

# Extras 281

## Chapter 281 First Day Of The Raid [Pt 2]

"Fiery Destruction!"

~BOOOOOM!~

"Ice Prison!"

~FSHIII!~

"Wind Vortex!"

~WHOOOSH!~

"Descent Of Light!"

~SHIIINNNGGG!~

Various Spells stemming from Skills were being called out, filling the vast expanse with the voices of the Otherworlders.

They were all followed by explosions or sounds of destruction.

... Every single time.

The cause for yelling out Spells was because, unlike Skills, Spells had to be Chanted aloud.

Unless one had the [Magic Application] Skill that Lucielle possessed, or perhaps something better, they were stuck with that arrangement.

In fact, they had to cast the full Spell if they wanted to bring out its full power, which most didn't have the time for.

As a result, while the abilities being displayed were lesser than they would have been if they were fully Chanted, they were still very efficient and effective.

Evidence of that was the damage done to the area, and the falling Monsters in the expanse.

None was spared.

"Haaa...!"

With all of this action going on, there was one more person who ventured forth and did what needed to be done.

He bravely marched forward and challenged the monsters who were at least twice his size.

"Raahhhh!" Rey gave a battle cry as he dashed onward.

The fear that previously stained his face was nowhere to be seen. The only thing in his eyes was the intent of winning.

~WHOOOSH!~

He leaped from his position, just barely fast enough to evade the slashes of the enemy.

Once he did so, he jumped straight for his opponent's face and transformed his hand to an extremely sharp weapon of execution.

~SWISH!~

In one powerful swing, he decapitated the beast.

~THUD!~

As soon as the creature crashed to the ground, Rey lightly landed behind it, meeting two other Monsters who threatened to end his life.

He dodged the attack of one and blocked the second's slash with his shield.

"Guh!" The force was enough to make him recoil, but he didn't allow himself to remain stunned for too long.

He dodged the next strike by a hair's breadth and charged towards the creature before him.

His Enchanted Items definitely played a huge role in his enhanced speed, allowing him to traverse the needed distance in no time.

And so...

"Yahhh!"

... He was able to close the gap in no time.

With a graceful stride, he slid behind the creature and utilized all his strength to cut off multiple legs of the abomination.

"KRIIIII!" The Monster screeched as it lost its balance, swaying its heavy body violently.

Rey took this chance to leap high into the air and slice off its head with utmost precision.

Blood sprayed all over as his second executed beast began to collapse to the ground.

However... there remained one more close to him, and its massive claws neared him at an astronomical rate.

"Tch!" He swiftly activated the defensive ability of his helmet, which allowed an incorporeal shield to appear in front of him.

~SWISH!~

As the beast swung its heavy claw at Rey, his massive shield blocked the attack and saved his life—albeit barely.

He swallowed the saliva in his throat and managed to properly gain his footing after landing on the ground.

The snarling creature appeared annoyed at the fact that Rey had escaped its attack, the opposite of Rey's expression of relief.

"Huff... huff..." Rey narrowed his eyes as he closely examined the creature.

He couldn't get careless at this point.

'I can do this!' His face seemed to scream out as he took a sprint stance, ready to give the subjugation one last chance.

"KRIIIAAKKKK!"

The Monster charged at Rey with its multiple spider appendages making clicking noises as they smashed the ground to reach him.

Rey activated the function of his necklace and sent many blasts to the Spider-Wolf's legs, causing it to screech out in pain.

It stumbled at some point, which gave Rey the perfect chance to advance.

He didn't miss chance.

~WHOOOSH!~

He activated the only Non-Exclusive Skill he had in his arsenal, [Sprint], obtained from his training with Ralyks, which allowed him to double his speed for a set period of time.

He charged ahead and easily reached the stumbling creature in less than half of the time it would have normally taken.

He transformed his legs into a powerful variant that could allow him to leap ahead with great force.

~BOOM!~

The ground shattered a little, and he was propelled as a result of his kangaroo-like legs.

He twisted in the air and created blades with both hands.

"KRIII—?!"

The Wolf-Spider swiftly thrust its hands to catch Rey before it could slice off its head, but Rey's spinning form easily cut through the hand of the beast.

As the monster's fingers and arms were diced into multiple fleshy chunks, the beast realized its death was inevitable.

In the end, even this weakling had triumphed over it.

~SWISH!~

In one powerful slash, its head was cut off.

Blood gushed out like a fountain, but the executor had long flown from that area and rushed forward in search of his next prey.

His eyes went alight with desire, and before long, he also wore the same expression as everyone else around him.

—A smile of excitement.

Of course, no one knew what went on his mind as he found his next target and charged toward it.

They could only know one thing.

This wasn't the same Rey that was a weakling back then. Just like everyone else, he had grown a lot stronger.

He was fit to be called an Otherworlder.

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'Ahh... this is boring.'

As Rey killed his next foe, he fought back the urge to leak out a sigh.

So far, he had killed four Monsters while everyone else was nearing their tenth mark.

'I would say that's pretty standard.' His thoughts trailed.

The problem was that he wasn't gaining any EXP from the Monsters that he was killing.

'Even if I killed everything here, I doubt I'll be able to Level Up once...'

No, that was even too ambitious.

Rey had reached a point of growth that killing a hundred Monsters of this caliber wouldn't give him 10% EXP.

As a result, every action that he was taking felt too monotonous.

'But I have to endure.'

In the end, this wasn't for his benefit.

'The rest should grow as well...' He stole a glance at all his classmates, finding them smiling.

He couldn't help but leak out a grin as well.

'They're enjoying themselves, growing stronger in the process.'

This was what he wanted.

'Let's see how long that lasts.'

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## **Chapter 282 First Day Of The Raid [Pt 3]**

"Great work, everyone." Ralyks clapped as the last of the Monsters fell.

The Otherworlders were done with a little over a hundred Monsters in the blink of an eye, and they barely even broke a sweat.

Even Ralyks had no choice but to be impressed.

"These Items are amazing. I don't even feel tired at all!" One of the Otherworlders commented with excitement.

"I Leveled Up three times just now!"

"Four for me!"

"This is insane! Dungeon Raids are awesome."

There were sounds of excitement echoing from so many of them that it was safe to assume that they unanimously enjoyed their activities.

Brilliant smiles and bright eyes shone among the teenagers who stood amidst the carcasses of Monsters.

It seemed like they no longer feared anything.

"Kukuku... is that so?" Ralyks chuckled slightly.

No one could see what was beneath his mask, but it was clear that he was amused by their reactions.

"Well then, since you're not exhausted, let's keep advancing into the Floor."

The moment he said this, everyone—well, almost everyone—looked at him, perplexed.

"What's with those faces? You didn't think this was all there was to the Second Floor, did you?" The moment Ralyks said this, the ground trembled a little.

