a problematic student.

Alex wasn't aware that Professor Arienna and her teaching assistant had already labeled him as the worst musical disaster behind his back.

A disaster that would make Frieden Academy a laughing stock of the musical world within the three-kingdom Alliance.

Chapter 426: The Young Lady Blessed By Luck [Part 1]

Astrea's angelic voice echoed throughout the Music Room, drawing everyone's eyes on her and only her.

Alex was no exception and stared at the beautiful young lady with long purple hair, whose songs had touched him in more ways than one.

Back in ELO, if Astrea was part of the party, and her song was played before a battle started, it would continue playing as background music.

Even when fighting a high tension boss, it would still feel lively and fun, and the situation wouldn't feel so helpless.

She was also the singer of the theme song of the game called "Endless Leveling," which had become a very popular song, reaching the top 5 of the Billboard Charts.

Alex felt a little guilty because he didn't know who composed the theme song, and yet, he still used it in his Battle Choir against Melodina.

Because of this, the Fairies were now saying that the song belonged to Alex, which made the young man feel truly guilty.

He then promised to himself to compensate the true composer when he got the chance to meet them.

"Beautiful as ever." The Fairy, Doh, sighed happily with her eyes closed. "If Alex's song is Hell, Astrea's song is definitely Heaven."

"Right." Reh nodded. "It can't get any better than this."

Alex was too focused on Astrea's song and didn't pay much attention to the fairies beside him.

When the song finally ended, a thundering applause echoed inside the Music Room, a testament to how talented Astrea was.

Several minutes later, Professor Arienna clapped her hands.

"Today's session is over," Professor Arienna said. "Good job, everyone! Make sure to hydrate yourselves and rest properly. I'll see you all on Monday."

The Professor then gave Alex a glance, very thankful that the young man didn't disturb their Music Session.

The Professor had already planned the line up for the Inter-Academy Singing Competition, and Alex would also participate as the last singer of their team.

Forget school pride or whatever. Professor Arienna wanted everyone to go through the same suffering she'd been subjected to. But that would have to wait until Astrea and the other participants had finished their presentations.

Friendly fire would not be ideal, so she planned to set Alex as her trump card to eliminate their foes before they could even climb on the stage!

It was a flawless plan, allowing them to win without letting the other teams sing a single song!

"I'm such a genius," Professor Arienna muttered to herself.

Her Teaching Assistant pretended to not hear anything and simply handed a few water bottles to those who had participated in this session.

"You were amazing, Astrea!" Reh said as she flew toward the young lady, and handed her a hand towel. "We're going to win this year's singing competition for sure!"

“Thank you, Reh,” Astrea replied. “But you shouldn’t raise some flags, you know?”

“Relax,” Mii commented as she flew around Astrea. “This one is already in the bag. Also, we got a secret weapon this year!”

Mii then pointed at Alex, who was leaning on the wall in the distance with his arms crossed over his chest.

Astrea noticed the handsome young man from the start, but since she was focused on singing, she didn’t pay too much attention to him.

Still, she was very curious about the young man, especially after the things he had pulled off in the academy, which had made him notoriously popular.

Her brother, Cassian, had warned her to not get too close to Alex because he was a dangerous person.

But, so far, Astrea didn’t see why he was being labeled as someone dangerous.

All she knew was that Alex had done some things that no other First Years had done.

In fact, if she wasn’t part of the Singing Club, she might have already tried to join Endless Horizon simply because she felt that they were very unique individuals.

“Ah, by the way, Alex said that he wanted to talk to you,” Sue said with a smile on her face. “He didn’t tell me why, but he said that he needed your help on something.”

“Need my help on something?” Astrea frowned, but her curiosity got the better of her.

After making sure that she was presentable enough, she walked toward Alex, who smiled and walked in her direction as well.

“Sue said that you need my help with something.” Astrea eyed the young man with a solemn gaze. “Are you going to ask me to help you blackmail people?”

Alex almost tripped after hearing the young lady’s words. For better or for worse, his title of Blackmail King had certainly made an impression on everyone.

“I’m not here to ask you to blackmail people,” Alex replied. “I am here to ask you to help me open some treasure chests.”

“T-Treasure Chests?!” Astrea’s switch had been flipped on. Aside from singing, one of her most favorite hobbies was opening treasure chests!

“Indeed.” Alex nodded. “I have eight chests here, and I would like your help in opening them. Of course, I’m not planning to make you do this for free. Out of the eight chests, I will allow you to pick one treasure from them.”

