

D. Extraction 251

Chapter 251 Report

'Should I volunteer instead?' Lisa Grayback thought momentarily as soon as she realized that Vale was the center of attention once again.

She looked at Chad and Aubrey, and they seemed to have the same idea.

They don't want to put pressure on Vale as they planned to get tested first. Although they were also interested to know about Vale's improvement, they were worried that Vale would become a laughingstock in the whole class.

They can already see Jody writing a good headline for the Newspaper Club.

However, as she thought of raising her hand, Vale already agreed!

He didn't seem to mind their classmates' eagerness to put him in a difficult situation.

As Vale stood up, Lisa noticed something.

'Ah?'

She was startled as she was sure she saw a hint of a confident smile on Vale's face!

An idea suddenly came to her mind!

'Did he improve his Life Strand or Power Strand in exchange for a stagnant Spirit Strand?! Isn't that too stupid? What is he thinking?!'

She wanted to scold Vale for doing that since his future as a Spellcaster might be compromised because of this reckless decision.

Nevertheless, she couldn't say a word since it was inappropriate for a commoner like her to comment about such methods.

After all, this could be a tradition passed down to each member of the Chambers Family.

"Good! Vale Chambers can go first. We will only test the Power Strand this time. We'll do the assessment one at a time. Ahem... This green Crystal has a limit of 20 strands, so it's more than enough, and you can use it even until you graduate. I hope to see at least 3 or 4 Power Strands in each Crystal so good luck." Professor Shirley said as she invited Vale to come forward.

"What?! Four strands? Professor, you must be joking. It is too unfair for us." Emily immediately said as she knew that her Power Strand was nothing impressive.

"Professor, I heard that with our current age, our Life Strand should be around 3 or 4 Strands, but for the Power Strand, I think that a single strand is actually the average."

"T-that's right... Professor, you might've confused it for a moment. Please don't expect 4 Power Strands from us... We're Spellcasters."

Professor Shirley shook her head after hearing this. She then held the red Crystal tightly and spoke earnestly.

"That's right... That must be the average. However, we aren't looking for average students to participate in the Twelve Academies Competition. If you want a better chance, you must have a 3 or 4 Power Strand right now and increase it to even 6 or 7 before the Competition."

The students immediately quiet down after recalling the purpose of this assessment.

Indeed, this assessment wasn't just to boast about their Spell Mastery and Spirit Strands achievement! They have to be excellent students suited to be the representative of the whole Academy.

They could only watch Vale as he walked up to the front of the classroom with a mysterious smile on his face.

'The Power Converging Crystal only has 20 Strand Limit? This isn't even that exciting.' Vale thought as he knew this was his chance to prove himself, to show everyone what he was capable of.

Although he didn't really like to boast his current strength because he was too far ahead, he felt that this might actually be his chance to receive more benefits in the Academy!

He wanted to graduate as quickly as possible and get a chance to take back his shadow... He knows that he can't do it if he continues laying low.

Perhaps, showing his real power might do the trick.

He reached out and gently touched the red Crystal Professor Shirley handed over. He then felt a warm sensation in his palm, and it feels quite comfortable.

"Unlike the Life and Spirit Converging Crystal, the Power Converging Crystal might jolt your body for a brief moment, but that's normal..." Professor Shirley softly said, but it was enough for everyone to hear.

Vale nodded at this as he closed his eyes and let the Crystal scan his body, revealing his innate strength. He heard the teacher's voice in his ear, praising him for his calm and composed demeanor.

He waited for a couple of minutes until he heard a commotion from the class. He opened his eyes and saw that the red Crystal was actually glowing brightly, displaying a stunning sight.

'Is this what's supposed to happen?' Vale silently thought as he glanced at the Professor. It seems that there is a huge difference between the two other assessments.

He looked inside the Crystal and saw that twenty small white strands were swirling around, which was something he already expected.

'Was that glowing effect happen if I reached the red Crystal's limit? It didn't happen in the Spirit Converging Crystal though...' Vale mused.

He then heard someone clapping and immediately glanced at Chad. It was then followed by Lisa, Aubrey, and others as they started cheering for him.

As for the others, they were too stunned to even react. Their mouths were wide open as they couldn't process in their heads how a fifteen-year-old like him could have a Power Strand meant for a First-Class Knight!

This was too unbelievable!

The Professor, on the other hand, recovered quickly as she looked at Vale with a smile of approval and admiration. Although she was equally confused, the result wouldn't lie.

'I should report this to headmaster as quickly as possible...'

After the cheer calmed down, she announced to the class:

"Vale Chambers, you are a prodigy."

The latter felt a surge of pride, happiness, and excitement after seeing everyone's reaction.

'So it wasn't that bad showing off my current strength. However, this is just the beginning.' Vale thought as he looked at the Professor, expecting some recognition or reward for exceeding expectations.

Unfortunately, before she could even speak, Neil stood up and slammed his hands on his table.

"Professor! This is definitely weird! Having a 20 Power Strand is just too suspicious! There must be something wrong with the Crystal... or perhaps, Vale used one of the Forbidden Rituals of the Dark Arts Faction to increase his strength! Should we not report him to the Association to have him investigated?!"

Chapter 252 Crush It

Neil Sommerhalder couldn't believe what he had just witnessed. He had been waiting for this day for several weeks, hoping to impress everyone with his own power. He had always wanted to be a top student, excelling in the theory and practice of Dark Arts.

His bloodline may have stopped him from becoming an excellent Runecaster, but his talent in Dark Arts was supposed to be at a higher level! It was confirmed by the elders of his Clan, and as a matter of fact, he only had to recuperate for about three hours after he consumed the Darkness Possession Potion.

His talent could not be denied with such an achievement.

Furthermore, he had trained his body since he was young. He was aiming to become a Necromancer, and it has the highest demand in terms of physical requirements.

He was confident that he would get at least four strands, maybe even five strands!

Having done everything he could, he knew that his own efforts wouldn't betray him.

But then, Vale Chambers had to ruin everything.

He had seen Vale touch the red crystal and produce twenty strands, the maximum possible in that crystal. He had seen the whole class go wild with applause and admiration. He had seen the teacher congratulate him and call him a prodigy.

He hated him.

He hated him for stealing his spotlight, for making him look like a fool, for being better than him. He hated him for being so calm and confident, as if he knew he would ace the assessment.

He couldn't accept that Vale had such a diverse and versatile power while he couldn't even advance his Dark Spells to the intermediate realm.

'I can't just stay like this...' Neil then looked around him and confirmed that he had a few classmates who were looking at Vale with the same gaze.

They also didn't like how Vale took all the spotlight in today's assessment.

'Good... They will surely support me.' Neil thought with a wicked smile as he considered how to reveal Vale's true colors.