Loud noises and screeches echoed a far distance away from the students, deeper down the path they were meant to traverse.

"W-what were those?"

"They sound like a lot more of them."

"How many more of them will be on this Floor?"

The overwhelming confidence that the Otherworlders had built was beginning to crumble.

However, their worries didn't last for long.

"We're all a lot stronger than we were before. We also have better gear. Lastly, we have Sir Ralyks. Is there really any reason to worry?"

As Adonis' words of encouragement echoed among the group, the members all nodded in approval.

The tension and unease vanished.

"Well said, Adonis. Let us proceed."

Ralyks floated in the air, right behind the students, and they began their advance towards the terrifying screeches and growls.

Despite all they heard, and were about to see, no one expressed any form of hesitation.

In the end, they wanted to grow stronger.

And this was the only way!

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[Moments Later]

"Guark!"

Clark yelled as his body was thrust into a wall with so much momentum that his body felt it greatly,

~BOOOOOOM!~

Debris scattered from the point of impact, and his armored body dug into the wall as he struggled to regain focus.

He looked around him with blurry eyes and found that the rest of his comrades weren't faring so well either.

... All because of one Monster.

They were currently in the Boss Room of the Second Floor, and their enemy was a single entity.

A massive wolf who had the height of at least ten meters,

It had spider appendages stemming from its back, and its wolf-like body was extremely agile for its size.

It could become a blur and appear anywhere in no time at all, making it extremely unpredictable.

Its several appendages were also used for offense, and having so many sharp and strong spider appendages made it nearly impossible to catch it off guard or attack a blind spot.

It had a defensive barrier active anytime it wasn't attacking, and also a sonic attack that rushed from its mouth for long-

range attack.

It was this sonic attack that hit Clark, forcing him to land on the wall without any way to resist.

"Tch... come on!" He grunted, peeling himself away from the rock that he was stuck in.

Fortunately, he was able to jump away from there before the Boss Monster appeared there and impaled him with its appendages.

~WHUUUSH!~

The moment the Boss appeared where he had previously been, Clark used his [Icy Breath] to lock him in place, but the beast's shield suddenly manifested to block the assault.

"KRIIIIIIIIAAAKKKK!!!" It roared, sending Clark flying to the ground, where the rest of his comrades were standing.

All nine of them watched the Boss with annoyance.

They were clearly powerful enough to take it down, but the problem was its annoying ability to evade attacks or downright block it.

"I'm ready!" Eric yelled, stepping forward and stretching his wand to the air.

"Everyone step back!"

They all listened to his voice, all of them covering their ears as well.

"Vibrato Resonatia!" He yelled out, swinging his glowing Enchanted Item as he activated a Spell from his [Grand Sound Magic].

At that instant, a screeching vibration echoed into the air, piercing the world around them.

Adonis activated [Absolute Defense] around his comrades, protecting them from the attack, but the Monster wasn't so fortunate.

Its barrier or evasion could not protect it from sound itself.

As a result—

"SKRIIIIIIAAAKKKK!!!"

—It collapsed to the ground, screeching and screaming in its monster tongue.

"Now! Attack now!"

No one needed Eric to say anything before making their move.

Everyone rushed towards the Boss, but no one was nearly as fast as Adonis.

Streaks of golden light passed all the Otherworlders and closed the distance between everyone else and the affected creature.

In no time, Adonis appeared before the Boss and moved his hand to finish it off.

~SWISH!~

Following the flow of the blade, the severed head danced off the neck of the beast, and everything was over at that moment.

Adonis ended the life of the Boss Monster, thus concluding the Raid on the Second Floor.

Everyone collapsed on the ground the moment their task was over.

Heavy-layered sighs and deep breaths were taken as the Otherworlders clearly displayed how spent they were.

The only one left standing was Adonis, and he was right in front of the Boss he had just dispatched.

"Haaa... haaa..." The Hero heaved a few sighs, white fog rushing from his lips.

So far, he had killed the most enemies out of everyone else. He never took a break, and he constantly fought with all his strength.

It was no surprise that the exhaustion was beginning to catch up to him.

"We did it..." He whispered, a smile forming on his face despite how tired he was.

"I.. I did it!"

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## **Chapter 283 First Day Of The Raid [Pt 4]**

"Let me heal you."

Alicia's words echoed in the air as she approached Clark and helped him recover from the damage he received from the Boss Monster not too long ago.

"T-thank you." Clark responded sheepishly, as if he wasn't used to such kind gestures.

He even scratched his head and laughed awkwardly. Alicia ignored all of this and healed him anyway.

It was during moments like this that her S-Tier Skill, [Absolute Healing], could come in handy.

'I have enough Mana to properly use it now.' Alicia smiled as a bright light covered Clark as a result of her powers.

This wasn't the first time she was using [Absolute Healing] in the Raid.

She had done so a few times already, especially during the just-concluded Boss Fight.

Surprisingly, she never got to heal Rey.

'I guess he's being extra careful, so he fights Monsters he knows he can take.'

Thanks to that, and his defensive Enchanted Item, he didn't take any damage.

'To think he hasn't made a single slip-up so far. That's really impressive...'

Alicia still didn't know the kind of training that Rey underwent with Ralyks, but it had to have been amazing for him to come back so strong.

Of course, he wasn't as powerful as everyone else.

However, he wasn't a liability.

'I'm happy for him.' Alicia shot him a glance and smiled.

He looked so tired, and she understood it well.

'If I didn't have the White Ember, I might also be...' The thought caused her to smile even more.

She noticed Rey was turning in her direction, so she quickly looked away.

'Why did I even do that?' She thought to herself, feeling like an idiot.

It wasn't as if Rey would find it weird if she was staying at him and smiling at the same time.

'He doesn't think I ignored his gaze, right?'

Alicia felt like she was overthinking again, so she shook off those thoughts.

"Um... I think I'm pretty much healed already." Clark's voice brought her back to reality.

"A-ah, yes! Yes, sorry!"

"N-no... it's fine. Thanks once again."

"It's no problem."

Alicia watched Clark sheepishly make his exit and go to chill with his closest buddies—Eric and Justin. She also noticed Adonis walking towards the rest of the group with a smile on his face.

Looking around her, she could see everyone being extremely positive despite how tired they were.

She was no exception.

"Well done, you all." Once again, Ralyks appeared before them and clapped.

Alicia moved to Rey's side, and they both acted naturally as they waited to hear what Ralyks had to say next.

"We'll be taking a short break now..."

Once he said this, the faces of everyone expressed nothing short of relief.

They had been forced to tread the world of the Dungeon for about five hours now, and they were pretty exhausted after the Boss Fight.

A few had feared Ralyks would tell them something different, so it was a pleasant surprise to see that he was being considerate.

Perhaps if they knew what his next words would be, they wouldn't have celebrated so early.

"... Before descending to the Third Floor."

