

Esper 671

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Chapter 671: Guests Next Room

"I am minding my manners! And I just asked for an obvious solution. Don't you want our room to be next to yours as well?!" Ruby asked impatiently.

"I do. But yelling, threatening, or stating the obvious won't get you a room."

"Then how?"

"Watch me," Rudy said with a smug look on his face.

"I am sure you will use your powers," Ruby scoffed. "Have you ever done anything on your own? You have always relied on your power to do everything."

Maria furrowed her brows at Ruby and said, "Ruby, that was rude."

"I am just stating the truth, am I not? You, of all people, should know it."

"He didn't use his power in the gambling tournament. Even when we first met, he never used his powers. In fact, for everything he has done so far for us, he never used his power except for the battles. Of course, I am not including flying and teleporting since they are basic transportation powers."

"I..." Ruby turned her face to the side and muttered and said, "I didn't know."

"Then you should speak of something you have no knowledge about."

"...I am sorry. I just don't like when he tries to school me whenever I do anything."

Rudy turned to the guard and asked, "Can't we do anything about the rooms?"

"Everything is already planned, and we can't do anything. If you would like, you can talk to the master."

The guard handed him a communication device.

"Yeah, I will do that."

[Who is this?] she asked.

"It's me."

[Oh, hello. It seems you got here on time.]

"Yes, thanks to your ride and special VVIP service."

[I assume you are not contacting me to show your gratitude. That's unlike you.]

"Yes, you got there right," Rudy sighed.

[Is there anything you need? Or did you find something unpleasant here? Or have you called to rant? If you want to talk to me, we can talk privately later.]

"Is there any way I can have the room next to mine?" Rudy jumped straight to the point.

[Sadly, that's not possible.]

"Why not?"

[That room is assigned to someone else. The guest will be displeased if we ask them to change their room at the last minute. You would feel the same, would you not?]

"I would. But have the guests arrived already? If they haven't, I am sure you can change the rooms."

[Yes, they arrived an hour ago. They have settled in.]

"Then what about the room on the other side?"

[You have the corner room, so there is no room on the other side.]

"I see. What about the room next to Mia's?"

[Uhm, I don't know anyone by that name.]

"I am talking about Ruby. Their room is below mine, what about the room next to theirs? Have the guests arrived there as well?"

[Indeed. I wasn't going to tell you this, but you are the last guests to arrive on the island. I was waiting for you to start the auction.]

"Wow. That's a lowkey burn right there."

[The room is not suitable for six people to fit in. Otherwise, I would advise you to get one room.]

"So, in simple words... there is nothing we can do?"

"Heh!" Ruby scoffed, seemingly taunting Rudy.

After a brief silence, Lu Bela said, [There is one option.]

"I am always open to options. What is it?"

[Ask the guest's next room and convince them to change rooms. That's the best and most peaceful solution I can think of.]

"That would be as easy as slicing butter with a hot knife."

[Please refrain from using your powers. Especially mind control, although it's not like I would know even if you used it.]

"Did you just indirectly allow me to hypnotize the guest and convince them to change rooms?"

[You didn't hear that from me.]

BEEP~ BEEP!

Rudy looked at the girls, who were staring at him with judging looks on their faces.

"What?"

"Maria stood up for you, so don't let her down."

"Just watch me. I am a professional when it comes to convincing people. Okay, that was a joke."

"I will take you to the room."

The gang followed the guards and took them to the end of the hallway.

"The corner rooms are bigger than the rest, and that's why the Master insisted that you should have one."

Rudy turned to the girls and said, "You girls can rest in the room. I will talk to our neighbor and find a way to convince him... or her"

He looked at the guards and said, "You two. Thank you for showing us the way. You can leave now."

"But the master has assigned us as your personal guards until the auction has ended. Every life is in danger here, including yours."

"I am pretty sure everyone's lives are in danger, but from me."

Both guards glanced at each other and said, "At least let us stand outside your rooms. We have a task, so don't take that away from us."

'The Underblades are pretty sensitive about their tasks, calling it a reason to live and whatnot. So I will let them do whatever they want,' Rudy uttered inwardly.

"Okay, you can stay. But I will talk to the neighbor alone. They will be scared if they see guards at their door."

Rudy walked over to the next room's door and knocked on it.

'This shouldn't be too hard.'

Rudy glanced to his side from the corner of his eyes and saw Ruby peeking from the doorway.

"I can see you."

Ruby walked out of the room and said, "I wasn't trying to hide."

"I will come with you." She stood beside Rudy.

"Why? To make sure I don't use my powers?" he sighed with a soft scoff.

"No. You are doing this for me, so I have to at least show my gratitude by accompanying you."

"Then be my guest and knock on the door."

Ruby knocked on the door and said, "Excuse me, we would like to talk to you for a second. Can you open the door?"

A minute later, the door opened, and Rudy's eyes widened upon seeing the guest.

"You are..."

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Chapter 672: A Humble Man

When the door opened, they were blasted with loud songs. Still, not a single noise could be heard outside the room when the door was closed.

Eight high-rank Underblades in the room, two in each corner. There were a dozen girls dancing inside, and the room reeked with the smell of perfume and alcohol.

'What happened to the 'room is not suitable for six people'?', Rudy uttered inwardly. 'And why are there so many girls in the room? The pass only allowed two people. Whoever the guest is, he must be a big shot of the underworld.'

A girl had opened the door, but soon an old man walked into their sight and greeted Rudy and Ruby.

"Yes? Is there anything you need?" he asked.

"You are..." Rudy raised his brows and said, "Well, hello there. Long time no see."

Rudy greeted him with a grin.

"Uhm... do I know you from somewhere?" the old man asked.

"You forgot about me? Well, I guess, it's been eighteen years, so you can't recognize me." Rudy poked his finger at the old scar on the old man's neck and said, "Remember me now?"

The old man placed his hand on the scar and said, "I got this in the riots in the underworld eighteen years ago."