He refused to believe that Vale was that talented, that gifted, or that lucky. There was no way he was that inferior, that mediocre, that unlucky.

'I don't believe that the test was fair, that the crystal was accurate, and that the result was final!'

With this in mind, Neil decided to challenge it.

"Professor! This is definitely weird! Having a 20 Power Strand is just too suspicious! There must be something wrong with the crystal... or perhaps, Vale used one of the Forbidden Rituals of the Dark Arts Faction to increase his strength! Should we not report him to the Association to have him investigated?!"

He decided to accuse Vale of cheating, of using some forbidden ritual to boost his power. In case that was too much, he didn't forget to suggest that there may be something wrong with the crystal, that it was probably faulty or tampered with. He wanted Vale to retake the assessment under his supervision and scrutiny.

'I bet you're a fraud... I'll see how you cheated if you do the test once again.'

The accusation had obviously stunned many of his classmates.

The other students reacted to Neil's accusation with a mix of shock, anger, disbelief, and amusement. Some of them, especially Vale's close friends, were appalled by his rudeness and jealousy as they defended Vale's achievement.

"Neil, what are you talking about? Vale didn't cheat. He's just amazing. You're just jealous because he's better than you. Stop being such a sore loser and accept the fact that he's a genius." Chad immediately said as he looked at Neil, filled with disdain.

Chad had always felt that Neil was trying hard to be at the top of the class and that there was nothing wrong with that. However, Neil had finally crossed the line.

Chad wasn't sure why he was doing it, but no matter what, he shouldn't accuse his classmate of the usage of Forbidden Ritual. This is a grave matter and shouldn't be joked about.

"That's right. Do you have any proof that Vale used a forbidden ritual? Do you even know what a forbidden ritual is? Do you realize how serious your accusation is? You could get in trouble for making false claims. You should apologize to Vale right now." Aubrey Hall demanded as she felt that it was so ridiculous to accuse Vale of something so serious.

He even has the audacity to report it to the Association of the Harmonious Arcane Paths!

Neil was obviously startled as he heard those words, but he looked at his friends to get them on his side.

Some of them were curious and wondered if he indeed had a point.

"I don't think that a Forbidden Ritual was used. It will be up to the experts to decide that. However, perhaps there's something wrong with the crystal as you said. In any case, we should let the others use the crystals to make sure. If they also get a ridiculous result, then you can be right." Alvin said cautiously.

Junius, his seatmate, also whispered something to him.

"Do you really want Vale to take the test again? Do you think he'll fail this time—I mean, would he get fewer strands? What if nothing changed? What will you do about this situation?" Junius reminded his friend worriedly. It feels as if his friend was being rash in his decisions and he felt genuinely concerned about it.

At this time, Leonore found an opportunity to speak. Since she offended Vale just a few moments ago, she had to redeem herself!

"Why are you so angry at Vale? He didn't do anything to you. He just took the test like what we're about to. He just happened to be awesome at it. He doesn't deserve your hate. You should be happy for him and congratulate him."

As Leonore said this, she looked at Vale with a pleased smile on her face.

"Alright... That's enough." Professor Shirley finally made up her mind after hearing all their opinions.

She then took something out of her pocket. It was an obsidian stone and felt quite heavy.

The students looked curiously at this stone, but Shirley's next action stunned them.

She threw the stone at Neil, which startled him for a bit.

Thud!

He easily caught the stone and realized it weighed about 8 kilograms. It was heavy.

"Professor, what's this?" Neil curiously asked as he failed to understand what was going on.

Professor Shirley didn't waste her words and briefly answered.

"Crush it without using your Dark Energy. Just your pure physical strength. I want to see what would happen."

Chapter 253 Rewarded

"..."

Neil was stunned by the Professor's instruction. He didn't have to try, and he knew that there was no way he could not crush this stone with his physique alone.

Although he was confident with his strength, it was definitely not at this level.

Nevertheless, he could see that Professor Shirley was already coldly looking at him, so he had no choice but to obey.

Professor Shirley was not happy about the accusation that Neil had made against Vale Chambers, one of her best students. She already knew about Vale's mysterious identity, and even the Headmaster was watching him.

A few weeks ago, she also heard Professor Lucius muttering Vale's name as if he wanted to see Vale as quickly as possible. It was too suspicious, but this made her aware that Vale was special.

She decided to settle the matter once and for all.

She wanted everyone to witness the truth as she pulled out the spherical obsidian stone in her possession to test their strength.

She looked at Neil and said. "Since you have a question about Vale's result, let's settle this matter with that stone. Hurry up and crush it. This is a test of your power. It's a simple test but an effective one."

"I... I'm already trying, Professor." Neil said as his face was already turning red.

Neil was actually trying to crush it, and she didn't even notice!

He then switched to two hands and tried it one more time. However, he felt that he was just being embarrassed here.

Not even a crack can be seen from the stone!

"Alright... That's enough. This stone is tough and heavy. It takes a lot of force to break it. Pass that stone to Vale, and let us see how he would do it." Professor Shirley said with a light smile on her face.

"Wait! Professor, give me another chance." Neil said as he wanted to try stealthily using his Dark Energy.

However, Professor Shirley shook her head.

"No, Neil." she said. "You had your chance. And you wasted it."

She then turned to Vale and gestured for him to start.

Vale stepped forward to take the stone from Neil. He kept his silence all this time since he felt that the Professor was handling this matter really well, and he was right.

Professor Shirley's method was better than he expected. Instead of dirtying his hands and wasting his words, it's better to let the Professor handle it.

'I'll just accidentally extract you later...' Vale thought with a wicked smile on his smile.

After getting the stone from Neil, he stood at the center of the class and spoke softly.

"You can enter your Phantasm State to inspect me while I crush this stone." Vale said as he gave them time to enter their Phantasm State!

He was so confident, and this made Lisa, Chad, and Aubrey smile at their friend.

'He can actually be so boastful at some time.' They thought unanimously as they entered their Phantasm State.

Then, after confirming that everyone had entered the Phantasm State, Vale made his move. He didn't show any strain on his face or sweat from his forehead.

He simply smiled and crushed the palm-sized stone with his right hand.

That's right! The stone shattered into many pieces!

This shocked his classmates but not the Professor. With the 20 Power Strands, she knew that Vale was indeed capable of doing something like that. It wasn't even that close to what he could really do with that number of strands.

'I wonder what was his real limit? Since I only have 20-limit Power Converging Crystal, I can't test him further. This is really fascinating.' Professor Shirley mused as she looked at Vale with admiration.

In the meantime, the center of attention silently lowered his hands and looked at the dust with satisfaction.

He had succeeded.

He had crushed the stone with ease.