The moment Ralyks said this, the closed eyes of many popped open, and jaws dropped in shock.

"Third Floor? After all this?!"

"That's insane. Aren't the Monsters there going to be tougher?"

"How long do we have to rest?"

"I don't really mind if we can chill here for like an hour or so..."

"No... no more..."

Different reactions rushed from the lips of the Otherworlders.

It wasn't like they were unwilling to work, or too lazy to continue.

They were simply too tired.

"You'll be resting for thirty minutes. That's more than enough time to recover your strength."

More groans and grunts reverberated among the Otherworlders, but it ended at that.

No one could really complain.

"What about the Monster Cores? I noticed we haven't been picking them." Adonis asked, his hand slightly raised.

"The Alliance will surely need them."

Many people grunted as soon as Adonis said this, since it meant they would be tasked with even more work.

Unknown to them, though, that shouldn't have been a concern of theirs.

After all, Adonis already knew one of Ralyks' abilities, and how it would be incredibly helpful when it came to this situation.

—Summoning Magic.

"I'll be summoning minions to take care of the harvesting of Monster Cores and any other precious resource here, so don't worry." Ralyks replied with a nod.

"All you need to be concerned about is getting stronger."

Adonis nodded back and thanked Ralyks for his response.

"It's no problem. In any case, your resting period starts now, so make the best use of it."

The agreement was to spend 10 hours a day in the Dungeons. If they were only resting for thirty minutes, that meant they had to work for over nine hours.

Even Training wasn't this brutal.

The Otherworlders could now better understand why the Royal Council had to get rid of their remaining classmates.

There was no way most of them would agree to this kind of arrangement.

As they mulled over this issue and rested, a few watched Ralyks as he took a few steps from them and began to release a strange power.

Before long, all eyes were on him as a sort of dark energy crept from his body.

A swirling mix of black and purple danced around him as a Magic Circle began to form right a few meters from where he stood.

Then, he spoke.

"Come forth..."

As the purplish-black Magic Circle began to cackle with unknown power, something began to emerge.

First was a hand, then it was followed by multiple hands.

Faceless faces rose to the surface, and the forbidden nature of darkness began to manifest before everyone's very eyes.

Death incarnate was manifest.

"... Denizens of the Dead."

From the depths of the dark void rose ten undead entities—  
each with varying forms.

One was very robust, while another was incredibly skinny. Some had rotting flesh on, while others were mere bones.

The only thing these beings shared in common was the fact that they were dead.

Ah... and one more thing.

They were strong!

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## **Chapter 284 First Day Of The Raid [Pt 5]**

Undead.

They were a very specific kind of Monsters that were very rare.

This was mainly because of the special kind of energy they gave off—a perverted kind of Mana that very few knew of.

Miasma.

Miasma was a corrupted version of Mana, and it was its very antithesis.

Like poison, it could prove deadly to pure Mana Users, though the opposite was also true.

Since Miasma was exclusive to Undead beings, they were known to be incredibly dangerous. Hardly anyone had any sort of Skill related to such a forbidden power.

All the Otherworlders had learned of this during class, so they simply couldn't believe what they were seeing with their very eyes.

Sir Ralyks... had just summoned Undead— and it wasn't just one or two, but a whopping ten!

Each of them were different from mere Zombies or Skeletons. They had armor, special clothing, and various kinds of appearances that caused them to look different from each other.

While one seemed to be a Mage, others resembled Knight, Thief, Archer, Lancer, Brawler, etc.

With all these Undead manifesting at once, the Otherworlders felt a certain pressure that caused their bodies to grow cold.

Snow growled as she stood in front of Alicia, glaring very deeply at the creatures that had just appeared from the depths of darkness.

No one could move.

They could only helplessly watch as the grim reapers bowed to their summoner.

"There's no need to be frightened. They're all my slaves." Ralyks told the group with a calm demeanor.

"They won't harm you."

Despite how assuring his words were, the students simply couldn't believe him this time.

The level of intensity his 'slaves' exuded was too much for them.

"Haa... I understand. I'll send them off now, so endure it for a while longer."

The Dark Adventurer turned to his undead servants and gave them their instructions.

"Depart and complete your tasks."

They nodded and bowed in respect once more before swiftly departing from the Boss Room.

None of the Otherworlders could even follow the movements of the Undead Summons as they departed from their sights.

Their speed was unbelievable, and their power incalculable.

Yet, Ralyks summoned them so casually.

Despite no one saying it so explicitly, the same thought went on in the minds of everyone who saw what he did.

"Just how much more power does Ralyks have?!"

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The break was instrumental for the Otherworlders to relax and catch their breath, but before they realized it, it was over.

Once again, they were all thrust into a new battlefield—The Third Floor.

This place was a completely different realm compared to the First and Second.

It was filled with tiny glowing stones that grew on the ceiling and certain corners. This caused a full glow to fill the area, though Ralyks still ensured there was more than enough light for the Otherworlders to see very clearly.

"You know what this means, don't you?" Ralyks told them the moment they stepped into the Floor and observed this phenomenon.

The Third Floor had already been mined of Mana Crystals just a few weeks ago, when the Royal Dungeon was still viable.

The fact that so many—irrespective of how small they were—had already started growing in this area meant one thing.

There was a lot of Mana density in this Floor.

The consequence of that was a simple fact—the Monsters in this Floor were very strong.

"Brace yourselves. This will be your biggest challenge yet."

The Otherworlders gulped, their nervousness palpable as they advanced into the jaws of danger.

If Ralyks said something, they had to believe it.

And this time... he wasn't wrong!

Several stronger Monsters appeared in the Third Floor, and it was a lot more difficult to defeat them than anyone could have imagined.

Some were just as tricky as the Boss Monster of the Second Floor, having abilities that focused more on evasive maneuvers and defense.

Fortunately, the Otherworlders had Eric as well as speed on their side.

The problem was numbers.

At some point, they became outnumbered and outgunned. Ralyks had to intervene and eliminate a swarm of Monsters to protect them.

That was how incredibly dangerous the place was.

Alicia had her hands full with healing her allies, and Adonis had to work twice as hard due to the nature of the enemies he faced.

The problem wasn't individual strength, but rather their numbers and problematic tricks. freeweb  
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Out of everyone present, he managed to kill most of them by a wide margin.

The only one who surpassed Adonis was Ralyks, who took care of the leftovers that were a threat to the overall welfare of everyone.

In estimation; Ralyks took care of forty percent of the enemies, while Adonis took care of about twenty-five percent.

The remaining thirty-five percent was handled by the rest of the Otherworlders.

Unfortunately, Adonis could not keep up this streak for too long.

Once the Boss Fight came, he was too tired to do very much, and the rest of the Otherworlders were also at their limits.

As a result, Ralyks had to subdue the creature and pretty much offer it to the one who had the least Levels in an attempt to be fair.