"I know. And I am the guy who saved you. Not to mention... all the wealth you got from me..."

"Oh! I remember you now!" the old man exclaimed.

The old man was none other than the merchant Rudy used to visit in the Underworld to trade the gold with money.

"But... why do you look the same even after all these years? Did you have advanced surgery? Or is it something else? Please tell me! I would like to be young again."

"I can make you look young too, but that wouldn't change anything from the insides. Do you still want it?" Rudy asked curiously.

"If I say yes, the wrinkles on my face will vanish, but the pain in my joints won't?"

"Indeed."

"Will my sex drive change? Will I be able to last longer on the bed?"

"Sadly, that's a factory default. You can't change that, especially at this age."

"Sadge. Then I would like to stay the same. More or less, I won't lose anything. The fortune I obtained from trading with you for a year made me who I am today. What brought you here?" the old man asked sincerely.

"Would you like to exchange the rooms?"

"Uhm..." the old man looked at the girls busy dancing in the room and said, "I could say yes, but... the room is a mess. The interior is the same in all the rooms, so that's not an issue."

"That's okay. I can clean up the mess."

"Well... sure. I wouldn't say no to my lucky charm."

'I would have much preferred if a hot lady called me a 'lucky charm' instead of an old man.'

The music stopped, and the old man left the room with the girls and the guards.

"Come on girls, the night is still young. We are going to have much more fun!" the old man said as he spanked two girls with both hands.

Rudy turned to Ruby's guard and said, "Can you show them the room?"

The guard nodded and took them all to the elevator.

The old man waved his hand at Rudy and said, "Later~ And yeah... happy bidding~!"

Rudy entered the room, and Ruby followed him.

"When he said the room is messy, I assumed there would be drinks and glasses all over the room, but..." Ruby shook her head and said, "This is next-level messy."

Rudy stood in the middle of the room and began to fix the room using his telekinesis powers.

"I am surprised you knew the old man."

"Why?"

"You don't know? Everyone in the Underworld knows him. He is like a celebrity there."

"I had no idea, nor do I care about it."

"He owns at least three villas in each and every Underworld in the world. He is also the producer and funder behind most of the events that happen in the Underworld. Most likely, he is funding this auction too."

"All thanks to me. And no wonder he was allowed to have so many girls in the room and also a tight security."

Rudy gathered the drinks at one place and turned to Ruby, "Do you drink?"

"No. I never saw the appeal, nor I ever understood why people drink."

"At least, we can agree on that one. "

Anything that can be addictive is a big no for me. Ain't no way I will be a slave to addiction," Ruby asserted.

"I was the same. Until..." Rudy sighed.

"Until?" Ruby asked curiously.

"I became an addict."

"Wait, do you drink? Or are you talking about gambling addiction? To be honest, I don't consider that as an addiction. It's more or less like a job for me."

"No, I was talking about sex. I am a sex addict, but I think I have got it under control... kind of."

"Anything can be addictive... if that makes you feel any better."

Rudy continued fixing the room and burned the trash into nothing, not even leaving the ash behind.

Ruby sat on the bed and said, "It must be awesome to be able to do all that effortlessly."

"It may seem effortless, but it requires a lot of hard work and precision. When I was learning to control telekinesis, I would accidentally break things. Those were tough times."

"I guess I was wrong about you," Ruby muttered.

"Hmm?"

"You are not a total asshole."

"Is that supposed to be a compliment? Because if it is, I am sure there could have been a better way to say it."

"Looking at the old man reminded me of the harsh truth."

"Oh?"

"Rich people, good-looking people, and strong people can have whatever they want."

"Uhh... what are you trying to say?" Rudy asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"I am talking about sex partners. They can have multiple girls or boys to have sex with and change them once they are done using them. They can have as many partners as they have but the only thing keeping them together is sex."

Meanwhile, you are rich, handsome, and powerful— more than anyone else in the world. Yet, you don't do the things the others do. You have multiple partners, but you are in a mutually loving relationship with them.

You are... humble." Ruby sighed and added, "I can't believe I am saying this, but I respect you a little now."

"Hey, Hey, Don't fall in love with me," Rudy teased her.

"Heh! Don't flatter yourself."

Thanks, @Russdogg, for the gift!

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Chapter 673: Opening Ceremony of the Auction

"I will send Maria and Jane here."

Rudy left the room and entered the next room to see the girls had made themselves comfortable.

"Maria, Jane, your room is the next one. Go."

"Do you want to kick us out that badly?" Jane asked with a judging look on her face.

"I just want the auction to start. It's going to be a long event, so order some food if you want. And you can come here anytime you want. No one is stopping you."

"We will see."

Jane and Maria left the room, and Rudy closed the door using his powers.

SIGH!

He let out a weary sigh and jumped between Rias and Alice on the bed.

"I feel bored already~" He groaned.

"That was quick."

Rudy placed his head on Alice's lap and said, "There was no need for me to come to the auction, to be honest. I could have gotten us a house using another way."

"Then why did you come?" Rias asked curiously.

"Because of Maria. She didn't tell me what happened when we were having sex in the pool house, I read her thoughts, and she seemed to be missing the Underworld. I don't blame her for being homesick. After all, I made her disband their syndicate and leave their house."

"Hmm~ You did the same with us, though," Rias remarked.

"Vampire matter was different. Well..." He sat up and said, "Let's hope she enjoys the event."

"Will her parents also be here?" Alice wondered.

"I am not sure. But we will know if they are here."

"So..." Rias glanced around the room and asked, "How exactly will the auction start? And why do we need a room for that? I am so confused right now."

"I am too. But Lu Bela can color us surprised."

Suddenly, the television in the room automatically turned on, and a person holding a mic was seen on the stage. The curtains rolled up, and the person turned out to be Kim, seemingly acting as an anchor of the auction.

[Welcome! Dear guests and the people of the Underworld! For the last 269 years, each year, an auction has been organized and conducted for those who are fortunate enough to participate in one.