“Deal!” Astrea didn’t bat an eye and immediately accepted Alex’s proposal.

The Fairies also grew curious about what kind of items would come out of the treasure chests, so they insisted that Alex and Astrea open them alongside them.

Alex agreed, and soon, Astrea and the Fairies followed him in one of the private rooms in the Music Room, where no one would disturb them.

As soon as the door was properly locked, Alex took out the eight chests Dim Dim had handed to him earlier.

Six of them had the emblem of slimes embedded on the lid of the coffin, while the two other chests were Bronze Chests without any identification.

“Let me just confirm our agreement,” Astrea said as she placed her hand on the lid of one of the bronze treasure chests. “After I open them all, I can choose any item as my payment, right?”

“Right.” Alex nodded. “The Fairies will serve as our witness in this deal. Right, girls?”

“That’s right!” Doh patted her chest. “This deal is Fairy Approved!”

“We won’t allow any foul play to happen,” Reh stated. “But if the treasures contain any sweets, we call dibs on it. This is non-negotiable.”

“Nice one, Reh!” Mii gave her friend a thumbs up. “Yes, all sweets belong to us!”

Fah nodded. “Non-negotiable and no refunds.”

“Now, open it, Astrea,” Sue said in excitement. “I want to see what treasures can be found in those treasure chests!”

As soon as she said those words, Dim Dim and the Fairies all wore their gangster sunglasses to make themselves look cool.

Astrea no longer hesitated and opened the Bronze Treasure Chest she had chosen to open first.

As soon as the lid was opened, a shiny golden light lit up the surroundings.

Alex and Astrea were forced to cover their eyes due to the blinding light.

Dim Dim and the Fairies, however, were unaffected by it, and they all looked at the thing that was inside the treasure chest.

“A pendant?” Mii took the harp-shaped pendant from the treasure chest and showed it to Astrea, who finally regained her sense of sight.

“Wow, it’s so pretty,” Astrea said as she looked at the pendant that was now in her hands.

Alex moved closer and looked at the pendant before using his System to Appraise it.

— — —

< Melody Pendant >

Item Grade: Super Rare

Type: Accessory (Lyre-shaped Pendant)

Stats: Magic Power +72, Charisma +35, Constitution +20

Active Skill: Healing Wind.

Effect: This pendant can transform into a lyre, and when a song is played, the Skill, Healing Wind, will automatically activate.

— — —

< Healing Wind >

“A gentle breeze that carries the touch of renewal. Soft, unseen, yet powerful enough to turn despair into hope.”

Skill Type: Support / Recovery

Element: Wind / Holy

Effect: Unleashes a soothing current of wind that restores 15% of Max HP to all allies within a 35-meter radius over 15 seconds. Removes minor bleeding and burn effects.

Bonus Effect (when cast with a Song active):

Healing potency increases by +10%, and the wind carries a faint melodic resonance that grants +5% Movement Speed to all allies for the skill's duration.

— — —

'What the...' Alex's eyes opened in shock. They'd just started, and the first item was already a banger.

The Melody Pendant was a support-type magical artifact that anyone with musical talents would love to have.

The young man had once again confirmed that he made the right call in letting Astrea open the treasure chests for him.

She simply opened a bronze treasure chest, and yet, a Super Rare item appeared, which he believed could only be obtained from Silver Treasure Chests.

Astrea handed the Melody Pendant back to Mii, who handed it to Alex for safekeeping.

She was quite fired up after opening a single chest, and now, she wanted to see what kind of goodies were waiting for her to discover.

Chapter 427: The Young Lady Blessed By Luck [Part 2]

Astrea glanced at the seven remaining treasure chests and decided to open one of the chests with the slime emblem on its lid.

This was the first time she had seen this kind of treasure chest, so she was very curious about what was inside of it.

“Dim Dim,” Alex said.

“Dim?”

“One Gangster glasses, please.”

“Dim!” Dim Dim happily gave Alex gangster sunglasses, so the young man would now be part of the cool gang.

Having heard the conversation behind her and seeing that the young man had joined the rest in wearing the sunglasses that everyone was wearing, Astrea felt left out, so she also asked Dim Dim to give her one as well.

The little bun was more than happy to add another member to its “gang,” so she gave Astrea not one, not two, but three gangster sunglasses, and told her to give the other sunglasses to her friends as a gift.