Rey ended up dealing the final blow to the Boss Monster. This caused an incredible boost in his Level, compensating for his very little contribution to the overall subjugation in the Third Floor.

No one could even complain that he got carried since it was pretty much the same for everyone,

If the Second Floor had made them confident in their abilities, the Third Floor served as a way to humble them.

They were still a long way from being truly strong.

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"We're done for today."

With everyone collapsed on the ground in the Boss Room, he didn't clap or chuckle at them.

Instead, he folded his arms and gave them all a nod of respect.

"You truly did well for your first. Good job."

Those words marked the end of the first day of the Royal Dungeon Raid.

A bittersweet mix of pride and dissatisfaction coiled within the hearts of the Otherworlders.

It was clear from the look in their eyes that they weren't done yet.

All of them were determined to do better on the second day.

All... without exception.

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## **Chapter 285 End Of The First Day's Raid**

'Not bad...' Rey smiled as he looked at the faces of everyone around him.

He was, of course, pretending to be exhausted beyond measure. Still, he was secretly staring at everyone and looking at their Status Windows.

'Most of them have Levels already in their early Twenties.'

A few outliers like Billy and Belle managed to get to the late twenties.

Trisha's Level was around the mid-twenties—same as Eric.

Those were the hardest hitters in the entire raid.

'Clark started out strong, but he ended up defending himself and others too much.'

As a result, he didn't Level Up too much.

'Alicia was too busy healing people, so she didn't have much of a chance to Level Up herself.'

Justin was objectively the one with the lowest Level since he often liked to sneak around and take down his enemies one at a time rather than engage in a more reckless assault.

No one could really blame him since that was his build.

People like Billy and Belle had immense destructive power, so it was only expected that they would Level Up the fastest.

Trisha was the most skilled fighter of the group—aside from Adonis, of course.

As a result, she was more efficient in taking down Monsters despite being weaker and having a limited set of Skills.

'Then there's Eric. That guy's like a natural-born wizard. It's crazy!'

His combination and utilization of various Skills, as well as the Spells associated with them, was insane.

Rey wouldn't be surprised if the guy had a scrapbook that he used to prepare attack patterns and countermeasures against Monsters.

He truly was impressive.

'As for me, I think I'll maintain a range of Level 10-12. That's a safe place to be in.' Rey nodded to himself as he stared at the MVP of the entire Raid.

Adonis Levi.

'He's seriously a beast. I still can't check his Status Window, but I wouldn't be surprised if he cracked Level 40. No... maybe even close to 50.'

Adonis had everything! Every compliment Rey gave his other classmates could also be attributed to him.

No... perhaps even more!

'He's the most skilled combatant I've ever seen. He uses his Skills perfectly, and he's so decisive in his attacks.'

Adonis was unbelievably strong.

'I can't afford to slack off. At this rate, he'll definitely catch up to me.'

Rey felt tempted to solo the Floors in order to prevent that, but he decided against it.

'Even after killing the Boss and my fair share of Monsters, I still haven't Leveled Up once.'

It seemed there was something about the realm behind Level 100 that just made it difficult to proceed any further.

'I have to find an alternative soon. Maybe another Dungeon or something.'

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[STATUS WINDOW]

- Name: Adonis Levi.
- Race: Human (Otherworlder) (Regressor)
- Class: The Hero (S-Tier)
- Level: 60 (56.99% EXP)
- Life Force: 420 (+210) [100]
- Mana Level: 450 (+225) [150]
- Combat Ability: 400 (+200) [200]
- Stat Points: 0
- Skills (Exclusive): [Divine Sword Summon]. [Absolute Defense]. [Grand Light Magic]. [\$\$\$@?3\$!0n]
- Skills (Non-Exclusive): [Combat Application]. [Magic Application]. [Mana Recovery]. [Full Sense]
- Alignment: Lawful Good

[Additional Information]

Your desire to save this world has transcended the very bounds of time itself, and now you are once again on the journey to protect those you love.

Good luck!

[End Of Information]

'Not enough. It's still not enough...' As Adonis stared at his Status Window, he felt a constant surge of hunger within him.

Despite reaching Level 60 on his first day, he still didn't feel accomplished.

It wasn't enough.

'It's a shame that my Stats deteriorated after facing that Dragon. I would have been a lot stronger by now.'

Adonis calculated how many Stat Points he lost in total, and it was over 400.

He had gained 900 Stat Points thanks to Leveling Up thirty times in this Raid, so that compensated for his loss greatly.

Still, he desired a lot more.

Until his Stats were in the thousands, he didn't have enough confidence in his ability to protect his friends.

'I wonder what his Status Window looks like...' Adonis thought to himself as he looked at the Dark Adventurer.

Was it in the thousands? Tens of thousands? Surely it couldn't reach hundreds of thousands.

'I don't know. I don't think I can know...'

Adonis swallowed his current dissatisfaction and looked around him.

He could see their smiles and expressions of relief, and somehow that made him happy.

'It seems everyone has grown considerably. That's good...'

He couldn't face the upcoming threats alone, and it felt reassuring to have his friends grow with him.

'Even Rey is finally catching up. This is good... it's all good!'

Rather than also seeing his own progress and being proud of his achievements, Adonis did not even let such a thought cross his mind.

'I can't afford to grow complacent.' That was his excuse.

'Until I properly defeat a Dragon on my own... I will not be satisfied!'

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Rey and his friends got transported back to the Royal Estate thanks to the portal that Ralyks created.

They all had refreshed expressions on their faces, despite still being sore in certain parts of their bodies.

Alicia would have healed them all if she could, but even she had reached the limits of her abilities and was plenty exhausted.

"You should all have a proper rest. I'll see you again tomorrow." Ralyks told them as soon as they appeared within the Estate.

Before they could say anything else, he completely vanished from their sights.

"He didn't even wait to hear my 'Thank you'."

"Haha! That's just the kind of guy he is..."

"I'm actually very excited for tomorrow!"

"Me too!"

The Otherworlders retired to their quarters and straight for their rooms as soon as they arrived in the Royal Estate.

Of course, they discussed before getting there, but everyone instantly clocked in the moment they reached the comfort of their home.

Alicia was no exception, as she told Rey she was drowsy and would talk to him later before venturing to her room.

Rey told her the same and went to his inner sanctum as well.

The moment he entered and closed the door, however, he completely put off the act and sat on his bed, a completely different demeanor now active.

"I suppose it's time for a review..." Rey stared right ahead at a swirling darkness that formed a small distance from him.

"... Ater."

### **Chapter 286 Ater's Proposal**

Emerging from the darkness was a man in a black hooded cloak, shrouded in a mostly blackened attire.

He had a dark mask on, and he appeared just like the famed Dark Adventurer.

No... he really was him!

The one who stood before Rey was none other than Ralyks.

Then, he knelt before the seated boy.

"Master..."