Every year, we try something different, and we host the event at different places. This year, we have decided to do something unique, something we have never tried before.

This year, we took the confidentiality of our guests and bidders seriously. No one will know who you are and what you bought. This year, you can participate in the auction from your room.

Please look at the right side of your room. There should be a green button near the window or by the door. Press that button and wait for my next instruction.]

"Can I press it?!" Alice asked excitedly.

"Sure, go ahead."

Alice got up from the bed and pressed the switch with her finger.

[Once you have pressed the button, walk to the glass table in the middle of the room. We have hidden a hammer somewhere in the room, and you must find it. Everyone will be given one minute to find the hammer. And those who fail to do that will be kicked out of the event.

But don't worry, the hammers are hidden at the obvious spots, so even a kid would be able to find them. And if you can't find something so simple, you don't deserve to be in this auction.]

"I knew there would be a harsh twist somewhere in the event," Rudy muttered.

"Rudy! Hurry up! We have to find the hammer!"

Rudy pointed his gaze at the closed glass window and said, "Open the window."

"We don't have time for that!"

Rudy opened the window using his power and said, "Look outside. You will see the hammer taped beneath."

Alice looked outside the window and stared at the scenery.

"We are so high up. And the lights look so beautiful."

"You are supposed to grab the hammer," Rias commented.

Alice grabbed the hammer and said, "I don't think that was the obvious location."

"It depends on the rooms. Maria found the hammer in the next room, and it was hidden inside the drawer," Rudy informed.

"Somehow... this is actually fun," Rias stated.

"Yeah. Props to Lu Bela for making this interesting."

[One minute has ended. Those who found the hammer, please walk to the glass table and break it using the hammer. You have one minute.]

Alice looked at Rudy and anxiously said, "I am scared. What if a piece of glass hits me?"

"Don't worry. I am here. Nothing will happen."

Alice took a deep breath and closed her eyes.

"You can do it," Rudy encouraged her.

"I can do this!" Alice smashed the hammer on the glass table and shattered it into small pieces.

[Once you are done, look at the glass pieces scattered on the floor and find the piece with a number written on it. The number wouldn't have been visible unless you broke the table. The impact caused by the hammer on the table will generate energy, which will make the number visible. You have one minute to find the number.]

Alice crouched down and began to look through every glass of pieces.

Rudy raised his finger and lifted the piece that had a number written on it.

"I think we are done." Rudy tapped on his lap and said, "Come here."

Alice sat on Rudy's lap and looked at the number of the glass piece— number 69.

"What's this number for?"

"I am not an expert, but it's most likely our bidding number," Rudy answered.

"We can bid using this number?"

"Yes."

[Each room has been assigned with a bidding number. Don't worry, you don't have to announce which number you have got. We already know everything. Also, to that one person who had a room change at the last minute, we have changed the names assigned to the room as well as the bidding number. No need for your thanks.]

"..."

[Now that the opening ceremony of the auction has ended. Please look outside your window and enjoy the auction. Happy bidding~!]

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Chapter 674: Otherworldly Auction

Three cushioned chairs were placed near the window so the people could sit there and gaze outside the window. Rudy had guessed it the moment he saw the chairs by the window, but he assumed it was because of a sky show.

He wasn't way off the mark, but he had underestimated Lu Bela and her master tricks.

Rudy, Rias, and Alice sat on the chair and gazed outside the window.

"Are we supposed to watch the stars?" Rias asked.

Soon, an orb-like object appeared in the sky and twinkled.

Alice squinted her eyes to see clearly, but couldn't make out the object.

"What is that?" she asked.

"It's a... drone..." he responded with a sigh.

Within a minute, hundreds of thousands of drones covered the sky and emitted bright light from them.

"Umm... are they supposed to emit such light?" Rias wondered.

"They are... drones equipped with projectors."

"Oh! It's a drone show but advanced?!" Alice cheerfully exclaimed. "I always wanted to go to a drone show."

"This is the auction."

The drones had formed an enormous screen in the sky using the projectors, and the screen was so vast that it was clearly visible from space. Moreover, the quality was so high definition that it could put the highest-quality resolution to shame.

A timer began counting from 10 to 1, and fireworks began to go off.

"I am curious to find out just how much money she burned in arranging all this. And will she get anything in return from the auction? The passes were free, but I am sure she has her share from all the bids," Rias muttered to herself.

"I don't think she even spent a penny on all this. She has many businesses in the world apart from being the ruler of the Underworld. She owns the top drone company in the world, and the drones used in this auction are prototypes and won't be released publically for the next twenty-five years— until the world has caught up to the technology," Rudy explained in a calm voice.

"Calling her a genius or a prodigy would actually be an understatement. She reverse-engineered the advanced and futuristic technology from the equipment and gadgets she purchased from the merchant and made more gadgets based on them. They are far too advanced to be released in today's era," he added soon after.

"You surprisingly know a lot about her," Rias commented with a judging look on her face. "Maria was right."

"I simply researched a bit on her."

"So you research on everyone you meet?"

"I research on the people I consider my friends."

"Oh? So she is your friend now? I thought she was your enemy," Rias remarked.

"As the saying goes, today's enemy is tomorrow's friend," Rudy shrugged.

"I am sure the saying goes both ways, so today's friend could also be tomorrow's enemy."

"I know, and that's why I don't make many friends. And even if I call them my friends, I don't fully trust them like I trust you girls. And there are only three friends I fully trust."

"One is Eric, I guess," Alice quipped.

"Yes. Second is Anothony and the third is Joe."

"What is your reason to trust them?"

"I have known Eric since I was a kid, so I don't see any reason to not trust him. He is one of my best friends and a childhood friend. And... apparently my... Well, that part doesn't rule in anything.

I will say the same for Anthony. He was like a father figure to me from the start. And Joe is a harmless and chill guy. He does what he likes and is always focused on his dreams and goals."

"Do you trust Lu Bela fully?"

"I don't know. Why are we even talking about this? Since when have you become so possessive?"