'That thing can't be crushed by anyone below 10 Power Strands. I wonder if its purpose is just to be crushed like that. Why is Professor Shirley even carrying that in her pocket?' Vale couldn't help but think about it as he glanced at Professor Shirley with a polite expression.

"Ahem. Professor, thank you. That was interesting." He said with a stiff smile after realizing that Professor Shirley was looking at him.

"Well done, Vale. That stone can only be crushed if you have at least 10 Power Strands. Even without the Power Converging Crystal, you have already shown what you're capable of. "

Professor Shirley said before she turned to Neil and frowned disapprovingly.

"And you, Neil." she said. "You have proven your weakness. You can just sit down and wait for your turn. Regarding the matter of the Forbidden Ritual or whatnot, let the experts handle it. However, I'm telling you now that Vale didn't have any signs of using a Forbidden Ritual."

She looked at the rest of Class 2, who were stunned and excited by what they had seen.

"Class 2, you have witnessed their strength. Vale Chambers did not cheat on the Power Assessment. He scored a perfect 20-Power Strand because he is a powerful Arcane Arts Practitioner."

She paused and sighed again.

"I hope you all learned a valuable lesson today. Don't judge others by their results. Judge them by their actions. And don't make accusations without proof. Make them with evidence."

She then used a Dark Spell to clean up the shattered pieces of the stone before she continued.

"Alright... Let's not waste any more time and have everyone tested."

"Yes, Professor!"

Soon, the Power Assessment was completed.

Just like what everyone feared, they indeed got 2 Power Strands in their assessment. There were only a few exceptions. They were Neil, Dalton, and Warren, which all had 3 Power Strands.

As they thought that they would get second place in this assessment, Lisa Grayback's result shocked them!

She actually had a 5 Spirit Strand, which is very impressive!

Although her result couldn't be compared to Vale's result, she actually felt genuinely happy about this since she believed that Vale was just too unique and shouldn't be counted in the rankings.

As the Power Strand Assessment was finished, Professor Shirley smiled at Vale.

"Alright, since you have the best result here that could probably not be broken until you all graduate here, I'll be rewarding you."

The Professor said as she handed him a book.

'The Book of 12 Unique Advanced Dark Spells... This is Interesting.' Vale thought as he read the title of the book.

The book contained a list of twelve dark spells, their properties, and their applications. It was quite timely since he felt that he needed some better Dark Spells in his Arsenal.

"Study this book and make sure not to be rash in your Spell Selections. Your Spell Lights are limited, so I hope this book will make you reconsider those low-level Spells you're fantasizing about." Professor Shirley Reminded

Chapter 254 Life Strands

Vale nodded at the Professor and kept the book on his table.

He couldn't read it now, but he would surely study it once he returned to his dorm.

Lisa looked at Vale with a complicated gaze. She thought that she had gotten closer to Vale's level during this summer break, but today's assessment made her realize their vast difference.

She shook her head at this thought as she reminded herself of one thing.

'Unlike them, I have no background in the world of mysticism and barely learned something from Senior Lesley. I didn't have anyone to support me, and I didn't have any riches that could help me with my advancement. I should be satisfied that my talent isn't bad.'

She felt better at this thought as she looked at her classmates.

Their class had just finished their Power Assessment, where they had witnessed the amazing display of Vale Chambers' physique. They had also seen the humiliating defeat of Neil Sommerhalder, who had accused Vale of cheating by using the Forbidden Ritual.

She couldn't help but feel disappointed at her classmate for causing such a scene.

Anyway, Professor Shirley did not make them wait for long as they continued the assessment.

"You still have more assessments to complete," she said. "The next will be the Life Assessment."

She reached into her pouch and took out tiny red crystals.

"These are Life Converging Crystals." She said while holding up one of them.

"They are special crystals that can measure your life force... Unlike the Power Converging Crystals, they can only measure 15 Life Strands. Don't think that it's too low since I only have 11 Life Strand... Once you reach 10 Life Strand, increasing it by another strand would be extremely difficult with our Arcane Path."

Professor Shirley looked at their expressions before she continued.

"When you hold one of these crystals in your hand, it will connect with your soul to create the Life Strands on the crystal."

She looked at them with a serious expression.

"This test will not only determine how much life force you have, but it can also be the potential you have as an Arcanist and as a person. It may also determine how much freedom you have in your life..." Professor Shirley mysteriously said, which confused many of the students.

They thought that the life strands would just allow them to quantify their life force. Was there actually more to it?

They didn't expect something like that at all.

"Are you ready?" The Professor asked.

The class nodded nervously.

"Yes, Professor." They said in unison after some hesitation.

"Very well, let the test begin."

She pointed at Chad Bulmung, who was very noticeable after gaining some weight during the summer break.

"Chad, you go first." She said as she went to her seat and gave a crystal to him.

"Yes, Professor." Chad nodded confidently. He held the crystal in his hand and waited for a few seconds before it showed some reaction.

After some time, he saw four white strands appear inside it.

He smiled and announced the result to everyone.

"Four. I have four life strands."

Professor Shirley nodded approvingly.

"Well done, Chad." she said. "I'm expecting everyone to have at least 3 or 4 Life Strands. However, it wouldn't be surprising to have 5 or even 6 Strands since all of you are talented."

She turned to Dalton Stranway, a short and skinny boy with a freckled face who was quite good in academic studies.

"Dalton, you're next," she said. She was no longer looking for volunteers and decided to just call out everyone in the class and get them tested one by one.

Dalton was startled after being called so suddenly, but he still replied. "Yes, Professor."

He held the crystal in his hand and waited for its reaction

He saw five white strands appear inside it. "Five... There are five strands!" He was shocked at this result since he wasn't expecting much with his life force.

"Good..." Professor Shirley commented as she noted the result in her record book before continuing.

She turned to Warren Lawstein, a quiet student who didn't seem to have many friends in the class.

"Warren, you're next."

Warren nodded confidently, and after some time, he revealed that he also had 5 Life Strands! This made everyone excited as they felt that it was quite common to see 5 Life Strands.

Then, it was Leonore's turn.

She held the red crystal confidently and got 6 Life Strands!

Leonore faintly smiled at this result and he was already expecting this much.

'Joining the Fortune Telling Club may have been challenging, but the benefits I got were worth the price.

"Very well, Leonore," she said. "You have a higher Life Strand than I expected."

She then turned to Aubrey Hall, a smart and diligent girl who was good at both academic and arcane studies. According to all the professors in the first year, Aubrey Hall can be considered the model student in Class 2.

Aubrey nodded as she held the crystal.

She saw four white strands appear inside it, which was what she had expected. Nevertheless, she couldn't help but frown as she announced her result.

"Four."

Professor Shirley nodded sympathetically.

"It's not bad. You don't have to frown like that." She said as she recorded the score.