As those words echoed in the room, Rey shrugged slightly as a small smile formed on his face.

"You should transform back to your normal form." He said.

"You mean as a ca—?"

"No! You know fully well what I mean." Rey swiftly interjected.

This completely broke his cool vibes.

"Understood, master."

Instantly, a swirling surge of energy circled around the Ralyks that knelt before Rey, and in no time at all, it had become a handsome young man with red hair and ebony skin.

His crimson eyes shone brightly in the room, and his lips curled up to form a devilish grin.

"That's more like it." Rey nodded, staring at his Familiar—Ater.

"You may rise."

Ater rose to his feet, his tall figure looming over Rey who sat comfortably on his bed.

"You can sit down if you like. We have quite a bit to discuss, after all."

Upon hearing that, Ater began to float in midair and crossed both legs together as he sat on nothing but empty space.

Rey noticed this, and a spark of curiosity appeared in his eyes.

"How are you able to do that? Float, I mean."

Ater didn't have any Skill related to flying, yet he had displayed the ability to fly a few times—both as Ralyks and in his normal form.

How was that possible? Some kind of Magic Spell he had?

"Ahh... I think it just comes naturally to me. Sort of like how walking is to humans—maybe even running or crawling."

Once he heard this, Rey's eyes widened considerably.

'Oho! So that's how it is.'

Just the same way humans didn't have a Skill for walking or running, he didn't need a Skill for flying.

'It must come naturally to his race.'

"Alright then. Back to important matters. How was your first day as Ralyks?" He asked, folding his arms as he rested on the wall behind him.

Rey had previously planned on using his [Replicate] Skill to become both Rey as Ralyks, but Ater had suggested himself acting as Ralyks.

There were several advantages to this, so Rey decided to leave things up to him.

Thankfully, Ater was good at acting, so he played his part well.

'There were some parts where he acted a bit too cold, but I can see my Ralyks persona acting that way, so it's forgivable.'

In the end, it didn't matter who was behind the mask, as long as they got the job done.

'And I think he did considerably well.'

"It was puzzling for the most part. Master, I do not understand why you waste your time with those inferior entities." The moment Rey heard this, he nearly coughed out loud.

'The hell...?!'

Ater had just spoken his mind, and Rey could definitely feel he was being honest, which was why his comment was even more effective on him.

"W-what do you mean?" He asked, clearing his throat as he spoke.

"Well, the resources you are spoonfeeding them are indeed making them stronger, but I can not comprehend why you would choose to aid them so much."

The ebony man stared honestly at his master, and his gleaming red eyes showed no regard for any of the Otherworlders at all.

"Other than Adonis, none of them possess any real value. Perhaps Adonis would be useful as one of Master's servants, but I see no reason for your charades around him... or the rest of them."

Ater remained calm, his demeanor a mostly stoic one, but his eyes showed some kind of genuine confusion.

... As if he couldn't comprehend his Master's action.

"Could there perhaps be some deeper reason to this that I can not figure out?" His face seemed to say.

Rey didn't know what to tell his Familiar.

He was frozen in his seated position, wondering how to justify his actions to someone who was driven by nothing but cold-

hearted utility.

"You really think they have no value?"

"Perhaps they can be used as fodders in war, but even then, you already possess powerful abilities that allow you to make fodders of your own without relying on any of them." Ater responded.

"I understand there is a war, and I understand that every leader requires followers, but I find it difficult to believe that these ones will be of much use in the end."

Rey shook his head slightly as he stared at Ater.

'He's only saying this because he's pretty much stronger than all of them. Other than Adonis, I don't see anyone getting stronger than him—especially if he begins to Level Up.'

However, there couldn't be a lot of Adonises, and Ater came in short supply.

In the end, rather than merely seeking out the best of the goods, it was also prudent to grow the lesser valued products and make them worth as much as possible.

In essence, the weaker Otherworlders had the potential to grow stronger by training them and helping them grow.

'That is my intention. I want to make them strong enough to actually stand against the Dragons.

And it wasn't impossible!

'Just by looking at their growth today, and how their Stats have advanced so far, I honestly think it's only a matter of time that they reach Level 100.'

It was possible that they would arrive at that Level once the entire Dungeon Raid was concluded.

Rey couldn't even imagine what Level Adonis would reach once the entire thing was over.

'They're currently being polished. Given enough time, I'm sure Ater will see their value.'

Besides...

"Utility isn't the only reason I make such decisions." Rey smiled in response to Ater's questions.

Perhaps he was just being sentimental, but he genuinely wanted to see those eight grow strong too.

'In this world, it's better to be strong rather than weak. They all stayed because they wanted to protect this world and stop the Dragons. The least I can do for them is give them the opportunity to become strong.'

One could perhaps describe it as an act of benevolence. Others could call it selfless, or even patronizing.

But for Rey, none of those mattered much.

'Most of what we do as humans isn't fully logical.' He sighed and rubbed his head.

Even now, he couldn't help but wonder if Ater was right—and if there weren't any better ways to go about what he wanted.

However, since his current arrangement was working well, there was no need to change anything.

"I guess there are reasons that you just can't recognize." Rey finally said to Ater, who had been waiting for an answer.

The moment he heard this, his eyes widened in surprise.

He instantly bowed his head in respect.

"I understand, Master!"

Whatever Rey meant by those words could have been misinterpreted by Ater, but the boy didn't notice any of that at all.

He was just happy that Ater wasn't asking him the question any longer.

"Now then... on to the real issues."

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## **Chapter 287 Conspiracy Discourse**

"So, how are the 'preparations' going?"

As Rey asked this question, Ater's lips broadened and a somewhat sadistic smile formed all over his face.

"They're going well. They should be ready by tomorrow. We can utilize them anytime after that."

"I was thinking of waiting for two or three more days before using them. It's not time yet." Rey responded, rubbing his chin.

"I understand. The beneficiaries aren't ripe yet, am I correct? You desire for them to acclimate a little more."

"Yes. You saw how they were today. They have a long way to go before the plan can be viable."

Ater nodded his head at his Master's wise words.

"You are correct."

While he didn't completely understand the rationale behind his Master's actions, Ater could see the reason behind this plan in particular.

It pleased him that his Master was the one behind it as well.

"I'm quite optimistic about it." Rey added, and Ater couldn't help but give a nod in approval.

They were both on the same page on that matter.

"This is just a tangent, but I guess being in the thick of it with them in today's Raid made me notice a few things about my classmates that I didn't know before." Rey chuckled a little.

He was able to see them very differently since he was paying very rapt attention to them.

It was a somewhat refreshing experience.

"If you so desire, we can create a scenario that will help you explore more of that tomorrow." Ater voiced his opinion, eager to please his master.

Rey narrowed his eyes as he heard what Ater said.

"I promise, it's nothing harmful. In fact, it could end up benefiting them."

