

## D. Extraction 361

### Chapter 361 Isolate

Vale grasped the broken artifact, feeling a surge of energy entering his body.

Nevertheless, he didn't feel alarmed. He could tell that the energy was harmless.

"This is indeed an Immortal Item..." Vale muttered. It wasn't because he had an appraisal ability but because his system could recognize what he was trying to extract.

[ Immortal Fragment has been discovered. Would you like to extract it? ]

Of course, Vale didn't Extract the item...

Instead, he observed it carefully.

Though damaged, its essence still emanates a faint glow, hinting at the immense power it once held.

The artifact, or the Broken Immortal Item, was crafted from an ancient material that seems to be a fusion of metal and ethereal essence. Its surface was adorned with intricate engravings and symbols, weathered by time and wear. The markings, although faded, suggest a rich history and deep significance.

Again, he couldn't understand what was written on it. He probably needs to take another Ancient Language class to learn this.

Anyway, the Broken Immortal Item takes the form of a handheld object similar to a scepter or a ceremonial staff.

It was empty at its pinnacle, where a pristine gemstone might have once resided. It probably held a precious stone or crystal and might even be a source of higher Divinity Points.

The fractured nature of the artifact was evident, with visible cracks running through its structure. Yet, despite its damaged state, there was an undeniable air of resilience and latent power that surrounded it.

"What does it do?" Vale asked.

After all, he wasn't an expert in this. Using his Phantasm State, he could tell the broken staff had an orb of blue light inside. This could mean a lot of things, but it should be a power related to nature... which was quite weird since this is the Dark Soul Tower.

He expected this Immortal Item to be related to Darkness or something Evil.

The mysterious entity smiled at his question as it then started fading away. Nevertheless, before it completely disappeared, it still answered Vale's question.

"Cursed Growth... and... You can only take a single book on the shelf, so choose carefully."

"What?" Vale repeated as he looked at the disappearing figure of the entity. He thought that the entity would explain what Cursed Growth was... However, he was instead told to take one book in the shelves.

Their meeting was so short, and he couldn't even tell whether he should really follow their instruction and return here once he got stronger.

After all, he doesn't think that a complete Immortal Item could give him a significant boost in his strength. At most, he was looking forward to Extract a genuine Immortal Item.

'Alright... Let's not return here. I'll just get into trouble once I free him.' Vale thought to himself as he looked at the shelves.

He couldn't read a single book, so he simply used his Spirit Vision and found a random book that was emitting a strong Aura. Well, it must be something good, so he picked it up.

As he held it in his hands, he felt a faint but powerful surge of Ancient energy from within its pages. The book seemed to vibrate with a mysterious aura, as if it was happy being taken from its shelf.

"Interesting..." Vale muttered as he placed the Broken Immortal Item down and opened the book.

It revealed pages filled with intricate symbols and glyphs in the same Ancient Language he couldn't decipher. Yet, as he gazed upon the text, he felt an inexplicable connection, as if the book itself was trying to communicate with him.

'It's a pity... I can't understand you...' Vale closed the book and looked around.

His Phantasm State was already reaching its limit, so he wanted to go out as quickly as possible. He didn't feel comfortable, especially if the entity was still watching him.

Luckily, he found an exit leading to another floor. He wanted to leave this place even if he went to the higher floor.

As Vale prepared to escape this strange floor, the Mysterious Existence's voice echoed through the chamber.

"Remember, Vale, our fate is intertwined. The day will come when our paths converge once more."

With those enigmatic words lingering in the air, Vale passed through the door, which was actually an exit to the Tower!

Just like that, he arrived outside the Dark Soul Tower, carrying the broken Immortal Item and the Ancient Book!

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As Vale stepped out of the Dark Soul Tower, the professors who were gathered outside couldn't help but be taken aback by his sudden appearance.

Their expressions shifted from anticipation to worry as they noticed the exhaustion on Vale's face and sensed something amiss.

Professor Gale Evans, with a concerned tone, approached Vale first. "Vale, my dear, what happened inside the Tower? We were worried about your safety. Please, tell us what transpired."

Vale, who felt really tired today, suddenly had some energy in him as he stepped back from the seductive Professor.

"P-professors..."

Vale was certainly surprised by their presence here!

'Were they waiting for me?' He thought.

Professor Mark, furrowing his brow, chimed in. "Indeed, Vale. We sensed a disturbance in the energy within the Tower. We were preparing to send some experts when you emerged. Are you alright? Did you encounter something inside?"

Vale wryly smiled at this question. After a moment of thought, he decided to tell them the truth...

In any case, he didn't want to free whatever that entity was.

He nodded at the Professor and began recounting his encounter with the enigmatic entity within the Tower. Of course, he excluded something they shouldn't know, like how it recognized that he defied death before.

The professors listened intently, their worry deepening with each word.

Professor Cyrus, his voice filled with trepidation, spoke next. "Vale, the Mysterious Existence is a powerful force that has been shrouded in mystery for centuries. Its true nature and intentions remain unknown. It's a good thing that you didn't make a promise with it."