"Y-yes, Professor." Aubrey nodded as she kept the crystal. It was already hers since Life Converging Crystals can only be used by one person, similar to the Power Converging Crystal.

It was then followed by Lisa, who got the same result, four life strands.

Lisa was satisfied with this result since having a 5 Power Strand and 4 Life Strand at her age was definitely acceptable.

The assessment continued, and the rest of the class had similar results of three or four white strands in their crystals.

Then she turned to Vale Chambers, who was the last one to go. Vale held the crystal in his and waited for almost a minute before a result came out.

Professor Shirley smiled warmly at him.

"What's the result?"

"It's 15 Life Strands, Professor." Vale answered.

There was a gasp from the class. They already expected Vale to be awesome, but some of them started to really consider what Vale had done to get this monstrous.

Although they felt amazed by Vale, they also felt intimidated by him.

Neil couldn't help but clench his fist as he felt that this was too ridiculous.

In the meantime, Vale was thinking of something else. He was curious why the Professor had to ask them to do the test one by one and wait for the strands to appear instead of just passing over the crystals and having all the results simultaneously.

Chapter 255 Unbothered

The next was Spirit Strand Assessment, and this time, everyone felt motivated. They put aside their curiosity about Vale's unnatural results and felt excited about the Assessment.

'So it seems that Vale was focusing on his Life Strand and Power Strand when he entered the Academy... No wonder his Spirit Strands stopped improving. I wonder if we get to see progress this time.' Aubrey Hall mused as she looked at her handsome classmate.

Of course, she's also aware that even if Vale was forever stuck in 25 Spirit Strands, it would still be quite impressive. After all, she knows many decent Dark Arts Practitioners with only 20 Spirit Strands... Most of them were already in their 30s and 40s and didn't have a chance to study in the Academy.

Furthermore, according to the seniors in her club, some 10th-year students only have 20 Spirit Strands. These people were certainly average, but this means that it's not impossible to graduate with only 20 Spirit Strands.

Perhaps, the reason that many of them have high Spirit Strands in this batch was also because of the many advancements in the development or creation of Pills and Potions.

Soon, the Spirit Strand assessment started.

The average strands were 10 to 12 Spirit Strands. It was a great improvement considering that in their first year, most of them only have 4 to 5 Spirit Strands.

Just like what the professors said before, the Spirit Strands were the easiest to increase at their current age and would stop developing at the age of 20.

"I doubled by Spirit Strands... Hehe..." Alvin Vendel said in satisfaction after getting 10 Spirit Strands. He previously had 5 Spirit Strands so he couldn't help but feel proud of himself.

"Heh... I caught up to you. Do you remember teasing me for having 4 Spirit Strands?" Roswell, his seatmate, replied with a gloating smile.

In the meantime, the top rankers in their class also had decent improvements.

Warren and Leonore, who previously scored 17 Spirit Strands, now had 23 and 25 respectively. This showed how Leonore had a faster improvement speed than Warren.

On the other hand, Aubrey and Dalton, who had 16 Strands in their first year, now both have 22 Spirit Strands.

As for Chad Bulmung, with 12 Spirit Strands in his first year, he now has 19 Spirit Strands.

When it was Vale's turn, everyone went silent.

However, Professor Shirley even thought of making a joke.

"Vale, I selected a Spirit Converging Crystal that has 40 Spirit Strand Capacity. You're not telling me that you'll max it out as well, right?"

"Am I going to get a reward if I max it out?" Vale asked.

This stunned Professor Shirley for a moment.

However, her face turned serious as she considered the possibility.

If Vale really did that, then it's different.

If you have a high Life Strand and Power Strand, you'll be considered great and talented, but the Dark Arts Faction wouldn't think too much of it. After all, most Dark Arts can be learned even with a poor physique and life force.

However, having high Spirit Strands at such a young age was different.

As a matter of fact, even if the elders of the Dark Arts Faction were already old, weak, and sickly, they were still unfathomable and could destroy an entire city population with their rituals and dark spells if they really wanted.

If Vale was this great, the Council must be aware of this to ensure that his potential wouldn't be wasted.

"If you have that many Spirit Strands, I will request the Headmaster to have you accelerated... Perhaps you can even participate in this year's Twelve Academy Competition because of that."

Professor Shirley said.

"I'm not really excited about that, Professor. How about getting my ripped shadow back to me instead?" Vale suggested, which made the class extremely silent.

His classmates looked at the Professor since they wanted to see her reaction. This request sound a bit too ridiculous since it was known by everyone that they couldn't simply take it back unless they graduated from the Academy.

Furthermore, they were allowed to enter certain areas in the Academy because of this ripped shadow. It is similar to proof of their identity as a student of the Vermont Academy.

"Hmmm?"

This request had indeed momentarily stunned the Professor.

She had never expected such a request, but she had to take Vale seriously. This young man was filled with mystery, and she won't even be surprised if he said that he was an incarnation of the Darkness Emperor.

"I will have to ask the Headmaster for that request since I don't have any authority concerning the shadows. You have to change your request. Are you sure you don't want any special acceleration exam?" Professor Shirley replied.

Vale sighed at this and answered.

"That's certainly great, Professor. But I might miss a lot of things if I did that. Furthermore, I think I have a chance for that exam even if you don't suggest it to the Headmaster. Instead, may I request one thing from you? You can call it a favor."

"Of course... If there's something I can help you, I will try my best. We can discuss that once you reach the limit of the crystal."

As their conversation ended, Vale finally started as he held the Spirit Converging Crystal.

His classmates remained silent all this time...

The last time they had an assessment wasn't long ago, and at that time, Vale only had 25 Spirit Strands. They couldn't help but feel that it was too weird if Vale suddenly increased his Strands by 15 or even more!

That would make them question Vale's humanity! Perhaps, he wasn't even a human in the first place and had come from the Spirit World!

Perhaps, that was also the reason why he got a Dark Spirit to contract with him!

In the meantime, while Vale was waiting for the white strands to appear, a group of hooded people surrounded the Academy. They appeared out of nowhere, and the guards of the Academy were already lying on the ground, lifeless.

They didn't even have the time to react as they died swiftly without being able to report the situation to the Academy Officials.

Luckily, the Academy Grounds was still in a massive Formation Circle...

As soon as they stepped inside the Academy, the Headmaster, the Professors, and the members of the Order of the Evanescent Vessels stationed in the Academy sensed their presence.

Headmaster Jean calmly looked outside the window of his room while his hands were behind his back.

"We're under attack? That's surprising." He muttered.

However, although he said he was surprised, he didn't seem bothered by the attack.

Chapter 256 Strange

The day was bright and sunny at the Vermont Academy of Dark Arts.

The students were busy attending their classes. Some of them were doing their assessments, while others were already learning new knowledge from their Professors.