"Hmm..." Rey clearly senses that Ater had no malevolent intent with his suggestion, so he knew he could trust him.

"Fine." He sighed. "But you'll have to tell me the details."

"Understood, Master."

They had gone on yet another tangent, and the most important matters were yet to be addressed.

Rey felt like slapping his hand on his head, but he controlled himself while being watched by his loyal Familiar.

He had to keep up some measure of appearances.

"I noticed you didn't Level Up despite killing a fair share of Monsters on the Third Floor..."

Ater raised his earlier bowed head the moment he heard the question.

He gave a slight sigh and shrugged.

"None of those fodder can grant me any kind of meaningful EXP talkless of helping me Level Up."

The Absolute creature sounded disappointed—perhaps a little frustrated—as he voiced the conundrum to his Master.

'I can totally relate!' Rey wanted to cry out, but he restrained himself.

It seemed like they both suffered from the same problem.

They were too strong.

"We both need to find stronger prey, it seems." Rey sadly smiled at his Familiar.

He knew that Ater had intentionally given him the Boss of the Third Floor, perhaps as a means to get the lion's share of EXP, but it was honestly no good.

He barely got any EXP from it.

'That Boss Monster would have been a lot more beneficial to someone else...'

In the end, it was a waste on him.

'I'm honestly concerned about how things will play out in the future. I don't want to end up stuck at this Level.'

Rey had heard there were other Dungeons in a bunch of other regions, so he began to wonder if he should go there after he was done with his current assignment.

'Yeah. I think that's what I'll do.'

Once Rey settled on his thought, he went on to the next topic—perhaps the most important one yet—with Ater.

"The KariBlanc Group is supposed to set out tonight—at least, that is how it's supposed to be if they're going to get to the Merchant City on time." Rey smiled.

Of course, he wasn't planning on letting them leave so early. He was simply going to teleport them once the time came.

However, they had to put up appearances.

'There's no doubt that there are spies hidden all around who are waiting to see Rebal and Kara leave the Capital.'

They had to fool them by ensuring the two—and a believable number of people serving as their entourage—left before their eyes.

"You can leave everything to me, Master." Ater bowed his head and gave a confident smile.

"Oh, really?"

"Yes. While I find it doubtful that they would be attacked if they were to journey to the Merchant City, with or without your help, I understand your concerns."

Indeed... Ater didn't believe Scylla and her New Order would ambush Rebal or try to slow him down.

If that was the case, then this entire procedure was unnecessary.

However, Rey had to disagree.

'Well, it's still better to be safe rather than sorry.'

As a result, the conclusion was to keep Rebal and those who would be going with him to the Dark Gathering in some safe and hidden place while only making it seem like they left the Capital.

"Alright. I'll leave it up to you." Rey nodded at Ater.

He didn't doubt his Familiar's capabilities in that respect, so he left him to it.

"Thank you, Master."

"Ah! I nearly forgot, but remember the rule." Rey raised a finger, and the Familiar nodded almost instantly.

"No unnecessary killing or violence. I understand."

They had to remain as lowkey as possible—at least, until the promised day.

'If I don't give him something specific like that, he might go about the plan in some twisted way.'

Rey couldn't have that.

"Well, I suppose that's pretty much it for now."

"Yes, Master."

"Also, were you able to get more information about Conrad's moves?"

"Yes. The Royal Council is currently gathering their forces in the Merchant City while also strengthening their forces in the Capital and preparing for a full-blown Raid."

As Ralyks, he had agreed to transport the Capital's forces within the Merchant City once the time came, but Rey was pleasantly surprised that they already had troops being gathered there.

"Were you able to find the spies among the forces who leaked information of the Royal Council's plans to Scylla?"

"Yes, Master. They'll be dealt with once the plan is completely in motion and they're not needed any longer."

Rey smiled as he listened to all of this.

'Everything is going very smoothly.' As his smile broadened, his eyes brimmed with excitement.

"That's good."

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## **Chapter 288 Under The Canopy Of Night**

Night soon arrived, and darkness crept into the world.

The starless sky had only the dull glow of the half moon shining upon the areas engulfed in the thickness of the dark.

On this very night, a certain carriage departed from the Blanc Mansion.

It was prestigious, well-made. Its surface Barry reflected any light, and it was obviously designed for stealth.

As an Enchanted Carriage, it made no sound as it passed through the hidden paths that led out of the Capital.

As one would expect from a carriage of this pristine nature, it wasn't alone.

An entourage of six powerful men—led by a pink-haired woman—surrounded the wheeled mechanism.

They were all on mounts, and they had solemn expressions on their faces as they advanced to whatever destination they had in mind.

Among the entourage, there was a certain hooded man who rode right behind the others. If Yuri could be labeled as the leader at the forefront, then this enigma was the one who took the rear end.

Their formation ensured that the carriage would be protected from all sides—even the flanks.

A pretty standard formation for a considerably long journey.

"So they finally took off..."

A silent voice, unable to be heard by anyone around, softly proceeded from the lips of a man who watched all of this.

He was the leader of the Scylla's Personal Recon Team—Jawl.

His body was completely shrouded in darkness as he narrowed his eyes to activate his Skill.

'[Transparency]!'

With it, he could see through solid objects. Hence, despite the carriage having tinted windows, that didn't stop him from seeing what was going on inside.

As expected, Jawl's Skill worked!

He saw the interior of the carriage, and it was as exquisite as anyone would imagine.

Seated within it were Rebal Blanc, Kara Verte, and a mysterious man in a mask.

Rebal and Kara were seated beside each other, while the masked man was opposite them.

Once Jawl confirmed their positions, as well as all the other information he required from the carriage and its entourage, he deactivated his Skill.

'I better call Lady Scylla.' His thoughts trailed as his eyes darted up and about.

His subordinates were spread up and about the path that surrounded the carriage. As professionals, they had formations of their own.

It didn't matter what kind of formation the target had. They could easily break through it.

'We just need her go-ahead.'

Jawl knew that his second Skill—[Dark Silence]—was still activated, so he was confident that his next action wouldn't compromise his mission.

He brought out his Enchanted Communication Device and activated it by pouring his Mana into it.

The thing was shaped like an orb, and it was considerably heavy thanks to how many high-quality Mana Crystals were needed to make it.

Since it was used for communicating long distances, the Mana necessary was incredible.

After this single call, Jawl knew he would need to recharge the Item.

~ZTTTZ!~

Before long, the Communication Item connected to the other end.

~What's the situation?~

Jawl recognized the voice to belong to his master—Lady Scylla herself—and he subconsciously bowed his head the moment he heard her voice.

"All the necessary parties are present. Rebal Blanc and Kara Verte are within the carriage. Leading their entourage is their strongest warrior, Yuri, and I can recognize the other entourages save a few new faces."

He went ahead and succinctly poured out all the intel he had uncovered.