Astrea thanked Dim Dim and wore the glasses before opening the lid of the treasure chest that had the slime symbol on it.

Another dazzling light erupted from inside the chest, and this time, Alex gasped after seeing the thing that floated out of the box after it was opened.

It was a Red Skill Book, adorned with intricate golden patterns that shimmered like molten sunlight.

The cover pulsed faintly, as if it were alive, releasing a faint hum like a heartbeat that resonated with magical energy.

Even the Fairies, who usually made jokes at every opportunity, fell silent as the book slowly descended into Astrea’s hands.

The young lady read the bold letters that were written on the Skill Book.

“Unique Skill [EX]”.

Just like the name implied, Unique Skills were unique.

This Skill Book would create a skill that would perfectly match the Job Class of whoever would activate it.

And it would have the [EX] Prefix on that skill, making it a skill that could evolve and become stronger.

Not only that, there would only be one skill of its kind in the world, and as long as this skill was being used by someone, nobody else could use it.

That was why Unique Skills were sometimes considered as Pseudo-Legendary Skills!

Alex wanted to shout “Let’s Goooooooooooo!” so badly, but he held it back.

Even Astrea’s hand trembled as she held the book in her hand. She understood what the book represented.

A Unique Skill just for her.

When this thought crossed her mind, she had to forcefully hand the book over to Alex because she wasn’t confident that she would be able to hold herself back from activating it.

“Here, take it,” Astrea said firmly, while still looking at the Red Skill Book.

She was reluctant to let it go, but she also understood that the book would be more useful to Alex, the owner of the treasure chests in front of her.

Alex understood Astrea’s resolve, so he didn’t refuse the Skill Book and held it firmly in his hands.

After taking a few deep breaths in order to calm herself down, Astrea decided to open a second slime chest.

But, to everyone's surprise, another Unique Skill Book appeared, making the Fairies doubt their eyes.

This time, Astrea no longer hesitated and stored the second Skill Book [EX] inside of her storage ring.

"This is my payment, okay?" Astrea said to Alex, who nodded in agreement.

"Sure, that's yours," Alex replied.

Although he didn't know how two Unique Skill Books could appear consecutively, he was still glad that Astrea wouldn't leave this place with a heavy heart.

Perhaps wanting to change things a bit, she opened the second Bronze Treasure Chest.

This time, a pair of colorful maracas that were the size of an adult's finger appeared.

< Rhythmic Slime Maracas >

"Shake them once for joy, twice for courage, and thrice for chaos."

Item Grade: Super Rare

Type: Musical Instrument (Support / Buff Tool)

Effect: When shaken, releases rhythmic sound waves that strengthen allies within a 50-meter radius.

One Shake: Increases Party Attack Speed by 20% for 20 seconds.

Two Shakes: Increases Party Movement Speed by 20% and grants Major Resistance to Paralyze, and Petrify for 30 seconds.

Three Shakes: Randomly triggers a “Slime Groove” effect, either boosting all stats of nearby allies by 5% or have a 10% chance of forcing nearby Rank 1 and Rank 2 Monsters to start dancing uncontrollably for 20 seconds.

— Rank 3 Monsters, and above are immune to this forced dancing ability.

Continuous Shaking: Increase physical, and magical attacks by 10%. Keeps the buffs, and debuffs active for as long as the maracas is being shaken.

Special Trait – “Bouncy Beat”.

Amplifies the power of any Song-type, or Performance-type skills by 20% while being shaken.

— — —

Doh picked up the pair of Rhythmic Slime Maracas and handed it to Dim Dim.

The little bun playfully shook it, and activated the buffs, allowing everyone to feel its effects.

“Nice,” Alex muttered after experiencing the effect of the Maracas first hand.

Clearly, the Maracas were meant for slimes to use, but since Dim Dim was the right size to use it, he believed that the little bun should keep the magical artifact for itself.

Since both Bronze Treasure Chests were opened, only four Slime Treasure Chests remained.

Astrea opened the Slime Treasure Chest, and the thing that popped out of it was a circular object that looked like... a shield.

However, instead of it being metal, it looked as if it was made of jelly.

'D-Don't tell me?!' Alex didn't hesitate to appraise the blue jelly-like shield in front of him.

A part of him was feeling excited, and the other half was him trying to not raise his expectations.

Because the greater the expectations, the greater the disappointment.

However, when he saw the name of the shield, he understood that this Shield was indeed the exact same Shield he thought about.

< Slime Paradise Shield [EX] >

"Who knew defense could bounce back this hard?"