Professor Stella nodded. "This Mysterious Existence has a way of affecting those who come into contact with it. We must ensure your well-being and monitor any changes or signs of its influence..."

The captain of the Fourth Squad, who had been observing the conversation, stepped forward with a stern expression. "Vale, as the captain of the Fourth Squad, it is my duty to protect the Academy from any potential threats. The emergence of the Mysterious Existence is a matter of great concern. We have to isolate and observe you for a while until we confirm you're not possessed."

## Chapter 362 Unexpected Improvement

"W-what?"

Vale's eyes widened in disbelief as the Captain of the Fourth Squad suggested isolating him due to the possibility of being possessed by the Mysterious Existence.

'Are you serious? Don't you have any spell to confirm I'm not possessed?' Vale thought as he felt a bit disappointed in the Captain.

On the other hand, the Professors seemed to dislike the Captain's idea as well, especially Professor Gale Evans, who appeared to be ready to smack his head.

The weight of the suggestion hung heavily in the air, and Vale could sense the tension building among the professors and the Captain.

Feeling confused and frustrated, Vale took a step forward, his voice steady but filled with determination.

"Captain, I understand your concern, but I assure you that I am not possessed. The encounter with the Mysterious Existence was unsettling, yes, but I am still in control of myself and my actions..."

While saying this, he was also thinking of a way to prove that he wasn't possessed.

Professor Zara, her voice calm yet firm, interjected. "Captain, we must exercise caution and not jump to conclusions. I don't see any changes in Vale's condition. Isolation may not be necessary at this point."

"Indeed, Captain... In the first place, the Dark Soul Tower was known for its strong purifying power. Anything that wasn't given as a reward could never be taken out of the Tower... or they'd be purged. This includes the Evil Shadows, Vengeful Spirits, and other Spiritual Beings that could possess our Students. Isolation may do more harm than good." Professor Stella added.

'Ohh...' Vale didn't expect that the professors would strongly side with him.

He could see the conflict within the Captain's eyes, torn between the responsibility to protect and the need for understanding.

The Captain hesitated for a moment before finally relenting, realizing the validity of the professors' arguments.

"Very well," the Captain conceded, "but we must remain vigilant and closely monitor Vale's well-being. Any signs of unusual behavior or influence must be reported immediately."

Vale nodded, acknowledging the Captain's concern while appreciating the professors' unwavering support. "I understand, Captain. I will also communicate any changes or concerns that arise."

Professor Gale Evans finally found an opportunity as she spoke with a hint of excitement.

"Now that it's settled, can you tell us about the two items you're holding? I don't think the first, second, or third floor gives that kind of reward."

The other Professors were also curious about this as they looked at Vale simultaneously.

Vale hesitated for a moment before he answered cautiously.

"You're right, Professor. I didn't get these items on those floors."

As the professors and the Captain were about to inquire further about the damaged staff and the Ancient Book that Vale held, the sound of footsteps echoed through the hallway.

Headmaster Jean, returning earlier than expected, appeared with a smile hanging on his face.

"Ah, Vale, there you are..." Headmaster Jean said, his voice carrying a mix of relief and curiosity.

The Captain of the Fourth Squad then reported what had happened as Headmaster Jean nodded in understanding.

"I need you for a moment, Vale..." He then shifted his attention to others and continued.

"Professors, Captain, I will take care of him. Please ensure that the Tower is safe before letting the Necromancy Students enter again." Jean said as he grabbed Vale's shoulder.

Without waiting for their replies, Jean and Vale were shrouded by darkness before disappearing.

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Just like that, Vale arrived inside the Headmaster's office. This wasn't the first time he encountered this technique, so he wasn't too surprised.

"This Shadow Step again... It seemed really cool. Should I record this instead?" Vale mused as he was already considering recording the Dark Spells he found in the Dark Tower...

He already has Lightspeed, and with his incredibly high Agility, he believes he could beat even the Headmaster if they run in a marathon. However, the convenience of the Shadow Step seemed too obvious.

"Vale, only those who reached the fifth and sixth floor of the Tower would normally get Mystical Items. However, I believe that you barely have the capacity to reach the Fourth Floor... What happened?" Headmaster Jean asked as he returned to his seat.

Vale wryly smiled at this. In any case, he already expected to be questioned, so he simply decided to tell the truth.

This includes the mysterious floor he entered.

"Hmm?" This shocked the Headmaster since no one had ever reached that floor before.

As Vale continued, the Headmaster's eyes widened as he realized that Vale successfully negotiated with that entity.

This time, Vale mentioned what he heard from the entity before he left the Tower.

"Our fate is intertwined. The day will come when our paths converge once more... That sounds like a threat." Headmaster Jean repeated.

"That's right, Headmaster. I'm sure that the mysterious entity will try to do something again. I don't think I'll clear the Dark Soul Tower again. This might be the last time I enter it..." Vale said as he returned the metal key to the Headmaster.