It was brief, straight to the point, and accurate.

As a professional who had served Scylla for nearly a decade, he knew her preferences and how to do his job to her utmost satisfaction.

The reason he didn't even address her as 'Master' when on the call was due to her distaste for time-wasting formalities.

Jawl desired to please her to his utmost, so he did as he was told and reported exactly what his Master desired to know.

~Good job.~

The moment he heard this, Jawl felt like he had been rewarded for all the scrutiny he had put into his work.

Scylla's words of admonishment, spoken by her soft voice, put a smile on his face.

He wanted to do anything for her.

"My men are on standby. Should we attack passively and delay their arrival to the Dark Gathering, or engage in active assault to eliminate them?"

For a few seconds, there was silence on the other end.

Then—

~You said there are a few faces you do not recognize. Are there any of them dressed peculiarly? Perhaps in a way that resembles the title 'Reaper'...?~

Upon hearing this, Jawl searched through his incredibly photographic memory and came up with two results.

"I saw two men dressed entirely in black, hiding their faces. One was at the rear end of the formation, while the other was within the carriage."

~Two? I thought there would be three. Hmm...~

Jawl didn't know anything about this 'Reaper' figure, and frankly... he didn't care.

Sure, the name sounded scary, but that wasn't going to deter him from fulfilling his duties and completing his mission.

Reaper or not—they would all perish if that was the wish of his Master.

~Don't engage the enemy. You've confirmed what you need to, so let them be and begin your second assignment.~

"Understood." Jawl was curious about his Master's decision, but he was in no position to question it.

He didn't need to know.

He just had to act—that was his purpose.

~You desire to know why I ordered against attacking, right?~

Upon hearing those words, Jawl shuddered a little.

He wasn't surprised that his Master had figured out his thoughts, but it still caught him off-guard.

"Yes." He responded.

There was no way Jawl could lie to Scylla.

A slight chuckle echoed from the Communication Device, and Jawl swallowed hard as he listened to the melodious sound.

He felt something tingle between his legs, but he ignored it and focused solely on his Master's angelic voice.

It was enough to save a wretched man like himself.

~It's simple, really. I do not wish for you and your men to die futile deaths.~

The moment Jawl heard this, his heart nearly stopped. He couldn't believe the generosity and mercy of his Master.

"..."

He was rendered speechless by her consideration.

~Then, inform me of any other situation that arises. Bye.~

Once she finished speaking, Scylla cut off communication from her end, leaving radio silence on his device.

It automatically deactivated on its own, and Jawl slowly placed the Item in his pocket.

He couldn't say a word even a minute after the call. His mind was still recoiling from the kind words he heard from Scylla.

'She doesn't want me to die a futile death...'

Jawl seemed to have forgotten that her words weren't directed only at him, but at all of his men.

Still, his broken mind interpreted it the way he wanted.

~FWUSH!~

"Leader! We have been on standby for some time now. What is the order?" One of Jawl's subordinates appeared, seemingly out of thin air, his head bowed.

The subordinate's eyes nearly popped out of its sockets once he saw the massive pillar that rose from his leader's pants.

It was not human-like.

"Call all the men back." Jawl spoke, completely neglecting—or maybe just ignoring—his incredible boner.

"We're retreating."

\*

## **Chapter 289 The One Who Devours**

"Two instead of three, huh? Interesting..."

A voice echoed in an immensely pristine room. It belonged to a woman who sat behind an incredibly large dining table.

Her chair was soft and of the utmost quality, and the table was finely made as well.

The entire room was painted mainly white, with layers of black and red—a bit of gold too.

It had an aesthetic of wealth and power... but also forbidden danger.

The woman who sat all alone in the room—save for the masked guard who stood in a corner—was incredibly beautiful.

She had the face of an Angel, and her body was gorgeous beyond description. With clear skin and perfect proportions, she would easily pass as any man's dream lady.

She was currently confronted with a feast on her dining table.

It was mostly a meal that consisted of meat, with deep red sauce, and several garnishing by the side.

Then, a bottle of exquisite wine stood beside the meal, while she downed a glass which was gracefully held in her grasp.

Her lips formed a smile as she looked at the meal before her and mulled over the news she had just listened to.

All of it was making her hungry.

'Could I have been wrong in my assessment? Maybe two would have been enough...'

She took her fork and knife, perfectly slicing the juicy steak that was on a plate in front of her.

"Mmm..." Closing her eyes and savoring the flavor, her smile grew wider.

"Perfect."

The tender meat seemed to melt into her mouth, and the juices were fully absorbed without any discomfort of any kind.

'I can't ever come back from this.' She licked her lips as she looked at the steak, and then carried her gaze to the other meaty meals before her.

No other kind of food could satisfy her like this.

She took another bite and swallowed, downing the wine and leaking out a satisfied exhalation.

Once this process was over, she dropped her empty glass and decided it was time to think more deeply about everything thus far.

'If I was wrong, it means that somehow, one of those two was fast enough to get to two locations. So one of them guarded the KariBlanc goods and defeated Ogun, while the other took care of Anukus and Fernand. I see...'

That scenario was a little difficult to believe, but it wasn't completely implausible.

'The bottom line is, they're both pretty strong.'

At this point, the lady's smile grew broader—nearly losing her allure as an Angel.

If only she was one...

No, this was Lady Scylla, the furthest thing from a being of purity.

'I was ready to send those men to their deaths in order to find out just how strong this 'Reaper' is, but...' Scylla had changed her mind at the last minute.

After some careful thoughts, she realized how wasteful the whole thing would be.

'What's the point of testing the waters with weaklings like them when I know the Reaper is strong enough to kill a member of the Deadly Three?'

Compared to those monsters in the Mercenary Gang, her Recon Forces were mere toddlers.

It would be a pointless venture to try to see the depths of the Reaper's strength with weaklings like them.

As a result, they were spared.

'They'll serve a better purpose staking out the KariBlanc Group's assets and the Blanc Mansion.'

Once the time for action arrived, their mission would be complete and she would have to think of some other thing to use them for.

'It's only in a few days. I can't wait...'

Regardless of how strong the Blanc and Verte House had become thanks to the aid of this mysterious ally of theirs, the results were inevitable.

She had set up the perfect trap for them, and her plans would reign supreme.

'Either way... I'm going to win!'

Scylla stabbed the meat on her plate and took another bite of the juicy, tender meat.

Her intentions were to devour the entire United Human Alliance the same way she consumed the delicious meat that now melted in her mouth.

No leftovers whatsoever.

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[The Next Day]

~BOOOOOM!~

The Fourth Floor had its own sets of troubles as the Otherworlders had to set up a formation in order to stand a chance against the centipede-like monsters.

These creatures were each at least ten meters tall, with incredibly thick bodies and powerful exoskeletons.

They were also poisonous, and their incredibly sharp reflexes made them a chore to deal with.