Everything seemed normal and peaceful until a loud siren followed by an explosion shook the ground and shattered the windows of the first and second buildings of the Academy.

The students and professors who were situated near the Academy Entrance looked outside and saw a group of people wearing black hooded cloaks, armed with swords and wands, storming the Academy gates. There were more than 40 of them, and they were shouting slogans and curses, declaring that they were here to purge the Academy.

It was so sudden that they were unable to properly react.

"Everyone... The Academy is under attack. We are facing the members of the Secret Organization searching for the Ancient Relics of the Three Paragons."

A female voice suddenly resounded throughout the whole Academy. It was from the Vice Headmaster of the Academy.

After this, she continued telling the students to stay calm and follow their professors' instructions. She also announced that the Academy's defenses were already activated, and reinforcements from the Order of the Evanescent Vessel were coming.

'This...' Vale was stunned after realizing what was going on. He didn't even have the time to check his Spirit Converging Crystal as he pocketed the item and readied himself to get away. The other students also stopped caring about his result as they carried their bags, ready to run away immediately.

However, some students were extremely silent after the announcement that the Academy was under siege. No, perhaps they were also too scared and didn't know what to do as they were frozen on their spot.

Vale was right. He heard some of his classmates whispering their concerns.

"A-are we going to the shelter? Shouldn't we vacate the Academy as fast as we could?"

"Do we even have a shelter? I'm sure that this will be settled quickly."

"I hope so... I think the 7th-year students up to the 10th-year would help in this battle, right? With their numbers, I'm pretty sure that this will be over quickly." Dalton said with confidence.

He seemed to know many higher-year students that could possibly help in this situation. It wasn't that surprising since Vale heard that the Music Club that he joined had more than 60 Senior Students, and it seemed to have the most members in all the clubs within the Academy.

Dalton probably had plenty of connections now after being part of the club for one year.

At this time, Professor Shirley, who had been silent for quite some time, finally spoke with a calm and gentle voice.

"Class... I just heard some instructions from the Headmaster. All of us must stay in our classroom. This includes all the First Year, Second Year, and Third Year Students. Since our rooms are close to the center of the Academy, this instruction is understandable. After all, the target of the attackers must be a specific area in the Academy. They're probably planning to steal or destroy something instead of planning to annihilate everyone."

Seeing that everyone was nodding in agreement, she continued. "There were only 45 people who had entered the Academy. This number is too small if they want to cause major problems for the Academy. The Headmaster suggested that the ones attacking in front were simply a diversion and the real target was elsewhere. In short, there's nothing to worry about and everything is under control as per the Headmaster."

At these words, the students finally heaved a sigh of relief. They can also feel a strong fluctuation of Dark Energy around the Academy, so they know that the Professors are fighting right now.

'Hmm... Is it really that simple?' Vale mused as he entered his Phantasm State... With the coverage of his Magic Zone, he was confident that he'd sense all of the enemies who had entered the Academy.

'Oh? Is it because of the Academy's Formation Circle being activated? My Magic Zone is actually being suppressed.' Vale was surprised as he realized that his Magic Zone could only cover 180 meters which was his limit before the summer break.

Nevertheless, this was more than enough to see the situation outside.

'Ahhh... There's total chaos outside...' Vale silently thought as he realized that the Academy had really become a battlefield.

The professors of different dark arts branches acted to fight off the attackers and protect them. The professors of the Necromancy Branch summoned undead creatures such as zombies, skeletons, and ghouls. They commanded them to attack the cloaked invaders, biting, clawing, and tearing them apart.

It was such a morbid sight, so Vale quickly shifted his attention.

The Professors of the Rituals Branch started chanting prayers using their formation circles, drawn on the ground with blood. There were also Oardic characters written on the ground and Vale could hardly understand them.

These Professors called for various spirits from the Spirit World, such as ghosts, banshees, and wraiths. They unleashed them on the enemies who were trying to enter the Academy as they started possessing, haunting, screaming, and draining them of their life force.

'Whoa~ So they can be this terrifying... I wonder if Yvaine can handle this many spirits from the Spirit World.' Vale mused as he couldn't help but feel impressed by the immense power brought by those spirits.

Cressida's Banshees couldn't compare at all.

In the meantime, the Professors of the Essential Corruption branch started to gather students of higher years. They used their dark energy to create barriers and shields around them, blocking the spells and attacks from the invaders. They also used their dark energy to corrupt and weaken the enemies, making them sick, dizzy, and confused.

The Professors of the Dark Magic Branch, on the other hand, confronted the enemies with their dark spells. They used their wands, staves, and various mystical items to cast powerful curses, hexes, jinxes, and blasts at them.

The battle was fierce and chaotic. It was obvious from Vale's perspective that the members of the Secret Organization were outnumbered and outmatched by the Academy's forces. However, they were determined and fanatical, believing that they would succeed.

This confused Vale.

Although they were fighting with courage and zeal, hoping to destroy the Academy, he couldn't help but feel that something wasn't right with how they acted.

Chapter 257 Spy

As Vale was wondering about their real intention for causing such a scene in front of the Academy, he finally sensed a group of three people entering the Academy from the eastern side.

They stealthily climbed up the wall, and Vale had almost failed to sense them. Luckily, he kept his Extrasensory Perception Spell activated.

At this time, Vale finally decided to use his Divine Sense. Using this spell in the chaotic area outside the Academy was quite tricky. It was due to the intense fluctuations of energy caused by numerous dark spells, undead creatures, and spirits. This also includes the various spells from different Arcane Paths used by the members of the Secret Organization.

Using the Divine Sense amid such a chaotic battlefield would most likely fail, and there was also a chance of being detected.

He learned these things over the past few weeks outside the Academy.

'Divine Sense...'

Vale triggered the spell model in his body.

Transformation Arts Practitioner with 8 filled Spell Lights.

Transformation Arts Practitioner with 8 filled Spell Lights.

Transformation Arts Practitioner with 9 filled Spell Lights.

"Oh..." Vale was surprised as soon as he saw the Arcane Path of those three intruders.

"Vale, is there something wrong?" Lisa asked Vale after hearing his soft voice.

This surprised the latter for a moment as he replied.

"Nothing... I just tried sensing the situation outside and was a bit surprised." He said with a low voice. Everyone was chatting silently, so he also softened his voice.

However, his voice was still heard by everyone in the classroom as they looked at him weirdly.

Neil, who was one of his avid haters, said mockingly. "Hmph... He's bluffing. There's no way he can sense what's happening outside. There are multiple seals activated, and the Formation Circle of the Academy is also disrupting the flow of all Arcane Energy."

Emily also nodded at this. "Although I'm not Neil's friend, he should be correct about this."

"Tsk! Do you have to say we're not friends?" Neil said as he glared at the red-haired girl.