"I understand. It's better if you don't enter again. Just keep those things with you. I can already tell they're not being tracked and do not possess any sentience. It should be safe to use them."

Headmaster Jean instructed as he shifted his attention to the Ancient Book. "As for the language in that book... It's called Ievada. I'm not an expert on it, but I know that this language was used by the first empire built on the southern continent. No one speaks this language now, so you might have trouble deciphering it. Even our Language Professors have limited knowledge about it."

"I understand, Headmaster." Vale replied.

He stayed inside the office for a few more minutes as Headmaster Jean asked about his experience on the first three floors.

Finally, after Vale returned to his room, he checked his Attribute Panel to see how many energy points he had accumulated.

[ Name: Kyle Marshall ]

[ Attributes: Strength 79.85, Agility 75.95, Intelligence 100, Vitality 75.10 ]

[ Dark Arts: Spell Dispersion Lv7, Ghost Hand Lv7, Incorruptible Body Lv9, Darkness Manipulation Lv7, Spirit Vision Lv4, Light Absorption Lv6, Create Shadow Soldier Lv7, Cursed Breath Lv4, Moonlight Curse Lv7, Darkness Coil Lv4, Spectral Hands Lv4, Corrupted Chains Lv4, Dead Heart Lv4, Active Curse Break Lv4, Dusk Imprisonment Lv4 ]

[ Holy Arts: Divine Sense Lv7, Blessed Healing Lv4 ]

[ Celestial Arts: Call of the Divine Lightning Lv4, Shadow Mutilation Lv6 ]

[ Summoning Art: Grimoire Attraction Lv6 ]

[ Transformation Art: Human Shapeshift Lv7, Beast Shapeshift Lv4, Voice Manipulation Lv4 ]

[ Martial Art: Meridian Access Lv7 ]

[ Mystic Arts: Arcane Armor Lv6, Soul Bind Lv2 ]

[ Neutral Ability: Extrasensory Perception Spell Lv7, Traceless Shift Lv7, Lightspeed Lv7 ]

[ Available Energy: 8,990 ]

[ Available Divinity: 2798.30 ]

"Ahhh... It reached level 9?"

Vale was stunned as he saw the improvement of his Incorruptible Body.

Chapter 363 New Academic Year

Vale didn't even have the time to be shocked at the massive increase in his Energy Points as he was stunned to see that his Incorruptible Body had already reached Level 9! This equals the peak stage of the Advanced Realm!

Just one more Level and it will reach the legendary Perfect Realm!

According to the lessons he had, no one had ever reached that realm in their Spells! Even if there was, there were no records of it whatsoever.

"How did this happen?" Vale muttered to himself as he tried recalling what happened in the Dark Soul Tower.

He could recall his excessive release of Dark Aura at that time, which was triggered by his Incorruptible Body.

In the end, he could only think that it was related to how he entered the strange room and was contacted by the mysterious entity. Perhaps it was the tower itself that helped him level it up.

'I guess I saved a lot of energy points for this, huh...' Vale thought as the cost of upgrading the Incorruptible Body from Level 8 to Level 9 would be 7,680 points! That would be too huge!

'I wish it was the Spell Dispersion that was upgraded instead...' Vale mused as the Spell Dispersion was his most expensive Spell right now since it has the base price of 50 Energy Points!

Furthermore, it can be a very useful offensive and defensive Spell.

On the other hand, the Incorruptible Body wasn't some sort of offensive Spell, so it was a bit of pity, but nonetheless, Vale was still happy with this discovery.

"Now... What should I do with these energy points? It's almost nine thousand..." Vale muttered as he turned his attention to his Energy Points.

To be honest, he really liked to level up his Divine Sense. After all, it was frustrating to him when he was unable to 'inspect' Sherman.

He believes that a stronger Divine Sense would do the work for that.

However, he was a bit hesitant to spend his hard-earned points on a Support-Type Spell!

Currently, his Celestial Arts were the most reliable offensive spells. However, he couldn't even use them, unless he was hiding his identity.

'Should I just push my Ghost Hands to the limit?' Vale thought to himself.

This basic Spell that he got had been really useful. He was also known in the Academy for using this Spell. Unfortunately, it is still a Support-Type Spell that was only strong because it was high Level.

Ultimately, this Spell would also become useless if he met another Dark Spellcaster with high-level Spectral Hands or Spirit Hands.

It took him some time to decide what to level up first. In the end, he recalled one of the spells he would certainly get in the future. It was the Shadow Marionnette Spell. It was the fourth Academy-Exclusive Spell that was not required to be learned by students, but he certainly would.

According to what he learned, if he wanted to record the Shadow Marionnette, he would have a higher chance of success if the three other Academy-Exclusive Spells were actually in the Advance Realm!

With this idea, Vale leveled up his Light Absorption to Level 7, spending 576 Energy Points.

He didn't stop here, he also upgraded his Spirit Vision from Level 4 to 6 and Beast Shapeshift Spells from Level 4 to Level 7.