Item Grade: Unique

Type: Shield

Effect: Activating the Slime Shield envelops the user in a gelatinous barrier that absorbs all physical, and magical damage regardless of their rank for 10 seconds.

After ten seconds, channel 50% of the total damage received as an attack that the user could unleash to any target.

— Can only be used once per day.

— — —

'I knew it!' Alex couldn't believe that he got the special limited edition, Slime Paradise Shield [EX], which could only be obtained in a special event in the game.

No one had ever obtained this shield in the game, including Alex, because the condition to get it was simply too brutal.

In order to acquire the Unique Shield, that many people referred to as a Pseudo-Legendary Equipment, they must first survive Eiko's pirate ship bombardment for a minute.

Many players complained back then due to the absurdity of the event because no one managed to survive it, including the top Rankers of the game.

Because of this, the Game Master decided to compensate everyone with a Gacha Lottery Ticket instead.

But to those who were considered as Shield Collectors like Alex, this was a shield that they had wanted to add to their collection.

Alex was worried because he had been facing so many powerful beings as of late.

Nero and Luthor.

If he fought any of them, there was no hope for him to survive.

However, if he used the Slime Paradise Shield [EX], he might be able to find a way to turn the tide for a brief moment, allowing him to escape.

“Thank you, Astrea,” Alex said while holding the jelly-like shields in his hands. “Thank you so much.”

“Um... okay?” Astrea blinked because she had no idea what the jelly-looking thing was in the young man’s hands.

She had no idea that what she just pulled out from the treasure chest was a shield that could even block the full-powered attack of a Paragon!

Chapter 428: Nereid’s Whisper

“Thank you, Astrea,” Alex said with a smile. “Next time I get some treasure chests, can I ask you to open them again? Don’t worry, the same conditions apply. Also, please take this as a bonus.”

Alex handed Astrea the Lyre-shaped pendant, which he believed the young lady could put to better use.

“You’re welcome. I look forward to opening more treasure chests in the future.” Astrea grinned as she accepted the young man’s gift. “To be honest, I was a little intimidated by you at first because of your reputation. Turns out you’re actually a good guy, Alex.”

Warmth spread inside the young man’s chest after hearing one of his Queens call him a good guy.

For a long time, he had been wondering how he could form a connection with Astrea without making it look forced.

Alex knew that aside from singing, she also liked to open treasure chests, unaware that it was only so fun for her because she was blessed by luck.

For Astrea, opening treasure chests was exciting. For one, she never knew what she was getting from them. Two, not once had she been disappointed.

Out of necessity, Alex could only open treasure chests by himself in the past. But now, he had secured a sure-fire way of getting great items by convincing the person with the highest Luck Stat to open treasure chests for him.

The contents of the last three treasure chests Astrea opened were also Super Rare items.

One of them was a Slime Pill, which would transform whoever consumed it into a slime for an entire day.

Many people would think that the Slime Pill was useless, but Alex wasn't so naive.

For him, the Slime Pill was like a lifesaver. In Arcana, slimes were protected by the world itself.

If he turned into a slime, he could also go to places that only slimes had access to.

Alex had even joked in the past that all he needed was a baby slime, and he could walk through the battlefield unharmed. No one would dare to risk injuring or killing the sacred creature just to take him out.

The Slime Pill definitely had its use, but for the time being, he would keep it safely stored inside his ring.

The next item that Astrea received from the treasure chest was a fan.

— — — —

< Nereid's Whisper >

"Said to echo the sighs of sea nymphs who once sang beneath the moonlit waves."

Item Grade: Super Rare

Type: Magic Fan

Stats: Magic Power +62, Water Resistance +35%, Water Attribute Skill Damage +40%

Active Skill: Water Ball [EX], Summon Water Snake.

Passive Skill: Grace of the Deep — Enhances the user's control over water-element spells. While holding this fan, it is possible to breathe underwater and swim like a mermaid.

— — —

< Water Ball [EX] >

— Summon three Water Balls that deal 100 Water Elemental Damage each to the target.

— Deals 300% more damage against creatures of the Fire Element.

— Great for creating puddles on the ground.

— — —

< Summon Water Snake >

— Summons a three-meter long Rank 2 Water Snake that will last for ten minutes.

— — —

This was also a good item. Alex even considered making it a gift, certain that anyone who received it would be delighted.

The last item from the treasure chests was a treasure map.