"As if you can compare yourself to my friend. If you can't do it, it doesn't mean that Vale is also incompetent. It's your problem for having a 3-meter Magic Zone." Chad said with cold voice.

This had obviously angered Neil...

"What?! I don't have a 3-meter Magic Zone! It's already 14 meters! I'm telling you!"

At this point, Professor Shirley, who was using her telepathy to communicate with the people outside, could no longer stand their bickering as she sternly spoke.

"Stop making noise... The situation outside isn't settled yet. Be ready for further instructions coming from the Headmaster. Their decision might change at any time."

"Yes, Professor."

Everyone answered simultaneously as they all went silent. They could tell their kind professor was not in a good mood.

In the meantime, Vale was keeping his senses focused on the three Transformation Masters.

No one seemed to have noticed their presence aside from him since the Professors, including the newly arrived members of the Order, did not bother going in their direction.

'Hmm? Are they going to the East Pavilion? Wait--They're headed to the Armory!'

The Armory or the Treasure Vault was also in the East Pavilion's direction!

Vale felt surprised as he thought that the Secret Organization already entered that place and tried searching for the Pocketwatch.

They should've failed to find the Pocketwatch there and shouldn't be targeting the Academy anymore.

As he thought of informing the Headmaster through telepathy, he realized that a student was actually hiding and waiting for the three people!

Vale swiftly used his Divine Sense.

Mystic Arts Practitioner with 11 filled Spell Lights.

'That's the spy I detected not long ago!' Vale gasped as he recognized the fifth-year student who met with the three intruders... No, he should be a sixth-year student now!

At this moment, Vale finally realized what was going on. After getting so many hints, there was no way he couldn't connect it.

The young Mystic Arts Practitioner was definitely a spy of the Secret Organization, and these Transformation Arts Practitioners helped him ensure that no one would notice his disguise as Dark Arts Practitioner.

Then, it would also explain why they are targeting the treasury.

Perhaps, the treasury wasn't really breached then, and the Mystic Arts Practitioner only messed it up by using some sort of mystical ability. He may have been helped by a few other members of the Secret Organization at that time to make the people think that the treasury was no longer being targeted.

'I should inform the Headmaster...' Vale immediately thought as he used his Phantasm State to locate the Headmaster's location.

Boom!

The ground suddenly shook, and the aftershock dizzied almost every student in the Academy. Vale also failed to concentrate because of this, as he failed to find the Headmaster.

"Not good! The Academy's Protection Circle was damaged. Three enemies entered the building. Tsk." Professor Shirley grunted.

Although she's also a Spellcaster, she prioritizes her research and expanding her knowledge. She was only a third-class Practitioner, and it could be said that some 9th-year or 10th-year students were stronger than her.

If she had to fight against the intruders, who were all First-Class Arcanists, she would definitely die.

Luckily, the other Professors also came out of their classrooms as they gathered together.

There were a total of nine of them, including Professor Stella Harwin, Eric Saullon, Elnora White, and Law Morton.

Aside from Professor Morton, the others can be considered weak in individual battles.

However, now that they gathered up, their confidence rose as they readied themselves to fight and protect their precious students.

In the meantime, Vale had already slipped out the moment the Professors came out of the classroom!

Apparently, as soon as he contacted the Headmaster and reported the situation, he was ordered by the man to come with him!

Of course, Vale refused to follow as he didn't want to be in danger in this situation. The opponents are First-Class Arcanists after all! There was no way he would underestimate these people.

However, the Headmaster offered something that he couldn't refuse!

Chapter 258 Purification

"So Vale really has a detection spell... Was it from Heinz as well?" Headmaster Jean muttered as he calmly stood on top of the Left-Wing Building's roof.

He was watching the meeting of the three squirrels and one student in the East Pavilion Garden of the Academy.

According to Vale, the three squirrels were actually Transformation Arts Practitioners!

He would've failed to realize their real identity if not for Vale's reminder!

'What a fearsome detection ability... I wonder how it works.' Jean silently thought as he looked at what was going on below him.

He was also baffled by how Vale didn't know that they were in the form of squirrels.

Vale's detection didn't capture the appearance of the practitioners and only sensed them as Arcanists who practice the Transformation Arts.

It was something he couldn't even do unless he possessed a Mystical Artifact at the Royal Rank level.

Unfortunately, he had never considered that Vale might've used a different path's detection ability so he was unable to guess what Spell was used. He could only think that it was another ability that Heinz gifted to his disciple.

"Headmaster, the lower-year Professors are dealing with the First-Class Practitioners from the Secret Organization, should you not help them first?" Vale asked using his telepathy as soon as he got out of the main building.

He could still feel that the battle was going on and he didn't like the idea that those young students could die once the Professor failed to stop the invaders.

"Hmm? There were only three enemies... What are you afraid of? They can handle that." Headmaster Jean replied as he seemed to fully trust Professor Morton and the others.

"T-then... What should I do? You have to keep your promise, okay?" Vale asked while fully circulating his Extrasensory Perception Spell. He had to make sure that he won't be detected by those intruders.

"Yes... If you help me this time and bring glory to our Academy in the Twelve Academies Competition in your fourth year, I will give your Shadow back. Isn't that very generous of me?" Headmaster Jean said as he shifted his gaze to Vale.

He also tried sensing his presence using his Phantasm State and realized that Vale's stealth ability was quite impressive.

Perhaps, if he didn't know his general location and he doesn't have Vale's shadow with him, he would've failed to sense this young student.

'This young man is getting more and more fearsome... I hope Heinz could make plenty of him. Furthermore, If he could make them a bit more submissive, that would be a lot better.' Headmaster Jean thought as he felt that Vale's loyalty is a bit too lacking...

Nevertheless, he didn't think too much of it since Vale is just one of the first successful products of Heinz's research. He believes that over time, Heinz would be able to make better adjustments and have loyal subjects.

"You're right... You're very generous, Headmaster." Vale replied earnestly without having any idea about Headmaster Jean's thoughts.

He was too focused on how he could get his shadow six years early!

Concerning the Twelve Academy Competition, he wasn't worried about it at all. He already has the confidence to win a few competitions right now. So if he was given a couple more years of preparation, he believes that he could even deal with 10th-year students.

This wasn't some sort of delusion because his mastery over Planar Spells would've increased at that time and perhaps, he could even get a few more golden Spell Lights over the next two years.

"Very well... See those squirrels, lock into them as they might disappear from my sight. You have to tell me their location since I don't have any Spells to see through their Transformation Arts."

"Eh?" Vale was surprised.

"The Headmaster doesn't have any skill that could sense them?" Vale mused as he realized that the Headmaster wasn't that omnipotent after all.