That was 96 Energy Points and 336 Energy Points, respectively.

Realizing that his Energy Points had barely decreased, Vale closed his eyes and increased his Divine Lightning and Shadow Mutilation to Level 7!

That was 560 and 256 Divinity Points!

In the end, he spent a total of 1,824 in today's upgrading session! That was 1008 Energy Points and 816 Divinity Points

As for the remaining points, he wanted to keep them for now and upgrade his Spells depending on his situation.

If he needed to cure people, he could just increase his Blessed Healing Spell's Level. Or if he needed a better disguise, he would just increase his Transformation Spell's Levels.

Furthermore, he might find a chance to use his Grimoire and summon some items or spirits someday. He knew that he would need a lot of points for that, especially if he would disguise himself as a Summoner in the future.

He believed that it was better to have extra points than insufficient points.

He then checked his Energy Points and confirmed that he still had plenty.

[ Available Energy: 7,982] [ Divinity Points: 1982.3 ]

Soon, Vale fell asleep due to tiredness while his Broken Immortal Item and Ancient Book were beside him.

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Weeks passed, and the academic year began anew.

The campus buzzed with anticipation as students reunited after the summer break.

During this time, Vale was feeling tired. The past few days had been exhausting for him as, for some reason, he still kept dreaming of Professor Evans, although the Headmaster confirmed that she wasn't doing it anymore.

Headmaster Jean personally investigated this matter, and in the end, he was told that he might just be suffering from a trauma she brought to him.

He then suggested Vale take therapy, but in the end, Vale refused it because he didn't want his body to be closely investigated by another Arcanist. He had too many secrets on him.

Because of that, he approached the start of the semester with a mix of trepidation and determination.

He would resolve this problem on his own!

Luckily, as he settled into his classes, Vale found solace in the support of his friends.

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In the meantime, in the cafeteria of the Main Building of the Academy...

A young red-haired female student smiled at the sight of a familiar senior, Vale Chambers.

As the new academic year began, Celina Vermont, a determined second-year student, couldn't shake off her desire to have Vale Chambers as her Personal Shadow Knight. Despite her previous unsuccessful attempts, she was determined to find a way to make Vale agree to her request.

With her mind set on her goal, Celina hatched a plan.

It was a plan she had considered over the past few months. She even consulted several experts in her family about this.

Now, she was ready...

'Vale... You'll be mine...'

Chapter 364 Vale's Replacement



Heinz Becker, a brilliant and enigmatic Dark Alchemist, was immersed in his daily life within the chambers of the Becker Family Manor.

This estate, now under the ownership of the Chambers Family, served as his sanctuary and laboratory for his ambitious research into the Malefic Branch of the Dark Arts.

Within the Manor's dimly lit halls and shadowy chambers, Heinz conducted his groundbreaking experiments, pushing the boundaries of Magic and Dark Alchemy.

His ultimate goal was to create a new generation of powerful practitioners who would embrace the Malefic Branch and revolutionize the understanding of Dark Arts.

As he toiled away in his private laboratory, surrounded by ancient tomes and arcane artifacts, Heinz reveled in the endless possibilities that lay before him. He had so many ideas and hypotheses, each waiting to be tested and refined...

However, he was getting too old now. He had to hurry and show his results. Without results, no one would even bother completing his research.

"I wonder what he's doing now..." Heinz muttered as he recalled his first experiment.

After a couple of years, he had remarkable successes and created other experimental subjects with extraordinary abilities.

Vale Chambers, his very first successful human trial experiment, had become his most promising pupil. Under his careful guidance, Vale had mastered the intricate techniques of Spell Dispersion and attained an Incorruptible Body—an achievement that fascinated and intrigued him even now...

After all, he had difficulty replicating this success with other subjects.

Nevertheless, he didn't give up since Vale's progress served as a testament to his own prowess as a Dark Alchemist...

Flip... Flip... Flip...

Heinz then shifted his attention to the letters he received from Headmaster Jane. They were letters regarding the Vale's situation and also requests to send more "Vale Chambers" to the academy.

'Vale's doing really well... However, the potions I made for him were still incomplete. If he didn't increase the mastery of his Spell Dispersion and Incorruptible Body to Advanced Realm before he turned 16, then his Spell Models would collapse.'

Heinz thought as he believed that Vale was still incomplete... It was a pity that he didn't have the best potion at that time when he guided Vale.

Anyway, thanks to the Headmaster's advice, he formulated a daring plan for the upcoming academic year. At the same time that Vale reached his fourth year in the Academy, he intended to send several other carefully selected subjects, each possessing unique talents and abilities, to the Vermont Academy.

He envisioned them as emissaries of the Malefic Branch, poised to showcase the power and potential of this unexplored realm of Dark Arts. Their presence would challenge the traditional understanding of the Dark Arts and pave the way for a new era of magical exploration.

"Kukuku..."

Heinz chuckled as he imagined the faces of those prominent families of the Dark Arts Faction when they realized the powers of his Malefic Branch.

