

Edward and Hughes were walking in the hot desert for days; while the latter was on the verge of collapse, the former was perfectly fine; he seemed to be enjoying the process.

Edward turned his head to look at the dying Hughes before handing him a bottle: "Drink this."

"Is this water?" said Hughes as he took a mouthful without waiting for him to answer. Immediately after, he stopped as if in a trance, then he said: "Oh my god, I just tasted color."

"Delicious, isn't it? Which color was your favorite?"

"Green, no, blue. Maybe I prefer green more; let's just say both of them."

"Personally, I found green a little too bitter, but blue is quite delicious. My favorite is red," replied Edward. However, Hughes suddenly took out a picture from his pocket and said: "I bet my lovely wife and daughter would love the same color as me. Do you want to see how lovely they are?"

"You've already shown it to me 5 times in the last 3 hours."

"So what? I can tell that you're secretly jealous. It's not my fault that you do not have a lovely daughter and wife."

Edward's lisp twitched a few times, then he said: "The only reason that I do not have a daughter more lovely than you is that I am currently focusing on my career right now."

"All I'm hearing are excuses."

That's it. Edward had enough of this guy's bragging. He took a picture out of nowhere and showed it to him. "Look, while you only have one lovely wife, I have 5 lovely and beautiful wives."

Hughes' mouth was slightly opened as he saw the picture of Edward surrounded by five beautiful women that looked at him dotingly. He then said with gritted teeth: "Hmmp, you're just unfaithful."

"Oh, is that jealousy I smell," said Edward with a sneer. "What a disgusting smell."

Hughes ignored him and refused to talk to him anymore, nor show any picture of his family. After all, what man did not secretly want to have many wives--even if they knew that they could not handle it.

After seeing Hughes deflated, Edward's mood became much better, so they continued their voyage. As for the former Lieutenant Colonel, he finally noticed that after drinking that potion, he was no longer fatigued or dehydrated during the journey. Besides needing to eat food, he was in perfect shape.

However, since he decided to ignore that guy that made him mad, he decided not to ask. At least, not now.

After a few days of traveling, the two reached a ruin; to be precise, a ruined city. Scattered houses could be seen, along with a few broken monuments. The majority of them seemed to have been eroded by the sand in the desert.

"Where are we?" asked Hughes.

"Xerxes."

"You mean the ancient country that suddenly disappeared overnight?"

"The one and only."

"Interesting. So, why are we here?"

"To learn, of course," replied Edward. "However, before that, we need to deal with a little trouble. He looked in one direction where a building was still intact."

"Come out, I know that you're here."

A group of people with brown skin and red eyes revealed themselves after his shout.

"Ishvalans?" said Hughes with a slight surprise.

"Amestrian, leave this place; you are not welcome here," said one of the Ishvalan. Hughes lowered his head after hearing this. As a soldier who participated in the genocide of the Ishvalans people, he did not know how many of their kinds that he killed with his hands.

So, he understood their anger and hatred.

Edward looked at the ground and said: "First of all, I'm from Creta, so don't lump me with the atrocities that Amestris has committed."

He was committed to maintaining his persona.

"Second of all, there is going to be a big change going on in this destroyed city; if you can take advantage of the situation, maybe your kind will have the opportunity to rise again."

The Ishvalan that spoke still looked at Edwards with hatred in his eyes, however, an older one placed his hand on the young lad's shoulder, then asked Edward:

"Sir, could you elaborate on what you just said?"

"Follow me if you want to know more." After that, he ignored the group and walked away. Hughes immediately ran after him. As for the old Ishvalan, he hesitated for a moment before deciding to follow.

After walking a few meters away, Edward stopped, then his Gate suddenly appeared in front of him. He waved his hand and his long wand appeared on his hand. He pointed the tip of the wand that had a Philosopher's Stone towards the Gate and said: "Tokni Akfe."

Immediately, the dragon chant spell activated and a grey light flew the wand before hitting the Gate. A powerful temporal force came out from the gate and expanded like a dome; the force surrounded a large portion of the desert.

Then, a scene that shocked both Hughes and the Ishvalans occurred; the empty desert seemed to have rewind in time: buildings started to appear, followed by people.

"The power of blasphemy," muttered one of the Ishvalan, then he started praying to Ishvala, the Gods that their people worshipped.

"Oh my god! Are those the people of Xerxes?" asked Hughes. "Have you traveled back in time to 400 years ago?"

"Of course, not," replied Edward. "This is just a Time Record."

However, after seeing the confused look on Hughes and the other people, he further explained: "Every event that has occurred in history has left its trace or record. What I did was capture that record from the river of time."

Then, Edward walked to one of the people in the street; oddly though, he just walked through him.

"As you can see, none of these people are real; they are just remnants, echoes of the past."

This was a spell that Edward developed to learn about the events of the past without traveling there and risking messing things up. Unfortunately, there is currently still a limit to how far he can go back, otherwise, he would have long learned about the Catastrophe that destroyed the Lemurian Civilization 12,000 years ago.

Additionally, this spell can also be used by the Empire when solving crimes. However, only when the crime reaches a certain level of influence or danger will this spell be used.

Even then, a special division called the Time Auror will be dispatched to overview the process. Edward established the Time Auror to prevent any wizards or foreign civilizations from using time magic or technology to kill him or destroy the Empire.

Although he properly controlled all the Time-Turners, he did not know whether some escape the net, or if someone could recreate them.

So, to be safe, he established the Time Auror: a police force in charge of protecting the Empire's timeline.

Meanwhile, Hughes seemed to have understood his words, but not really. So, he moved on and asked: "So, what's the point of doing this?"

"Like I said before, to learn. Although we cannot interact with these people, we can learn their knowledge. For example, if you listen to a lecture about Alchemy, you can still retain that knowledge. The people of Xerxes were very advanced for their time."

Edward then looked at the Ishvalans: "You can learn many trades from this place, like plantation, masonry, irrigation, and a bunch of knowledge that could help your people survive in the desert, and even one day, rebuild some sort of civilization."

After saying that, Edward waved his hand and a map appeared in front of Hughes and the older Ishvalan. The map displayed different areas where they could learn different trades.

Then, he headed straight for the nearest Alchemist. As for Hughes, he pondered for a moment before deciding to learn about governing, philosophy, and the military.

Edward proceeded to walk to every Alchemist of Xerxes, and using this magic, he experienced their entire lives from birth to death; he read every book they read, witnessed all their experiments, and accessed all their results.

Finally, he met the Alchemist that made the homunculi currently known as Father. However, back then, he was only called the Dwarf in the Flask.

As Edward watched how the dwarf was created, he muttered: "So, that's the reason that he has so much advanced Alchemy knowledge: a part of him was from the Eye of God."

'Now, the question is whether this Eye of God is an entirely different entity, or is it just another part of Truth?' thought Edward. However, he quickly shook his head to remove this thought from his mind: he was strong enough to find the answer to this question.

And even if he wanted to, he must wait until he returns home where Truth's power might be limited.

So, he started to wonder whether to use this method to connect Morgana to the Eye of God so that she can gain unknown knowledge about Alchemy--just like the dwarf.