The biggest issue was, of course, their numbers.

They were incredibly plentiful, and thanks to the several tunnel-

like holes they had burrowed all around the Fourth Floor, they could escape at any time.

Thankfully, the team had Adonis' defensive barrier and Alicia's Healing Magic.

If not for those two forms of protection, they would have been rendered invalid a short while in.

The current plan was simple: restrain the Monsters and then the heavy hitters would strike with everything they had to destroy them.

Of course, this meant that the heavy-hitters would get all the EXP, but this was the only viable plan they could come up with among themselves.

Despite Ralyks being present, he already made it very clear that he wouldn't help unless their lives were in danger.

And so, the formation was initiated.

One of the most important components of the restraining procedure was Justin—due to his ability to get close to the centipedes and utilize [Sleep] and the binding Skill [Marionette].

As a result of his particularly useful skill-sets, he was sent to deal with the most problematic of the bunch.

Utilizing [Stealth], he easily made it behind the wave of centipedes and initiated his two-part maneuver.

First was [Sleep], which instantly rendered the Centipedes sluggish as a result of the drowsiness that it caused.

Before they could recover, he used his [Marionette] Skill to create several threads to bind them all of them in something like an inescapable net of sorts.

Thanks to their lack of speed, he was able to pull this off and even reinforce the strings with a wide smile on his face.

Once he was done, the heavy hitters were ready to commence their assault.

"On my mark!" Adonis' voice echoed in the vast expanse.

They only had one shot at this.

\*

## **Chapter 290 A Costly Mistake**

All the assaulters were ready to begin their counterattack.

With the window that Justin opened for them, and the other minor traps and debuffs like Eric's [Blindness], they were set to go.

Then—

"KRIIIIIIIKKKKK!!!"

—The most unexpected occurred.

~SWIIISHHH!~

One of the centipedes wiggled its way through the strings and rushed towards Justin in a bid to devour him.

Perhaps even crush him.

"Justin, no!" Swiftly leaving his own position in the formation, Clark rushed towards his friend.

Shockwaves radiated as a result of his impulsive action, causing others to shift ever so slightly from their formation.

Justin, who was too distracted in his celebration, did not notice anything off until Clark called out his name.

Once he opened his eyes wide, he noticed the centipede which lunged at him with dangerous precision.

It's disgustingly black body was about to crash on him when Clark charged towards it and knocked it away.

~BOOOOOM!~

The knockback effect caused the centipede to wriggle and try to gain its footing.

Clark rushed towards it before it could recover and sent it a flurry of punches while burning it with his Heat Vision.

"JUST! STAY! DOWN!" He screamed, finally dispatching the Centipede with a powerful strike involving a clasped fist descending on the wounded Centipede's head.

Yes, he was able to defeat that single Centipede.

However, thanks to his disturbance, the restrained Centipedes not only woke from their slumbering states, but they grew erratic and wriggled out of their restraints as well.

With Justin too startled to tighten the hood of his strings, they successfully escaped their constraints and charged at Clark all at once.

"Clark!"

"Look out!"

Clark's classmates rushed through the wall of massive insects, but even they could not make it in time.

It would seem as though all hope was left, when—

"Dissipate."

—All of the Centipedes suddenly turned into dust.

Their sandy remains fell to the ground, instantly eliminating the danger that would have ended the life of one Otherworlder.

Perhaps even two, if Justin was counted.

The only reason they were able to survive was due to the masked man who appeared before the kneeling Clark and glared at him with his crimson eyes.

Despite the threat being extinguished, a powerful pressure still filled the room.

It screamed of more danger than the swarm of Centipedes could ever generate.

And all of it stemmed from Ralyks.

"Why did you break formation?" He asked, glaring at Clark.

His tone was calm, but the undertone clearly displayed his dissatisfaction with the boy's action.

He waited patiently for Clark's reason.

"Justin was in danger. I couldn't just watch while he—!"

"I would have saved him. I'm here, remember?"

Ralyks had given his word that none of the Otherworlders would die as long as he was around.

So far, he had managed to keep his word true.

The mere fact that he easily destroyed all the Monsters that were giving them so much trouble meant they really weren't anything to him in the slightest.

Surely, he would have helped Justin even without Clark's impulsive action.

Clark should have recognized that too.

But—

"I-I'm sorry, but... I just can't sit by and watch someone get hurt right in front of me. Not... not anymore..."

Clark's face fell, becoming slightly downcast.

Ralyks still looked at him with his cold, crimson eyes. No mercy or compassion could be found in his gaze, and this continued for a few moments.

"Sir Ralyks, maybe—"

Ralyks instantly held up his finger the moment Adonis spoke up, instantly shutting up the Hero.

No one dared say anything afterwards. They only gulped and watched in anxiety as Ralyks looked down on the boy.

"By doing so, you would have put the rest in greater danger. Is that truly a better alternative?"

Clark couldn't answer the question. He just looked away and stared at the ground.

"What would you have had me do? Just watch my friend die...?" He murmured.

Ralyks would have saved Justin for sure, but at that moment, nothing of the sort registered in Clark's mind.

He simply wanted to save his friend.

"The desire to protect is indeed an important aspect in being a hero."

As soon as Ralyks admitted this, Clark beamed and looked at the Dark Adventurer with bright eyes.

"Exactly! I just—!"

"BUT, there are no heroes in a Dungeon. There is only the predator and the prey. The hunter and the hunted. The Adventurer... and the Monster."

Ralyks narrowed his eyes as he stared at Clark's trembling facade.

"You will do well to remember this, boy. In here, your desire to destroy must exceed the will to protect." fre ewebn ovel

Destroying the Monsters, eliminating the enemies, and growing stronger while doing so... that was what mattered most in the Dungeon.

The primary reason one had to protect their teammate in a Dungeon wasn't due to some altruistic reasons or selfless action, but simply because the chances of survival would reduce if said teammate died.

You protect your ally in a Dungeon because your survival hinges on it.

Because you can kill more Monsters by working together.

"It's a cold and dark world down here, kid. You'll do well to remember that."

"I think that's enough." Justin stepped forward, his voice quivering as he did so.

He looked nervous as he stood up to Ralyks, but his gaze went to Clark, who was already crying.

"I think he gets it already."

Sobs escaped the macho Clark's lips, and tears flowed down his eyes.

It seemed Ralyks' words had completely broken him.

"Very well. We'll be taking a small break here, so relax a little while I do some scouting."

Ralyks stared at Justin for a few seconds, causing the boy to tremble a little.

"I won't fault you for your carelessness. Mistakes happen in the Dungeon, especially with newbies like yourselves."

Ralyks looked at everyone else and addressed them all.

"That is why I am here. To prevent you from dying whenever you make a mistake."

Then, he looked at Clark for the last time.

"So you do your job... and let me do mine."