Knock. Knock...

The knocking sound of the door suddenly interrupted his thought as he felt the presence of one of his apprentices on the other side.

"Evelyn? Come in." Heinz said with a gentle tone.

Evelyn was one of his best apprentices. He had no doubt that Evelyn was better than Vale Chambers, so he was treating her differently. Evelyn wasn't just Vale's replacement but also his perfect experimental subject.

He had no doubt that if she faced Vale in combat, Vale would easily be defeated because he lacked the necessary talent to master Dark Spells faster.

Currently, her Incorruptible Body had already reached the peak stage of the Elementary Realm through his help. He spent ten times more potions than he spent on Vale.

Because of that, she was already scheduled to drink her second Darkness Possession potion so she could achieve even more in the Darkness Path.

"Master Heinz, the new batch of people seeking your guidance has arrived..." Evelyn said as she looked at her Master with reverence.

"Hmm? Where's Denise? She's supposed to filter them out before sending them to me..." Heinz asked.

Denise White, a previous errand girl working for him, had now become his secretary, doing miscellaneous things for him, including managing the Manor.

She also had access to most of his Alchemical Items and Books that not even his apprentices could get close to.

"Miss Denise informed us a few hours ago that she can't be disturbed right now. I think she was preparing to do a ritual."

As Evelyn said this, Heinz's eyes lit up as he recalled Denise's plan to summon a Dark Spirit.

"Right... I forgot about that. I'm really getting old. Fine... I'll take care of them." Heinz said with a sigh as he stood up from his seat to meet his visitors.

Denise White was indeed talented, similar to her older sister. Unfortunately, her weak physique limited her growth in the Darkness Path. It was a good thing that she was also interested in Alchemy, so she had different methods of getting stronger.

Clank...

As the gate of the Manor opened, Heinz saw the new batch of people and realized that there were more of them than he expected.

These people were primarily young boys and girls.

However, in some cases, there were those who were already in their twenties, but he would still accept them as long as they passed his tests.

Of course, he wouldn't just feed them some Darkness Possession Potion to test them. He wasn't that brutal to his people.

Furthermore, the main ingredient for this potion could only be purchased from the Vermont Family. Although he could still make them with his current inventory, he doesn't have unlimited resources, so he had to be prudent.

Instead, Heinz exposed them to rituals, spells, and enchantments, pushing their limits and unlocking their hidden potential.

In this way, he would be able to find new apprentices who could potentially be the next Malefic Arcanist.

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In the meantime, Denise White, a young and ambitious Apprentice Alchemist, found herself engrossed in her personal laboratory within the Becker Family Manor. While she had faithfully served as Heinz's secretary, her true passion lay in the realm of Dark Magic...

As she meticulously prepared her laboratory for the ritual, she surrounded herself with carefully arranged ritual materials, mystical items, and dimly lit candles.

The laboratory had soon become solemn as she focused on the intricate steps of the ritual.

Chapter 365 Return?!

Denise meticulously followed each step of the ritual, her hands steady and precise as she handled the sacrifices she had prepared.

She carefully arranged the candles and other items, ensuring perfect alignment in the Magic Circle.

The candles flickered, casting dancing shadows that seemed to mirror Denise's own determination. Her eyes shimmered with a mix of excitement and reverence as she prepared to delve into the unknown.

With a breath held in anticipation, Denise chanted the ritual prayer.

"Oh, Glorious Gates that lead to the Spirit World, Sacred Weaver of the Soul Society, Nameless Guardian of the Harbingers, As a devoted follower of the Eternal Darkness, I humbly beseech you to grant me passage.

In this solemn moment, I seek to open the gates, To beckon forth a Dark Spirit from your realm, One who desires friendship and kinship with me.

With utmost reverence, I call upon the unseen, May my words reach their ethereal ears, May they heed my sincere plea and answer my call.

Oh, Dark Spirits, hear my earnest invocation, Accept the offering of my devout devotion, Open the path between our worlds...

Glorious Gates, I call upon your power. Break the barriers that separate our existence, And let the boundless energy of the Dark Spirits flow."

As the ritual reached its crescendo, Denise's focus intensified.

She closed her eyes, shutting out the world around her, and allowed herself to become fully immersed in the moment. Her mind was calm as she tried sensing the unseen entities she sought to connect with.

The ritual she just made was certainly different from Vale's incantations... This was what real incantations should be since she doesn't have any good connections with the Spirit World, unlike Vale.

Soon, the room seemed to tremble as if responding to Denise's call.

A surge of energy coursed through the air as it pulsed throughout the through... Shadows danced and swirled as if drawn to the intensity of the ritual.

'Please...' Denise said one last time before she opened her eyes.

She extended her hands towards the center of the ritual circle, palms upturned, ready to receive the manifestation of the Dark Spirit she sought to contract with.

And then, in a sudden burst of ethereal energy, a presence materialized before her. It was a dark figure shrouded in shadows, its form ever-shifting.

However, before it could fully materialize, something unexpected happened!