"I am not. I am just curious. You have a harem, so if you add one more girl, it won't make that much of a difference. Yet, you still keep avoiding every question related to Lu Bela. So it naturally makes your harem members curious and suspicious at the same time."

"I don't avoid questions, and if I do, that means the topic is boring and ridiculous."

"They may sound boring and ridiculous to you, but not to others."

While Rudy and Rias were busy chatting, the auction had already started a few minutes ago, and some items had already been bid.

"Will you two stop fighting?" Alice asked in an annoyed tone.

"We are not fighting," Rudy responded. He turned to Rias and asked, "Right?"

"Yeah. We are just talking." Rias nodded.

"No matter how you look at it, you two were clearly arguing. It wouldn't have taken long for you to start fighting."

"I mean... small or heated arguments like this are no big deal. Don't elders always say that if a couple fights, that means they have a strong relationship... or something like that?"

"We are here for the auction, so let's focus on that only. You two can fight all you want once we go home. Just don't fight in front of me."

Rias nudged Rudy and asked in a whisper, "Why is she acting like this?"

"Couple fight is a sensitive topic for her. I didn't know it, and I found out pretty late in my past life that her parents didn't have a great relationship and used to fight all the time. Mind you, they seemed a loving couple to me until I uncovered the truth."

"Her mother died when she was a kid, right?"

"Yeah, all that happened when we were in their house."

"I can hear you two whispering."

Rudy hugged Alice and said, "From today onwards, I promise I will never argue with a harem member in front of you."

"I would much appreciate it if you never argue with them, but I know that's not possible since, most of the time, it's the girls starting the arguments," Alice commented while shooting a glance at Rias.

"..."

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Chapter 675: Lord's Perspective

The auction started with an antique coin dated back to thousands of years and proceeded with a ring. It was conducted in the size order from small to big.

The items were presented by the respected seller, and they were given a minute to talk about their things, and then they would set a starting bidding price. Kim would do the bidding call and get the item sold using her remarkable anchoring abilities.

Rudy realized that the houses would be the last one on the list, which made him lose interest in the auction quicker than the time it took him to teleport from one place to another.

SIGH!

He got off the chair and relaxed on the bed.

"What's wrong?" Alice asked.

"Wake me up when the auction gets to the house part."

"Are you not interested in other items? Something might pique your interest, you know?"

"I highly doubt. I lose interest in things pretty quickly as I can simply touch them, copy them, and create the same thing. It no longer stays unique."

"Counterfeit is a serious crime," Alice grinned.

"I know. And I was saying that I could do that, not that I would actually do it unless I owned the item. However, if there is something you want or piques 'your' interest, do let me know. I will buy it for you. Consider it a present for coming with me."

Alice had taken a liking to the auction and was curious whenever she saw a new item being presented.

"The prices of such small items are being sold is ridiculous. I can't imagine how much they would sell a house for."

Rias glanced at Rudy and said, "And he has to buy a house big enough for all his harem members to settle in."

"How much money do you have?" Alice asked.

"I am not sure what's my worth in the Underworld. But the last time I checked, I was nearing a trillion dollars," Rudy answered nonchalantly.

"What?!" Alice exclaimed in surprise. "Wait, doesn't that mean you are currently the richest person in the world?"

"Maybe... maybe not."

"Why are you so laid back about this? Shouldn't you be more excited?"

"As I said a while ago, nothing makes me interested or excited except three things. One is... girls. Second is... girls. And third is... girls."

"..."

Rias and Alice gave a judging stare at Rudy.

"Okay, I was kidding. I get excited about three things. One is... girls. The second is when I create a new power and successfully manage to execute it. And third is... sex, although you can include that in the first. So I guess only two things make me excited."

"Is this what people call 'suffering from success'?" Alice asked in a low voice.

"Also, the title of the richest person in the world doesn't actually mean anything. You stop giving value to something you already have. I am not saying you neglect them or do not care about them at all, but it wouldn't be like the time when they didn't have the said thing.

And the richest person in the world would be so rich that they wouldn't let the world know that they are the richest. They can technically control the entire world's economy. They can destroy it, to be honest.

If they decide to give away their money equally to everyone in the world, inflation will rise like my dick when I see you girls naked. That is the very reason poverty exists. People hate poverty, but it's actually the savior of the world's economy. You have to live according to the system of the matrix, those who break it can change their destiny and survive."

"..."

"It may be hard for you to understand. I wouldn't have seen the world from that perspective either if I wasn't the Lord. It's crazy how powerful people can turn the world upside down with just one move," he asserted in a solemn voice.

"That's... scary..."

"Which is why humans and the human world have always been so despicable," Rias stated. "I would still suggest you to move into another world. You don't have to leave anyone behind either."

"How will I not leave anyone behind?"

"The only person you were attached to in the human world who you were worried to leave behind is... Rebecca. And now she is in your harem, so you can take her with you."

"What about Elena?"

"You can take her as well."

"And what about her kids?"

"Take them too."

"So what about their life here? What about their friends? Elena is a business tycoon. She has devoted half of her life to her business. If I asked her to come with me, she would follow me without asking any questions. But I can't ask her to leave everything behind.

Eric and Erika also have a life here, you know? What about Reina? She has been working hard for the waterpark and soon-to-be amusement park. Everyone has a life here, and I can't just ask them to come with me to a place they don't belong."

"But we followed you. Didn't I come to the human world even though I hate it so much?"

"..."

"Forget it." Rias sighed. "Otherwise, Alice would say I am starting an argument again."

"Fine, I will think about your request. But know that it will take a long time. We will live in the human world but settle in another world.

If it's a must, I will simply create a new world of your dreams where only we will live. And by we, I mean me and the harem. I have been thinking about it ever since I returned from the past, but I didn't know if I would actually work on it.

I am the Lord and every Lord, the ones before me and the ones that will come after me... they all have one job, which is to maintain the balance. I don't think I have done anything Lord-like yet."