"Vale, these three were Expert Shapeshifters. It's not easy to sense their presence. It's literally an Arcane Art they've mastered for three or more decades. You're just weird since your Detection Spell could make their decades of practice useless... Do you understand that?" Headmaster Jean suddenly said as if he could read his mind.

At this comparison, Vale's eyes lit up since that indeed makes sense!

These Practitioners spent most of their lifetime perfecting the spell in their Arcane Path. It was normal that they could fool even the Headmaster who lacks a proper Spell to counter them.

'Right... I'm lucky to have my Divine Sense.' Vale thought as he agreed with the Headmaster's plan.

In the meantime, while the two of them were tailing the spy and the three squirrels near the Armory, the battle in the main building had already involved the students!

"Tsk! One of them is a Holy Arts Practitioner! Not good!"

"It's just two Elementalists and one False Priest... They're not going to do anything—" As Professor Saullon thought of underestimating the enemies, he suddenly felt his feet turn cold.

As soon as he looked down at his feet, he realized that an ice had already formed!

'Shit! How come I didn't detect it at all?!'

His Phantasm State had been active all this time and he was sure that he was monitoring the surroundings properly.

Professor Shirley immediately acted as she helped the Professor who was caught in the stealthy attack.

She took out a pouch containing a cloud of glittering dust and sprayed it over the surroundings. Luckily, the three intruders didn't move in their position since even though they caught Professor Saullon, the others remained relatively fine from the attack.

They must be afraid of rushing over since Professor Morton had already summoned three Spectral Hands ready to crush them if they get near.

"It's the mist! Be careful!" Shirley reminded everyone as they poured out more Dark Energy around their bodies... She had also noticed this late but because she had a defensive Mystical Item, she was able to resist the Frostbite.

"P-professors! Kill them already!"

"Hurry!"

At this time, the students in their rooms started getting cold and they could only try to resist it by gathering together.

The first-year students were the most affected as the field-type Elemental Spells of the two intruders covered more than 20 meters around them!

Realizing that the students are suffering, the Professor had no other choice but to hasten their plans. They could no longer wait for Professor Stella's Curse Spells to take effect!

"Kill!"

Professor Morton sent out his Spectral Hands to allow the other Professors to cast their Tier 2 Dark Spells without being interrupted by the False Priest.

"Fool! You are all going to die here!" The False Priest shouted as he cast a powerful Holy Spell!

"Great Purification!"

Chapter 259 Real Target

The Great Purification spell was the strongest counter against the Spellcasters of the Dark Arts Faction. Even if the Caster was weak, this Tier 2 Holy Spell has a strong effect against Curses, Dark Spells, Undead, and others.

Not even the Professors could ignore this spell.

Luckily, this knowledge was something that even first-year students knew.

As soon as the Professors realized that the False Priest was capable of using the Great Purification, they immediately halted their Spell Activation.

As for those who had already activated their Spells, they immediately canceled them before they get hit by the Holy Spell. Professor Morton was quick on this as he swiftly dismissed his Spectral Hands from further approaching the enemies.

"Hahaha! Kill them now!"

After the Priest saw the Spellcasters retract their Dark Spells as soon as he cast the Great Purification, he immediately ordered the two Elementalists to take care of them!

The Great Purification Spell could last for more than five seconds after all!

This is the perfect time to deal with these Spellcasters!

Since they have canceled their spell activation to avoid getting backlash from the Great Purification spell, they would also need a few seconds to trigger their Spell Lights again... Those few seconds would be enough for the Elementalists to deal with them!

The two Elementalists didn't have to be reminded, as this was their plan all along. The three of them partnered together for this combination attack.

They used their Wind Spell to quickly arrive beside the Professor who had summoned three Spectral Hands.

It may be safer to use other Elemental Attacks from a distance. However, getting near their target and using short-range Spells with short casting time is more efficient.

As they were about to behead this Spellcaster, they noticed the man's smirking face before they sensed some activity above them!

'Shit! It's a trap!' The two of them realized it too late... They wanted to back off, but they dashed forward so quickly and could no longer change their direction!

Bam! Bam!

In the blink of an eye, two beings with stitched bodies dropped from the ceiling and crushed the two Elementalists!

"Idiots! Did you forget that we have Tier 2 Variants?" Professor Morton looked at the False Priest gloatingly.

The Variants of the Dark Arts Factions was created for the sole purpose of dealing with the troublesome Holy Arts Practitioners...

Over the past decade, the Variants had changed from secret weapons into assistants or laborers since they were supposedly no longer at war with the Holy Arts Factions. However, it doesn't mean that they have weakened because of their lack of battle experience.

Their abilities were deeply ingrained in their brains and they could perform assassination tasks with great ease, even if it was their first mission.

"Y-you..." The False Priest stuttered as he didn't expect such a sudden turn of events.

He had fully believed that as long as he cast his Great Purification, no Dark Spells, Spirits, or Undead could reach him.

He was extremely wrong as he failed to calculate the presence of the Variants.

"Hmph! Capture him alive! We can use him to get some information from the Secret Organization." Professor Morton said as he ordered the two Variants.

Of course, the False Priest won't let himself be captured so easily. He didn't waste his time as he fled from the Variants and used various Holy Arts, hoping to delay them.

He may be incapable of battling the Variants but he had companions outside the building who could help him deal with these products of Dark Alchemy.

In the meantime, outside the main building of the Academy, Vale watched the Headmaster allow the Spy and the three Shapeshifters enter the Armory.

They seemed to be prepared as the Mystic Arts Practitioner had easily dismantled the defenses that were laid on the building.

All the traps and formation circles seemed useless in front of the sixth-year student.

'No... He's definitely not a sixth-year student. He's most likely a First-Class Mystic Arts Practitioner. There's no way he could do all that so swiftly without decades of experience.' Vale mused as he could tell that the defenses placed on the building were extremely complex.

He then shifted his gaze to the Headmaster and realized that he was just calmly watching the four...

Soon, the four started entering the Armory, and this time, the Headmaster finally made his move.

"Once they enter, they'll be considered trapped. I'll stop them from escaping, so enter the Armory with me. I won't find them if they shape-shifted as an object... Well, I don't think your detection spell can enter the building, can you?"

Vale didn't immediately answer as he tried to use his Divine Sense inside the Armory... Just like what the Headmaster said, it couldn't penetrate the building for some odd reason.

"I can't, Headmaster."

"That's good to hear. Only Immortal Items can penetrate that building."

Headmaster Jean heaved a sigh of relief. He didn't explain too much, but Vale could guess a little from that reaction.

As soon as the four intruders stepped inside the Armory, Headmaster Jean no longer hid his presence and appeared at the entrance.

The squirrels on the student's shoulder immediately looked behind as they sensed Jean's presence.

"Student Mark, why did you enter Academy bringing those cute pets with you?" Headmaster Jean teased the man with his deep voice.