A sudden disturbance halted the process. The Dark Spirit that was originally intended to be summoned remained hidden in the depths of the Spirit World. No! It was being pulled away!

'W-what's going on?!' Denise was already about to cry since she spent most of her savings to complete this ritual.

If she failed this time, she would have to save for six months to redo the ritual.

"Why are you retreating?!" Denise could no longer hold it in as she asked with a teary voice.

She wasn't expecting an answer, but she was shocked to see that a new presence emerged.

She could tell that it was different from the previous Dark Spirit she was trying to summon. This Dark Spirit seemed stronger, and she could feel that it had a high sentience!

Soon, an ethereal Dark Spirit in a female figure that was shrouded in a cloak of shadow appeared in front of her.

A powerful aura enveloped the room as this Dark Spirit fully emerged and stepped forward to take over the summoning.

'Another Dark Spirit took over the summoning ritual? What's going on?' Denise was confused.

This Dark Spirit was captivating, and she exuded an air of ancient wisdom and mystery.

In any case, she couldn't mess this up. She knew that summoning a Dark Spirit was just the first phase. They could still return to the Spirit World since they were different from other Spiritual Beings that could normally be summoned.

She knew that there would be a test for her, and depending on how she scored on this test, the Dark Spirit could either leave or stay with her for some time.

Denise, filled with anticipation and curiosity, couldn't help but feel a sense of apprehension. She spoke cautiously.

"Who are you, Spirit? What name do you bear?"

At first, she didn't want to ask this since Dark Spirits don't have names, according to Heinz. Usually, it would be the summoners who would give names to them.

However, she felt that this one looked different, so she couldn't help but ask instead.

Then, as she waited for an answer, an ethereal female voice filled the room, carrying a haunting melody.

"I am Lotus..."

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Meanwhile, in the well-lit clubroom of the Battle Arena Committee, Vale Chambers had no choice but to speak with Celina Vermont since Nadine told him to teach her how to use the recording crystals.

Then, as Vale was about to tell her how to purchase these items from the Alchemy Faction, he felt a sudden unease ripple through him.

It was as if an invisible presence had brushed against his senses, sending a shiver down his spine. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but there was something in the air that felt familiar yet enigmatic.

'Is that my ESP Spell? Am I being cursed by Professor Evans this time?' Vale thought to himself as he couldn't really interpret what he felt just now.

He wasn't sure if it was related to the Golden Pocketwatch, the Stormbringer, the other Kyle in his dreams, or perhaps the Mysterious Entity he met in the Dark Soul Tower... Well, it might even be about the Immortal Item or Ancient Book that he had brought with him!

There are just too many things he didn't know.

"Hmm?" Celina noticed the subtle change in Vale's demeanor.

"Is something the matter, Vale?" She inquired, her eyes filled with curiosity.

She had been looking forward to this meeting and was ready to negotiate once again with Vale... She had made a lot of preparations, and this time, she knew that even if Vale wouldn't immediately agree to become her Personal Shadow Knight, he would definitely be tempted.

Chapter 366 Threats?

Vale shook his head at Celina's question and shifted the topic.

"Nothing... Do you have questions regarding your task?" Vale asked.

He knows that Celina was involved with Neil's sudden procurement of high-level Mystical Items before. However, he didn't have any proof of it, so he decided not to blame her for that. In any case, he still defeated Neil at that time without even using any of his Spells.

"I'm fine... The procurement of that recording crystal would be quite difficult if I'm alone. I hope we get more first-year recruits this year." Celina replied.

Well, she was the only one in her batch, so she always had to team up with her seniors if she was assigned a task. This includes the cleaning task within their Archive.

"I see... Then tell me why you wanted to meet me. I'm sure it's not all about the Club Activities." Vale said as he looked at Celina carefully. He wasn't feeling threatened by this young girl, so he was quite fearless facing her.

Celina smiled at the question. She wasn't surprised that Vale was aware of her plans.

"I've come across something that might interest you, Vale." She whispered, her voice laced with intrigue.

Vale was uninterested as he knew that she was simply trying to win him over to become her Personal Shadow Knight.

He simply raised his brow as he allowed her to continue.

"According to the new rules, next year's Twelve Academies Competition would allow 4th-year and 5th-year students to participate... I'm sure there will be huge pressure on you once you're selected as a participant."

"Mhmm?" Vale was a bit confused. He doesn't know why he should be pressured into that competition between twelve academies.

They were only fourth-year students, so the expectation shouldn't be that high. They should just be making up for the numbers there since the real competition should still be those in the higher years.

The students who will participate there shouldn't be in a situation similar to his where they could get their shadows back once they won.

"What do you mean?" He asked, confused.

Celina smiled as she crossed her arms.

"You might feel you're great here in the Academy, but once you're in the Twelve Academies Competition, you will be in deep trouble if you're not prepared. I don't think I have to tell you that you will face against Acolytes, Runecasters, and Aura Users... Those three could already negate your Dark Energy... If you were matched against those lunatic Psychic Arts, you'd be in even greater danger."