"Let's see, saving the universe from a psycho ancient entity does count as a job fit for a Lord. Why don't you ever credit yourself for your achievements?" Rias asked with a serious look on her face, her face showed a hint of disappointment.

"I don't really feel like I defeated Asura. He found out the truth and kind of killed himself," Rudy shrugged.

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Chapter 676: House Worthy of Lord

[The list of the items in the auction is pretty long, and even if we give five minutes to each item, it will take more than a hundred hours. So there will be different window screens, each having separate bidding.

You will get the item description on your television screen to decide whether you want to buy it. I will be moving to the last section— auctioning houses. I am sure some of you have been waiting for this.

Wait no further and keep your eyes on me to follow the screen. Since we can't show you the houses and the places physically—obviously— we will be showing a 3D hologram which would let you have a better and closer look at the site you want to bid on.

To have an even better experience, grab your television remote and press the yellow switch two times.]

Since Rudy was on the bed and he was closer to the remote, he grabbed it and pressed the yellow switch two times.

The lights in the room turned off, and a blue bulb turned on, which illuminated the entire room.

"What's going on?!" Rias panicked.

"Heh!" Rudy chuckled softly and muttered, "You vampires hate the blue color, don't you?"

"Duh!"

"Eek!" Rudy heard Jane's shriek from the next room, seemingly, they pressed the yellow switch on the remote too.

"Tsk!" Rudy clicked his tongue and said, "I wish I had seen the live reaction on her face. I missed that by a long shot."

"...sadist..."

"How does that make me a sadist?"

[Please close your window for a better experience.]

"How will we watch if we close the window?" Alice wondered but closed the windows anyway.

Alice and Rias got on the bed beside Rudy and waited for Kim's next instruction.

[I will show you a live demo of how this works. Please keep your eyes on the television screen.]

A house appeared on the screen, and the next second, it seemed as though it came out of the screen to the room.

[Normally, you would need to wear glasses to see the 3D hologram, but not here. You can control the hologram through your finger and see the interior. You can inspect every single thing, down to its minute detail.

However, it is to be noted that the place might not match to what's shown in the hologram. For example, the size, color, and the surrounding— as they can easily be changed and not in one's total control.]

[And you can't match the actual size of the place through a hologram,] she added. [But if you feel insecure about your investment, you will be given a chance to visit the site you buy after the party. If you don't like it, you can revoke your purchase, and you will be provided a full refund instantly.

If you have any questions to ask about the places once they are presented, you can use the mic of the television remote to ask the questions to the seller you are presenting the said item to.

Since we are short on time, the seller will be given a minute for the presentation, and the interested bidders will get one minute to ask questions. Please note that only the highest bidders would get a chance to ask questions.

If any of the items from this auction are returned within an hour of the purchase, they will be provided a full refund. Of course, terms and conditions are applied, and you can read them by scanning the QR code at the left corner of the television screen.]

"This is... awesome. I hate to admit it, but the auction in the human world is much better than the auctions I have been to in the vampire and other worlds. This Lu Bela sure knows her stuff," Rias awed.

"The experience is surely the best. I can see why people are always eager and want to be invited to the auctions each year." Alice looked at Rudy and asked, "This event is invite-based, right?"

"Yeah."

Each item took a maximum of five minutes to be sold, and twenty-five houses were sold in two hours.

Rudy grew impatient with every item a house was presented with that was not to his liking. They were great but not great enough to appeal to Rudy to buy them.

Some of the houses were previously owned by celebrities, while some belonged to the royal lineage of all over the world.

The lowest final bid for one of the houses was five billion dollars, and the highest last bid was one hundred and one billion dollars.

Money wasn't an issue for Rudy. Even if he used up all his fortune, he wouldn't be considered poor. Even without misusing his powers to become rich, he could become wealthy.

He once dreamed and made a commitment to become the wealthiest person in the world, and he fulfilled that commitment in no time.

"The auction will run for four hours, and three hours and forty-five minutes have already passed..." Rudy muttered in annoyance.

"What if there are items left to be auctioned even after four hours?" Alice asked curiously.

"They won't be auctioned. But one can talk directly with the sellers at the after-party. Either way, I will not return without buying a house."

"Why don't you buy a random one? We don't need a fancy villa or a mansion to live in. As long as we get our separate rooms, I don't think it matters," Rias shrugged.

"I will be living in that house too, and I want a house that is worthy of me."

He grabbed Alice's phone and called someone.

"What are you doing?" Rias asked.

"I am calling Lu Bela. I don't know how many houses are left on the list, and I don't want to miss the last one. Turns out all the places are sold while I waited for a perfect one," he scoffed wryly.

"Don't let that happen, or I swear Jane wouldn't stop taunting you for decades."

"Yeah... I can see that," he sighed. "Come on... pick up the call, Bella."

[Esper Harem in the Apocalypse](#)

Chapter 677: House Worthy of Lord (ii)

"Pick up the damn call..."

A few rings later, Lu Bela answered the call with, [I am busy right now.]

"You sure are."

[I am literally talking with a thousand people at once, keeping an eye on every bid and transaction, checking the validity of the items and inspecting the truth of whether that item truly belongs to them or not, and confirming the authenticity of every bid and transaction.]

"You can assign those tasks to someone else. Why do you take responsibility for everything?"

[I can't afford to mess up, and I don't want to blame my people for the same. Anyway, why did you call me? Make it quick.]

"It's about the house. Only fifteen minutes are left, and I haven't seen a house to my liking. Can you skip the rest and show the biggest ones?" Rudy asked calmly.

[There are many left on the list, and the list has been made according to a first come, first serve basis. The sellers who registered their items first were given priority.]

"I really think the auction should be lasting longer. Four hours is too short."

[I agree. I will increase the time to five hours next year. As for your request, change the list. The last two houses will be the biggest ones on the list. And if you don't like them, we can talk later at the after-party.]

Even if the auction ends, the bidding will continue. We simply won't screen it. As you know, all the people present here are world-renowned, and their schedule is packed. I can't keep them here for long.