However, Mark took his time to answer as he looked around the Armory like he was sightseeing.

The Armory was a huge place with many shelves and crates where Mystical Items were kept.

For high-level items, they were in the inner area, where they were mostly behind glass cases preventing anyone from touching them.

"Headmaster Jean, you finally showed up... I need your help. I'm looking for something here."

Instead of being scared, the gloomy, pale, and skinny student, who also seemed to lack sleep, answered calmly.

There seemed to be something off, so Vale swiftly readied his spells.

If he found any problems, he'd be ready to activate his Spell Dispersion or his Traceless Shift if they ever thought of using Mystical Items.

He was right!

As soon as the 'student' answered, Vale felt a fluctuation of energy aimed at the Headmaster!

"That's futile..." Headmaster Jean said as he struck the ground with his cane.

The sound created by the cane seemed to be a form of mystical ability as it also destroyed the invisible attack of the enemy.

'As expected of the Headmaster.' Vale thought.

However, as Vale thought this would be relatively easy, he realized that the Shapeshifters were emitting a strong energy fluctuation!

The Headmaster also noticed this as he realized what was going on!

"Hoh~ So I'm your real target?" Headmaster Jean asked as he looked at the transforming squirrels.

"Yes! And this will be your grave!" Mark replied as he looked at the Headmaster with deranged eyes and a wicked smile.

Chapter 260 Animal

The next events happened so quickly, and Vale could only react on his instincts.

Rooaar!

The three squirrels transformed into ferocious bears as they charged toward the Headmaster. They were emitting a bloodthirsty aura around them as they bare their fangs and claws to rip the Headmaster apart.

The moment they reached the Headmaster's range, Vale noticed some changes on the cane he was holding.

It formed into dark chains and moved like a snake, strangling the three creatures simultaneously.

Based on the amount of Dark Energy that the chains had, it must've consumed a lot of Dark Energy. Vale couldn't help but wonder how much Dark Energy the Headmaster had.

'Not good...' Vale's Extrasensory Perception Spell noticed something and wanted to warn the Headmaster.

He realized that Mark had just used a Mystic Spell! He may not know what it does, but it was definitely a dangerous spell that must be avoided.

He wanted to use his Spell Dispersion to assist the Headmaster, but based on how it works, it will also disperse the Spell that Jean was trying to use since he was in the direction of the Mystic Spell.

With this in mind, Vale pulled out an Elemental Talisman from his pocket and tore it apart.

Whoosh~

As the Talisman was activated, a wall of ice formed in front of the Headmaster, blocking the Spell that Mark had just used.

Thud!

The invisible Mystic Art crashed on the wall of ice as it started cracking...

"Tsk..." Mark frowned at the sudden appearance of the ice wall.

The Spell he used was called Bone Softening, and it was something he could only use three times a day. Nevertheless, any living being that got hit by this Mystic Spell would be entirely at his mercy.

'I miscalculated that boy coming here.'

He thought Jean would try to defend against his Bone Softening Spell using a Dark Spell. He was prepared to bypass this, but the ice wall's appearance had completely caught him off-guard.

He had never expected that someone in the Dark Arts Academy would use an Elemental Talisman!

He looked at Vale, who was also at the entrance of the building, and decided to kill him first.

He could only use the Bone Softening Spell twice and he had no idea if this young man would interrupt him once again.

With a flick of his hand, a gold coin engraved with a complicated Formation Circle appeared in his hand.

'This is an expensive Mystical Item, and I plan to use it against Cleo... but I can't waste my time any longer. You're lucky to die from this Royal Rank---Eh?'

Mark still felt that using this coin on Vale was a bit too much since he had originally prepared it for Cleo, the Sixth-Squad Captain of the Vessels. It would seem too overkill to use it on a Second Year student of the Academy.

However, he was aware of Vale's identity and that he has a Dark Spirit protecting him in the shadow. If he used a hastily-formed Spell, Vale's Dark Spirit could just quickly deal with it and waste his time.

With this in mind, he decided to go all out so he could focus on the Headmaster.

Unfortunately, the gold coin that he was holding tightly seemed to have been sucked into the void, disappearing from his sight!

He wasn't even able to react until it was gone!

'W-what was that?!'

Mark's eyes widened as he couldn't explain what had just happened.

He checked his sleeve again and confirmed that the gold coin was really gone!

Beads of cold sweat suddenly formed on his back as he failed to understand what was going on.

Unfortunately, he doesn't have the time to think for long as the Transformation Artists are already reaching their limits.

'Mark! What are you doing?! You're supposed to kill the Headmaster while he's busy restraining us!'

'I'm on it now!' Mark answered as he decided to ignore Vale for now.

He had to change his plans as he swiftly backed away and went to a nearby shelf.

He was planning to use an item inside the Armory!

"Hey, you're not supposed to touch them..." Headmaster Jean coldly spoke while restraining the struggling Bears with his Dark Chains.

To be honest, these Bears were incredibly strong, and it wouldn't be weird if they got to escape once he used a different spell.

However, he couldn't just let Mark use any of the items here.

He used a portion of his energy to cast a Dark Spell.

"Shadow Soldier..." Headmaster Jean muttered.

This caught Vale's attention as he swiftly looked at the Shadow Soldier that had appeared beside Mark...

"This... You can do it like that?!" Vale was shocked as soon as he saw the Headmaster use his enemy's shadow to create the Shadow Soldier!

That's right! Headmaster Jean used Mark's shadow to trigger the Spell instead of using his own shadow!

Vale had never thought that this was actually possible. It was a good thing that he saw it now since he

'Is this perhaps an Advanced Realm Shadow Soldier?! Will it work with Shadow Mutilation Spell?' Vale thought in excitement as he also wanted to do something like that.

Summoning a Shadow Soldier using your opponent's shadow, then making it commit suicide using the Shadow Mutilation... That seemed like a cruel combination, but it seemed like a proper trump card.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Vale heard three consecutive punches from the Shadow Soldier as it tried to fight against Mark who was planning to take something on the shelves.

"You dare underestimate us?!" One of the Bears spoke with a barely audible voice as he felt that the black chains were weakening.

He started to release a stronger aura as the chains started creaking, threatening to be broken at any moment.

"What a tough bear..." Headmaster Jean wryly smiled as the Black Chains were supposed to expose them to a strong corruption.

If these chains caught some other Arcanists, they should've weakened a lot by now, and the Vengeful Spirit he had prepared would be able to use their bodies as Vessels.

A corrupted body would be a perfect target for Vengeful Spirits, after all.

Unfortunately, it didn't go as planned as the three Bears resisted his chains like they were normal ones instead of mystical ones.

"Tsk... I'm not fond of killing animals, but you've given me no other choice."