"Hmm? I understand I might be in trouble against those young priests or acolytes, but runecasters and aura users? I don't think so..." Vale replied. As for those Mind Controllers, he wasn't too sure either whether he could resist their powers.

"Heh... You're not reading the kingdom's newspaper, are you? The Runecasters Association has already made new discoveries with their Anti-Dark Magic runes. All rogue Dark Magicians are now being hunted by the police with this new Rune they developed. You should expect them to use this Rune in the competition..."

Vale was quite speechless as he was indeed unaware of it. He wasn't reading newspapers most of the time, so he probably missed a lot of important news around the kingdom.

Celina was satisfied with Vale's reaction and continued.

"As for the Knights, you should know that they were using a unique Arcane Art that could produce a very unusual energy called Aura around their bodies. This Aura protects them from Curses and Hexes, so you'd be forced to fight them head-on... Even if you're as strong as those Slender Zombies... That won't be enough against those muscle freaks."

Vale highly doubted that, but he didn't comment about it.

"So what do you want me to do?" He asked.

Celina finally chuckled as she replied. "Since I'm your rich and kind junior, I can help you acquire the Shadow Step Spell Model, a technique that would enhance your mobility and prowess.

Celina knows that the Shadow Step Spell Model required 25 Contribution Points to obtain. Additionally, a ritual involving the Shadow Stone was necessary to successfully record the spell in Vale's Spell Light or Spell Slot.

Knowing that Vale lacked such a movement spell and the necessary Contribution Points to get its Spell Model and precious Shadow Stone, she believed that by presenting him with the opportunity to obtain such a coveted spell, she could further bend him to her will.

"Ohh..."

Vale was indeed interested in the Shadow Step's Spell Model. However, he could just wait a few years, and he could certainly get it on his own. He doesn't think he'd need it in the competition either.

Furthermore, he might not even wait that long, especially if he decided to go rogue and extract some Dark Arts Practitioners...

Professor Evans would probably be the first on his list if he wanted to extract someone.

Vale didn't speak, so Celina went on to explain the requirements for acquiring the Shadow Step, emphasizing the need for Contribution Points and the elusive Shadow Stone that may not be available in the Contribution Exchange Hall. Even if there was a Shadow Stone there, it would be worth around 10 Contribution Points!

She painted a picture of the immense power and advantage Vale would gain with this spell, hoping it would fuel his desire to possess it.

"Without the Shadow Stone, even if you have the Spell Model, you'd only have less than five percent chance of recording it successfully..."

"Mhmm... So you're saying that I'll get them from you? What's the catch? If you want me to be your Personal Shadow Knight for that Spell Model, you have to give up. I can get them someday." Vale said.

"Of course not! I know that the value of those two things would not be enough for your service... Instead, I want you to join me on a mission outside the Academy. It's arranged for the next two months, so you have plenty of time to prepare."

She then continued to explain about the mission she received and that she was willing to shoulder all the expenses.

'That's weird...'

As soon as Vale realized that Celina was trying to get him out of the Academy, he immediately knew what was happening.

He didn't immediately give a reply as he looked at her coldly, weighing the pros and cons of this mission.

'This must be a trap...'

Vale silently considered whether he was afraid of the trap or not.

Chapter 367 Tempted

Celina lightly smiled as she saw Vale being tempted by her request.

The allure of the Shadow Step and Vale's desire for a powerful movement technique was her bet to take Vale outside of the Academy.

She believed that by tempting him with this opportunity, she could ensnare him in her web of manipulation, ultimately achieving dominance over him...

She couldn't help but feel excited about this.

She wanted Vale to be hers before the competition started. After all, if her Personal Shadow Knight achieved great results in the competition, then it would be the same as the Vermont Family achieving results!

She would then become famous in her clan and would be envied by many.

On the other hand, Vale's mind raced as he analyzed the situation.

He knew that Celina was cunning and had her own agenda, but the allure of the Shadow Step Spell Model was undeniable. The power and advantage it could provide him in his pursuit of Dark Arts were tempting.

She was also right about the difficulty of procuring the Shadow Stone needed to record this Spell Model. After all, his highly-rated Dark Spells like the Create Shadow Soldier and Moonlight Curse were just stolen or extracted from others.

Even the Spell Dispersion and Incorruptible Body required some unique potions to record them.

Nevertheless, Vale was not one to be easily swayed or manipulated. He had learned to trust his instincts, especially when it came to matters of danger and deception. He also trusts his own strength to deal with any problems that he might encounter in this request. As he looked at Celina, his expression remained cold and guarded.



"Celina," Vale finally spoke, his voice laced with caution, "I appreciate your offer, but I cannot simply accept it without more information. What is the nature of this mission? Why do you want me specifically? And what guarantee do I have that it is not a trap?"

Celina's smile wavered slightly, her eyes narrowing as she realized that Vale was not as easily convinced as she had hoped. She knew she had to tread carefully if she wanted to gain his cooperation.