Otherwise, if I wanted, I would run the auction for a week, and there would be no one to stop me. I am sure you have a tight schedule too. The next bid will start in a few seconds. Good luck.]

BEEP~ BEEP!

"What did she say?" Rias asked curiously.

"She said the last two houses would be of my liking. Let's see if that's true or not."

[Congratulations! Bidding number 420 has won the bid and bought the place for three hundred and twenty billion dollars!]

A brief pause later, Kim said, [Now, to our last two. The next one is something we have never had for an auction before. It's an estate formerly owned by a power syndicate!]

"You have got to be kidding me..."

"What's wrong?" Alice asked.

"This is Ross Estate. Maria and Mia's place. I can't believe they put it in an auction."

Since no seller was presenting the estate and it now belonged to the Underworld government— the Underblades, Kim was presenting.

"Shouldn't you buy it, then? Maria would be happy to live in her house again."

Rudy used his see-through ability to look into the next room.

"Should I buy it?" Ruby asked Maria with a serious look on her face.

Maria shook her head and said, "No."

"Why not? We grew up in the house. Don't you want to spend the rest of your life there with Rudy and the harem?"

"I want to spend the rest of my life with Rudy and the harem, but not in this place. It was not a house, it was a cage! And you know it. We were allowed to do whatever we wanted, but we didn't live everyday life.

I don't hate Rusher or anyone. They did what they had to do to protect us. But if we go back to that place, we will never be able to live the life we want. We will forever stay chained.

The reason we disbanded the syndicate was to start a new life, so let's respect that decision and stop living in the past. We live in a pleasant present, and there is a fabulous future awaiting us."

"You are right. That place is our home, but all birds leave the nest one day. If we have to move forward and start a new life, we must let go of the past. I will follow you wherever you go, but I won't become a burden to you by living together with you or Rudy's harem. I will find something else to do and make sure I am not freeloading at the new place he buys," she asserted in a solemn voice.

"Believe me, he would never think of that. As long as you don't try to come in between or destroy Rudy and my relationship, he wouldn't do anything to you," she said calmly.

Rudy shook his head at Rias and said, "No. That's not my call to make."

Since Rudy or Ruby didn't bid, Lu Bela raised the starting bidding price so high that no one was able to buy it. She kept the Ross estate by herself.

[For the first time in all these years, an item has been left unbidden. Now, moving on to the last asset, in fact, the most valuable asset of this auction. We are presenting a royal castle dating back to over seven thousand years ago.

It's considered as one of the first dynasties ruled by humans. One could also say that their ancestors once lived there before spreading all around the world. Since it was made thousands of years ago, there are scriptures and signs of the primitive era.

It's no surprise that ancient architecture would be otherworldly, something we can't do in today's era, even with advanced technology. The castle was later renovated after a few hundred years, adding more to its beauty.

Every half-century, a new generation of kings was selected, and as time passed and new inventions were created, one after another, new things were added to the castle. Now you might wonder why such a historical thing is in this auction and not in the government's hands. Well, that's because we have the rightful heir to that dynasty present here with us, and she wants to sell it.]

"Goddamn! Now that's something I really want and is worthy of me. A freaking castle! I will buy it, no matter how much it costs!"

[Esper Harem in the Apocalypse](#)

Chapter 678: Bidding Time

Rudy couldn't wait for the one minute of the presentation to end. He wanted to buy the castle, no matter the price, but for that, the bidding had to start. He didn't want anyone else to bid, but even if they did, he could simply bid higher than anyone else.

He was the richest man on earth, so if he had spent all his fortune, no one would be able to counter Rudy's bid. He had no need to worry, but the eagerness got the best of him and made him impatient.

"Calm down, will you? The castle won't run away," Rias remarked.

"I know. But did you not see the hologram? It looks so... nostalgic... no, I mean... appealing. For some reason, I want that castle badly."

Rias chuckled and uttered, "What happened to your 'I never get interested about anything?' I don't think I have seen you act so excited before."

"Why are you not excited? You grew up in a hugeass palace, so shouldn't you also be demanding that I buy the castle?"

"Contrary to the belief that I would be happy to live in a castle, I only want a private space, a room. Certainly, I would prefer a castle over an estate, villa, or mansion. It would feel more close to home.

However, we don't know where the castle is. If you buy it, do you think the other harem members would come to live there if it's too far away? Sure, you can teleport there, but others can't.

Most importantly, do you think Rebecca would allow you to live in the castle? Or rather yet, would she agree to live in the castle? But personally, I wouldn't mind. And yes, the castle is beautiful. You should buy it even if we never go to live there. We can make that our vacation spot."

"I can find solutions to all the issues you stated except for one. I don't know what mom would think of this. Obviously, she wouldn't think that my harem could fit in our current house. But..." Rudy sighed uncomfortably.

[The seller is asking for seven hundred billion dollars for the castle. The next one minute would be a Q&A time. If the interested buyers have any questions, ask them, but after making their bids.]

Rudy immediately made a bid of 800 billion dollars.

[We have got our first bid of eight hundred billion dollars— one hundred billion dollars more than the bidding amount— number 69! What a bid! What a bid!]

"Why is 'she' so excited that you made a bid?" Alice muttered.

"Maybe she had a responsibility on her shoulder that I must buy a house. Lu Bela invited me because I asked her to look for a nice house for us, so Lu Bela must have tossed that responsibility to Kim."

[Number 69! Do you have any questions? You don't have to worry about your voice being recognized. It will be automatically altered. Please, feel free to clear your doubts. The money hasn't been deducted from your account yet.]

Rudy glanced at Alice and Rias and asked, "What should I ask?"

"Since it's old, I don't think any questions matter. There won't be electricity, and it definitely won't be a clean place," Alice responded.

"Why don't you ask if the interior has the furniture included?" Rias suggested

"Does that matter? We can bring a better one from the vampire world. And I highly doubt there is anything in that castle that is made from wood. It would mostly be stone and iron. Although I would try to restore them. It's a perfect opportunity to test my new power."