Alex and Astrea both wondered what location the map was depicting. No matter how much they tried to scrutinize it, they were unable to get any leads.

Fortunately, Dim Dim was there and told them that this was a map of the Whispering Valley in Solara.

Astrea exclaimed that this sounded like an adventure and that she would gladly accompany Alex to the Whispering Valley if she had the chance.

Sadly, her brother, Cassian, would never allow her to go anywhere dangerous without him.

“Make sure to tell me what kind of treasure you will unearth by following this map, okay?” Astrea insisted.

“Of course,” Alex replied. “If I get some treasure chests, I’ll bring them to you, and you can open them yourself.”

“Good!” Astrea nodded. “We have a deal!”

The young lady then raised her pinky finger and waited for Alex to do the same.

The young man didn’t hesitate and made a pinky promise with Astrea.

Dim Dim also joined the promise, which made her giggle.

After making that promise, Astrea finally bade Alex goodbye and left the room to return to her dormitory.

“Dim Dim, should I give the fan to Fran?” Alex asked. “This fan can produce water, which she might find useful in watering her garden. What do you think?”

“Dim Dim!”

“You think it’s a good idea, right?”

“Dim!”

Fran had helped him many times in the past, and even fed him lunch from time to time.

Since he had already decided to give Nereid’s Whisper to her, he decided to drop by the farm.

For a brief moment, Alex even imagined the dependable dwarf lady turning into a mermaid while holding the fan.

That was the start of it all. The young man wasn’t able to stop himself from imagining all the ladies that he knew turning into mermaids!.

“Hmm... Fran, Astrea, and Evangeline will probably look good as Mermaids,” Alex muttered as he walked towards Fran’s farm. “Lavinia too... And Latifa. Oh no, Lapiz will also look incredibly cute as a mermaid. Wait... is there a way to create a replica of this fan?! Or many replicas?”

Dim Dim blinked. “Dim?”

Alex coughed lightly because his “impure” thoughts had conjured up a scene of the ladies transforming into beautiful mermaids.

He wouldn’t want to admit it, but he would love to see that scene if possible. Because of this, he entertained the thought of creating a replica of Nereid’s Whisper, conveniently forgetting that while it

gave its wielder the ability to breathe underwater and swim like a mermaid, it didn't have the power to turn his fantasy into a reality.

"I will look good as a mermaid?"

The sudden voice that came from behind almost made him jump out of fright.

When he saw Fran, the young man patted his chest to calm himself down.

"I'm sorry, I was just thinking of nonsensical things," Alex apologized to Fran, who had happened to see him while he was walking towards her farm.

"I'm sorry too," Fran replied. "I didn't mean to surprise you like that. I was just curious, you know? After all, I can't swim."

"You can't swim?" Alex echoed.

"Most dwarfs can't," Fran stated. "Water and Dwarves don't mix well. So it's a little surprising to hear you say that I would look good as a mermaid."

Her innocent gaze made Alex clutch his chest because she looked so endearing in his eyes.

"Fran, perfect timing! I came here to give you something nice. I hope you'll like it," Alex said as he took out the blue fan. "This fan is called Nereid's Whisper. It can produce water, conjure Water Balls, and summon a Water Snake."

To prove his claim, Alex pointed the closed fan to the ground in front of him.

At first, a drizzle of water emerged from the tip of the fan. But the more magic Alex applied to it, the stronger it became. Eventually, the fan was shooting water out of its tip like a hose.

“Wow!” Fran immediately took a liking to the fan, for it would be incredibly useful while gardening. If she had the fan, she would no longer have to draw water from the well when watering her fields.

“It can also do this.” Alex opened the fan and gave it a wave.

Three Water Balls, each the size of a basketball, flew in the direction that Alex had waved.

They splashed harmlessly against the ground, but had they hit a human, their mass and speed would’ve shoved that unlucky soul so forcefully that they would have staggered and fallen.

“Last but not least,” Alex said as he gave the fan another wave and summoned a three-meter-long Water Snake. “This Water Snake will obey your command and fight for you if need be. It only lasts for ten minutes, though.”

After showing how the fan was used, Alex closed it and handed it to Fran with both hands.

“This is a gift for you,” Alex said. “I got it from one of the chests from Slime Paradise. You have helped me many times in the past, so please accept my gift, Fran.”

“Thank you, Alex.” Fran didn’t reject the gift and gratefully accepted it. “I’ll treasure it.”

Alex smiled faintly after seeing that Fran liked his gift.