"True."

[Please wait for a second, the master of the auction has something to say.]

Kim turned off her mic and talked with Lu Bela over a device.

A second later, a voice said, [Excuse me, mine is not really a question, but a fact. A truth. The castle, or rather the entire dynasty, once used to be in one of the most prominent lands, which was highly fertilized. Rivers, mountains, and forests surrounded the land, giving them natural protection from the odds.

However, this is a story from thousands of years ago. It's no longer the same. The sea level rose, and the land became a ruin. The dynasty became an island, and the place which was once called prominent is now one of the most dangerous places in the world.

Every year, the sea level has been rising by 1cm, submerging the dynasty and drowning the entire island. The castle was located on the tallest mountain of that era, but now, the base of the castle is under the sea.

The castle would start submerging at a higher speed in the next few years. And once the base has weakened, the castle would collapse. The seller left out such a significant and essential detail in his presentation. Is such tergiversating action allowed in such a prestigious event?

The presentation about the castle was misleading, and the audience was fooled into believing that the investment in that asset was worthy and valuable. Master of the auction, I want your unbiased opinion on this matter.]

"..."

Rias glanced at Rudy from the corner of her eyes and muttered, "Looks like we won't be living in a castle."

[Yes, thank you for the insight, dear bidder. I was going to ask the seller the same thing, and thus I contacted the anchor to ask if the seller had provided that information in his written presentation.

But you did for me. I thank you, once again. Certainly, we don't allow such actions in the auction. Once we have received a response from the seller, we will kick her out of the event. I apologize for the inconvenience caused to any and all of you.]

"Damn, I have never seen Lu Bela so angry before. Why do I think she is going to chew the seller alive?"

"She doesn't seem angry to me," Alice stated.

"How can you tell? Her voice and tone are altered," Rias wondered.

"I don't know, but I can tell. She is furious. I pray for the seller's safety."

[The next voice you will hear will be of the seller.]

Thanks, @Russdogg, for the gift!

[Esper Harem in the Apocalypse](#)

Chapter 679: Curse of the Lord

[Umm... My name is Elizabeth Zenith, the last survivor of the Orcelona Dynasty and the last descendant of the royal lineage of the Zenith Empire. I am 24 years old. My introduction may sound cool to you, but I am not. And it's just a name. It doesn't mean anything in today's era. I was—]

[Get to the point, seller. You have one minute,] Lu Bela ordered.

Rudy turned to Alice and Rias and said, "See? She is pissed."

[I... I-I didn't mean to hide this from anyone. I didn't even know that the castle, or rather the entire island belonged to me. My father told me on his deathbed and asked me to read a certain book in his library that contained the history of the island.

Ever since I became the owner of the island, I have had visions. I feel scared every time, and thus I have decided to sell it. My father died three months ago, and I personally have never been to the island before.

I know where it exists, but I had no idea it was drowning. I just assumed the rest of the island was washed away with time, and the castle remained as it stood on top of a mountain. I didn't mean to fool anyone, and I sincerely apologize. I will withdraw from the auction. Please forgive me.]

"Hmm~ I don't think she is lying," Rudy mumbled.

"I agree. It didn't seem as though she was trying to fool anyone. She seems innocent," Rias seconded with a nod.

SIGH!

"So no more castle~" Rudy groaned in frustration.

"Sadly."

'Wait, if the island is drowning... I can simply...undrown it. I am more curious as to why she wanted to sell something so precious if she didn't know it was drowning?'

Rudy grabbed the remote and spoke into the mic:

[Why do you want to sell the castle?]

[As I already said, I have been having nightmares about this place, and I know the castle very well even though I have never been there. It's bad luck. It's haunting me, and I want to get rid of it.

I went to a spiritual master saint for help regarding this, and he told me I have some connection to that place. And if I want to break that connection, I have to give the castle to someone else, which brings me here.]

"This just got even more interesting," Rudy muttered.

[So, in order to get rid of the dream, you came here to sell the castle so someone would buy it and get haunted in your place? That doesn't sound good. You never said I will be getting a complimentary 'get haunted ticket' with the house.]

[I never thought of that. Deep down, I believed I was becoming mentally unstable. After all, ghosts and monsters don't exist. And let's say my nightmares truly had a connection with the castle somehow, but that's only because I am the last remaining survivor of the Zenith bloodline. You shouldn't have any... wait, no, I am not selling the castle anymore, so it doesn't matter.]

[I am still interested in buying the castle, though.]

[But it's—]

[Yeah, I know. And I want to buy it despite that. I am ready to pay whatever amount you ask for.]

[Why would you do that? It's a bad investment.]

[Name your price.]

After a brief silence of a few seconds, Elizabeth said, [I will sell you the castle and the entire Orcelona Dynasty— the island for fifty thousand dollars.]

"She decreased the price from seven hundred billion dollars to fifty thousand dollars..." Alice muttered with a surprised look on her face.

"She seems like a good girl. She could have asked millions or billions if she wanted, but she didn't. I truly don't think she meant any harm," Rias said calmly.

"So... final?" Rudy asked them.

"It's up to you. If you have a solution to stop the castle from drowning, I think it's a pretty good deal for fifty thousand dollars," Rias nodded.

Alice shrugged her shoulders and said, "You can't even buy an apartment at that price."

Since the starting bidding amount was decreased to fifty thousand dollars, almost everyone present in the auction had made their bids. They all had become interested, and the final bidding amount reached fifty billion dollars.

"Bastards!" Rias hissed at them. "None of them wanted to buy it when the bid was at eight hundred billion dollars, and now they want it like worms going after insects."

She turned to Rudy and pointed her finger at the television.

"And you wonder why I hate humans so much. It's in their nature to be greedy and selfish."

"Relax, I can counter the fifty-billion-dollar bid."

[The first person to bid was number sixty-nine, so they have priority in this bid. If they wish, they can buy the castle for fifty thousand dollars, as asked by the seller. The remaining amount will be paid by the auction master.]