“Well then, since you’ve given me this, would you like to have lunch with me?” Fran asked.

“Dim Dim!” Dim Dim raised its hand as if to remind Fran that it was also there.

“Of course, you’re also invited, Dim Dim.” Fran giggled.

Naturally, Alex accepted the invitation and had an enjoyable lunch before Lumi found him and dragged him to the clock tower so that he could help her with something.

Chapter 429: I'm Always Cleaning Up Your Mess

Alex blinked once, then twice, as he found himself being used as a hug pillow by Latifa.

When Lumi had dragged him to the clock tower, he hadn't expected that she wanted him to "help" by becoming the fox lady's bolster.

"Alright! Stay with her for a few hours while Lotte and I shop for her daily necessities," Lumi commanded. "You can do that, right?"

"Sorry, Alex," Lotte said while smiling apologetically. "Since we also handle the cooking and cleaning here in the clock tower, can you top up our food allowance with club funds?"

Alex didn't mind and promptly gave Lotte a hundred thousand Academy Points without batting an eye.

What the Alter said was the truth. Since Latifa had become the permanent resident of the clock tower, her Alters had taken it upon themselves to do the chores, like cleaning and cooking for everyone.

He felt a little guilty for not paying them for maintaining the cleanliness of the clubroom and preparing the meals and snacks for club meetings.

"This is too much," Lotte stated. "Even ten thousand Academy Points will do."

"Keep the rest for future expenses, Lotte," Alex replied easily. "We'll be staying here in the club room for a long time."

A million Academy Points could be exchanged for a hundred thousand gold coins.

Alex had given Lotte a tenth of that sum, and that was already more than enough to cover the club's food expenses for many months.

Still, since he insisted that she keep the money, the young lady no longer tried to return part of it.

"Hey, what about me?" Lumi asked. "Why aren't you paying me?"

"Pay you for what?" Alex blinked in confusion while Latifa hugged him tighter in her sleep.

"Protection fees, of course," Lumi replied.

"What? Are you some kind of gangster now?" Alex complained. "What do you mean protection fees?"

"You're always getting into trouble, and I'm always cleaning up your mess." Lumi glared at him. "I should be compensated for that."

"What the..." Alex wanted to refuse, but Lumi mouthed something.

Alex was no lip reading expert, but out of self-protection, he knew exactly what Lumi was conveying.

"If you don't give me hush money, I'll tell Latifa that you're letting Evangeline drink your blood!"

Alex didn't know how to react to her threat because while he didn't find any problems with letting Evangeline drink his blood, he also thought that now wasn't the time to let Latifa know about it.

Moreover, if Lumi was already threatening him with this, who knew what she might do when he really pissed her off? Alex could only sigh and reluctantly hand her a thousand Academy Points.

The Alter smiled so brightly and innocently it was hard to believe she had just blackmailed successfully.

"Well, then. I will leave her safety to you, Alex." Lotte curtsied. "We'll be back as soon as we can."

"We'll take our own sweet time of course." Lumi smirked.

The two Alters then turned into particles of light and disappeared, leaving their Mistress with the young man who was serving as her hug pillow.

Of course, Alex knew that Latifa was awake. He understood that she was now starting to open her heart to him. Frankly, he felt lucky and happy that she felt that way about him.

Slowly but surely, he hugged her back. He didn't hold her too tightly, leaving just enough space for her to feel comfortable in his embrace.

Latifa opened her eyes and gave Alex's cheek a quick peck before burrowing her face into his chest as if feeling embarrassed.

But compared to what she and Alex had experienced, a kiss on the cheek was nothing.

She no longer wanted to lie to herself and had accepted the fact that she no longer treated Alex as a friend.

She wanted something more, but was still too scared to take that step.

A faint smile appeared on her face as she listened to Alex's heartbeat that was beating wildly inside his chest.

His warmth and touch made her feel safe. Soon, she finally fell asleep in his arms.

The sound of the young lady's slow, relaxed breaths spread inside the room. Alex, too, closed his eyes to take a nap.

Perhaps feeling happy that he was able to hold one of his Queens in such an intimate fashion, he also fell asleep as all the tension left his body.

While the two teenagers were sleeping, two people entered the club room.

They were none other than Charles and Nessia.

When they saw Alex and Latifa sleeping on the bed, even holding each other, the two gave each other a knowing glance.

Without making too much sound, the two headed toward the dimensional room where Nessia had found the Codex she had been learning advanced Rune Magic from.

The dimensional room was very vast and could also be treated as a training room of sorts.

Nessia and Charles often sparred inside of it to hone their fighting prowess, aiding both of them greatly in the previous battles.

But Charles seemed to be deep in thought as he looked at Nessia.

“What’s wrong?” Nessia asked after sensing that Charles didn’t seem to be in the mood to spar with her.

“Nessia,” Charles said softly, moving closer to her to give her a hug.

The young lady didn’t pull back or push him away. In fact, she even patted his back reassuringly.

“Are you feeling envious of Alex?” Nessia teased.

“Yes,” Charles replied, looking at the young lady, who was also his girlfriend.

They hadn’t told anyone in the club that they were now a couple, wanting to be spared from Chuck, who would certainly tease them to oblivion.

A moment later, Charles planted a soft and loving kiss on Nessia’s forehead,

He then looked at her as if asking for permission. The young lady closed her eyes, as if waiting for him to finish what he started.

Gently and tenderly, he pressed his lips against hers. This kiss only lasted for a few seconds before he pulled back.

He could feel his thundering heart beating inside his chest. Even so, he once again gave Nessia another kiss, and the young lady kissed him back to calm his wildly beating heart.

Charles felt thankful for Alex, who helped him pass the Scholarship Trial. Thanks to him, he had met Nessia, whom he considered the second greatest blessing in his life.

Little did he know that it was thanks to this feeling of love that the darkness threatening to take over his mind, body, and heart was being pushed back.

Chapter 430: The Birth Of A Unique Skill [Part 1]

After a good night's rest, Alex woke up the next day, still in Latifa's embrace.

Fortunately, today was a holiday and there were no classes. He would have loved to stay asleep to hold her, but a light cough reached his ears.

"How long do you plan to hold Latifa, you rascal?" Lumi asked with her hands resting on her hips.

Left with no choice, Alex reluctantly left the bed.

"Please wash your face, Alex," Lotte said with a smile. "Breakfast is ready, so you can eat first."

"Okay." Alex nodded. "Thanks, Lotte."

The young man then glanced at the sleeping fox lady on the bed before going to the washroom to freshen up a bit.

He could still vaguely recall the dream he had of Latifa and him exchanging a kiss after going on a date.

Although he understood that going out on a date with her right now would be difficult—especially with Lumi always hounding him at every opportunity—he wished that he and Latifa would be able to take that next step in their relationship soon.

After washing his face and drying it with a towel, Alex returned to the round table where Lotte served him a plate of bread, eggs, and bacon.

She then poured him a cup of coffee and stood by his side, acting like a proper maid. This scene would have been perfect if not for the fact that Lumi was still glaring at him.

But just as he was about to eat, he heard a faint rustling behind him.

Latifa had finally woken up, and was walking towards Alex while still in her pajamas.

Her hair was a bit messy, but that didn't change the fact that she was still beautiful.

"Come here, Latifa," Lumi said before guiding her Mistress to the washroom. "Let's fix you up before that pervert takes a bite out of you for breakfast."

Lotte giggled, but she didn't make any comment to defend Alex's honor. Instead, she asked him if he would like to have pancakes or waffles to add to his breakfast.

"I'm fine with this, Lotte." Alex smiled. "Thank you."

Suddenly, the two heard a faint knocking on the glass window of the clock tower.

When they turned around, they saw Dim Dim waving at them, which prompted Lotte to open the window and allow the little bun to enter.

“Good morning, Dim Dim.” Lotte greeted Dim Dim with a smile.

“Dim Dim!”

“Do you want to have breakfast as well?”

“Dim!”

“Okay, please wait for a bit.”

Lotte then placed the little bun on top of the table, right beside Alex before going to the kitchen to prepare Dim Dim some breakfast.

“Good morning, Dim Dim,” Alex said. “Is Chuck still asleep?”

Dim Dim shook its head. “Dim Dim!”

“Oh? You didn’t sleep in the dormitory, but slept in the farm with Daisy and the others?”

“Dim!”

“I see.”

While the two were talking, Latifa finally came out of the washroom.

This time, she was dressed properly and was no longer in her pajamas. She greeted Alex and Dim Dim before sitting beside the young man, who was halfway finished with his breakfast.

“Do you have plans for today?” Latifa asked.

“I do,” Alex replied. “I need to make preparations for our Field Trip to the Kingdom of Solara.”