[There is no need for that,] Rudy said on the microphone of the remote. [I will pay sixty-nine billion dollars for the island. If someone counters my bid, I will counter it again. I will keep doing it until there is no one standing in my way.]

[Sixty-nine billion dollars bid by the number sixty-nine! Is there anyone to raise their bid?! One! Two! Three! Sold! Congratulations to number sixty-nine for their purchase!]

SIGH!

Rudy let out a short sigh and leaned on Rias.

"You don't look excited now. What's wrong?" Rias asked with a confused look on her face. "I thought you were interested in the castle."

"I was. But now that it's mine, I lost all the excitement."

"..."

"Consider it a curse of being able to do anything I want, call it 'The Curse of Lord'," he sighed again.

"Let's hope the castle looks as good as it seemed in the hologram," Alice muttered. "Fingers crossed."

"We will have to make many changes, including renovating it to give it a modern, or at least a Victorian, touch to it," Rudy started with a composed look on his face.

Thus, the auction ended with a successful purchase by Rudy. And the after-party begins!

[Esper Harem in the Apocalypse](#)

Chapter 680: Preparing for the After-Party

[The auction ends here. However, it will continue without anchoring. The sellers will present their items, and one of our team will keep the bidding on. Worry not, it will be monitored by the master of the auction.

Those who are invited to the after-party shall attend the party, while others participate in the auction. You should be able to see a helpline number on your television screen, and you can call us by dialing the number in the remote for further assistance.

We would be more than happy to help you. Don't use your personal phone to call us; the call won't get through, and you wouldn't want to risk revealing your identity by contacting us in private.

Happy bidding, and see you at the party! Your room's door will be knocked on in a few seconds. Follow the instructions, or you will be kicked out.]

After that, the screen with Kim on it turned off, and it was replaced by the sellers presenting their items.

"How could she say something like 'you will be kicked out' with a cheerful smile on her face?" Rias asked in disbelief.

"That's Kim for you. She personally doesn't care about the auction or anyone present at the event. She simply follows Lu Bela's orders. She is naturally programmed to be the best."

Rias squinted her eyes and said, "I don't want to start anything, but you seem to know a lot about her too. Did you research about her too?"

"No, Lu Bela told me. She once asked me if I wanted a bodyguard-- equipped with the best weapons and gadgets in the market available in the world-- and I turned her down. Obviously, I need no one to protect me.

Then she went to tell me about Kim. Lu Bela personally designed her. From her hair to her insides. Usually, they would make bodies in a program on their special computer. Sometimes they would just let the AI make one.

But Kim was handmade by Lu Bela. Of course, a person named Kim always existed and was Lu Bela's friend. But After Kim decided to select her gender and become a female, she asked Lu Bela to design her from scratch."

"Doesn't that mean the ancient civilization was actually more advanced than the current one?" Alice asked curiously.

"Yeah, it was. But everything that was lost is now called a lost civilization."

KNOCK~ KNOCK!~!

"They are here." Rudy got off the bed and walked to the door while saying, "I wonder what their next game is."

He opened the door and was greeted by the guard, who was asked to guard the room from the outside.

The guard handed three bags to Rudy and said, "This is the dress master has asked you to wear."

"Oh..."

Rudy took the bag and looked inside them to see black clothes.

"Will everyone have the same clothes?" he asked.

"No. There are various categories, and only the most valuable guests of the master are allowed to wear black clothes."

"Touche."

"She also asked me to say this if you asked me about the size of the clothes."

"I was going to ask you that, so go ahead and answer," he said calmly.

"Master herself designed the clothes for you and your... companions. She looks forward to meeting you at the hall."

"About that... where is this hall?"

"I would accompany you there."

"Alright. Give me a few minutes to change clothes."

Rudy closed the door and handed the bag to the girls.

"Here, your dress."

They all opened the bags and placed their clothes on the bed. Rudy had a black coat-like suit, and its design was custom, unlike anything Rudy had seen or worn before.

The girls had black dresses, but different. Alice has a party dress with nets for sleeves and her neck area. There was an attachment net for the back in case Alice felt uncomfortable with only the laces on her back.

Rias' dress was different from Alice's, and it was close to a traditional vampirish party dress. There was also a black mask bundled in the bags, which was the same for Alice and Rias but slightly different for Rudy.

"She truly knows her stuff..." Rias muttered. "I wasn't going to wear it if it was a normal dress the humans wear, but now I will have to wear it."

"Yes." Rudy sat on the chair facing the bed and the girls and said, "Please wear it."

"Umm..." Alice fidgeted a little and said, "What's the party about?"

"Probably dancing and drinking."

"Do I have to come? Is it okay if I stay here? I don't like parties with strangers."

"Do you want me to drop you home? It's already 4 AM, and the party will run till morning."

"When will you visit the castle?"

"After the party. But I will have to find a solution to keep it above sea level. We won't move in there for another day."

Rudy paused for a few seconds to gather his thoughts and then said, "I will take you there after you wake up at night."

"Okay," she nodded. "Take me home."

"In that case, I should go home as well," Rias quipped.

"Huh? Why?"

"There is no need for me at the party. Why would I dance in front of strangers? I am sure Jane is currently thinking of the same thing. I suggest you don't go to the party here. We have already done what we came here for," she stated.

"I have things to discuss with Lu Bela. And meet Lilim. I haven't met her ever since I... time-traveled. I don't really know what to call the event," he sighed.

"What's wrong with calling it time travel?" Alice wondered.

"It feels... unoriginal. I am still not sure if I actually time traveled or simply regained my memories of that event."

"Even if that's the case, doesn't that mean you time-traveled and experienced everything?"

"Yes, of course. I am not saying I didn't time travel. But... after my battle with Asura... something strange happened before I returned to this timeline. I don't know how to explain it, but it felt like I was living different lives at the same time. Makes me wonder if I am the Rudy from the past life or simply gained his memories."