Since Dim Dim had confirmed that the treasure map was in fact depicting the Whispering Valley in Solara, Alex decided to go there and check what kind of treasure was hidden in such a mysterious place.

“Why do I have a feeling that this field trip will be the same as our trip in Slime Paradise?” Lumi asked with her arms crossed over her chest. “Slime Paradise was a perfectly safe haven, but you still almost died there. The same can be said of Oak Village.”

Alex had no way to refute Lumi because she was speaking facts. With Alex being targeted by Demon Worshipers as soon as he left the academy grounds, it would to leave.

After weighing the pros and cons, the young man decided to come clean because Latifa was looking at him with an expression filled with worry.

“You see, I received a treasure map after opening one of the treasure chests we received in Slime Paradise,” Alex said.

His statement made Lumi scoff because she knew for a fact that it was Astrea who had managed to acquire the Treasure Map for him.

Still, she didn’t say anything.

Alex then took out the map from his storage ring and showed it to Latifa.

Lumi and Lotte stared at the map from behind her, memorizing where the “X” mark was.

“I won’t tell you not to go, but you should let Lumi or Lotte accompany you,” Latifa said.

“Then, I’ll go with Lot—ughh!!” Alex wasn’t able to finish whatever he was going to say because Lumi locked him in a chokehold.

“Huh? I think I didn’t hear you properly,” Lumi said, in a “teasing” tone that just came across as threatening. “Did you say that you’ll go with Lotte?”

“I-I said that I’m going with you!” Alex replied.

Lumi finally loosened her hold, allowing the young man to finally breathe properly.

Lotte looked at Alex with pity before giving Lumi the “you’re too mean to him” gaze.

Dim Dim didn’t make any comments and just ate the food that had been served to him by Lotte a while ago.

The little bun was going to accompany Alex wherever he went and didn’t mind having some friends to tag along with them.

After a good breakfast, goodbye kiss on the cheek from Latifa, a glare from Lumi, and a smirk from Lotte, Alex and Dim Dim finally left the clock tower.

His destination was his dorm room.

When he told Latifa that he was planning to do something today, it was all due to the Unique Skill Book that he had received from the treasure chests that Astrea had opened.

This skill book was very special because it would give Alex a unique skill that was meant only for him.

However, using the skill book wasn’t as simple as activating it to automatically gain a skill.

Sure, Alex could do that. He would probably gain a good skill that would serve him well.

But there was a better way to use this Unique Skill Book and that was to activate it with the intention of entering its domain.

Inside the Skill Book's Domain, Alex could choose to enter a trial, where he would need to fight several adversaries. The Skill Book would observe his fighting style.

After the trial ended, it would then list several skills that it deemed suitable for covering Alex's weaknesses. This would allow him to have more control in the skill that he would like to possess.

Of course, activating the Domain of the Unique Skill Book had requirements.

If you didn't know how to do it, you would probably just get a random Unique Skill that would still work in your favor.

The only downside was that you wouldn't be able to choose the skill that you thought would really boost your fighting strength to the next level.

But, the requirement to do that was to give up an equally important skill book, which was a Super Rare Skill Book.

After he cleared the Orion Dungeon, where the Demon Worshipers tried to ambush them, Alex received a Super Rare Skill Book.

If he sacrificed that Skill Book to the Unique Skill Book, the Unique Domain would open, allowing Alex to carefully choose a Unique [EX] Skill just for himself.

In the end, he decided that this sacrifice would be worth it as long as he gained a powerful Unique Skill that would truly compliment his fighting style.

Alex made sure to tell Chuck what he planned to do and asked him and Dim Dim to serve as his protectors.

Only Alex's consciousness would enter the domain, so his body would remain lying on his bed.

However, if someone were to forcefully wake him up, the Domain might collapse, so he needed his roommate and his little partner to ensure his safety.

"Rest assured, as long as I'm here, no one will be able to get past this door," Chuck declared.

"Even Princess Xenia and Mary?" Alex arched an eyebrow.

Chuck coughed lightly, and pretended that he didn't hear what his friend had just said.

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim gave Alex a salute, which made the young man smirk because Dim Dim was someone he could depend on.

"I'll be back," Alex said before lying on the bed and summoning both the Unique Skill Book and the Super Rare Skill Book in his hands.

After taking a deep breath, he finally activated the Unique Skill Book.

The two books turned into particles of light and flew towards Alex's chest, making the latter close his eyes.

A moment later, he found himself inside the domain, where his trial was about to begin.