However, she wasn't too disappointed about this since she still had other plans to ensure that she could take him outside.

"Senior Vale, I understand your concerns..." Celina responded, her tone tinged with a hint of frustration. "The mission I speak of involves retrieving a rare artifact from a hidden location outside the Academy. It requires someone with your unique skills and knowledge in the dark arts... To be exact, your Advanced Realm Ghost Hands would be useful on this mission."

She paused for a moment, carefully choosing her words. "As for the guarantee, I am willing to offer you a binding magical contract. It will ensure our mutual cooperation and safety throughout the duration of the mission. You have my word that I have no ill intentions towards you."

Vale's eyes narrowed further, his mind working through the possibilities. A binding magical contract would indeed provide some level of assurance, but he couldn't shake off the feeling that there was more to this than meets the eye.

He then recalled something and asked doubtfully. "Wait... How can you accept such a mission? Retrieving a rare artifact? Isn't that supposed to be given to higher years?"

"Of course, not... Second-year students can now accept these missions as long as they have a senior with them and it isn't rated to be highly dangerous. After all, there were changes in the Twelve Academies Competitions, so they're probably preparing the students a lot earlier. As for the reason that it requires two months of preparations, it's related to the new port being built to the town where the mission's objective is located." Celina replied.

That sounded a good argument, so Vale could only nod. Anyway, he could also check this mission later.

"Very well, Celina," Vale finally replied, his voice firm. "If you are willing to provide a binding magical contract and answer any additional questions I may have, then I will consider joining you on this mission. But remember, I am not one to be easily deceived or used. Should I sense any treachery or manipulation, our agreement will be null and void."

Celina's expression turned serious as she met Vale's gaze. "Agreed, Vale. I understand the weight of your words, and I assure you that I have no intention of betraying your trust. We will discuss the details of the mission further, and I will answer any questions you have."

As the conversation continued, Vale couldn't completely shake off his suspicions. The mission outside the Academy held both promise and danger, and he knew he would need to maintain his guard so he wouldn't suffer if he was met with a trap.

Soon, Vale left the clubroom, and Celina was left alone.

Unbeknownst to Vale, as he walked away, Celina's smile transformed into a sinister grin. She relished in the success of her plan... It was unfortunate that the mission would still happen in two more months, but it would also allow her to complete the stage she had prepared and fully use her family's Elite Arcanists to capture Vale and bend his will.

Once they were outside, she could guarantee that no one would be able to save Vale from her plans.

'It's your fault for rejecting me...'

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On the next day, the third-year class continued as usual. There weren't any early assessments for now, but there would be many of them before the academic year ends since they would have to choose which Dark Arts Branch they'll take next year.

That's right. During this year, they have to really consider what path to take so they won't waste a year of study.

As the morning sun bathed the Academy in golden hues, Vale prepared himself for another day of learning and discovery.

Today, he would attend his Alchemy class, a subject that had always intrigued him. This subject wasn't something he could easily learn outside the Academy, so he really wouldn't dare to miss this class.

Nevertheless, there was another reason he was excited about today's class, which was also the reason why he wouldn't choose the Dark Alchemist Path.

Well, he currently held an advantage over his classmates thanks to the collection of memories he had extracted from the corpses of skilled alchemists inside the Dark Soul Tower!

## Chapter 368 Which Branch

Professor Alexis, a distinguished alchemist with a sharp gaze and a passion for the subject, stood at the front of the classroom.

"Good morning, class..."

He said as he looked at the third-year students, his voice resonating with authority.

"In your previous year, you've learned basic concoctions of potions, pills, and even proper preparation of ingredients in various methods. With that skill, you can probably start working on a small apothecary or some Arcane Shop. However, if you want to improve and perhaps become an owner of your own shop someday, you have to listen to our class carefully... Today, we shall delve deeper into the world of Alchemical Potions."

Vale leaned forward, his eyes fixed on the Professor.

He was well aware that the alchemy subjects of second and third-year classes would only teach the basics of Alchemy. Things like Dark Body Manipulation, Artificial Element Transmutation, Dark Golem Contracts, and Reconfigurations could only be taught once you've entered the Dark Alchemy Branch.

Nevertheless, the Professor was right. Even if their only knowledge was related to the most basic potions, they could probably earn a living by working as an assistant or even making their own shop if they had the money to purchase supplies.

Professor Alexis continued. "Alchemy is the art of transmutation, of harnessing the fundamental forces of nature to create something greater. Today, we shall create a potion that enhances an Arcanist's physical strength and endurance. This potion only works with Arcanists. Pay close attention, for this potion requires precision and understanding."

"Ahh! Professor, is that similar to the Earth Eclipse Potion?" Warren asked as he recalled the famous potion that was rumored to be the potion that Vale used to fight against a Slender Zombie.

The question attracted everyone's attention, so they looked at Professor Alexis to wait for an answer.

"Earth Eclipse Potion? No... This is called Night Rage Potion. It may not be as strong as that potion, but it's cheaper by more than 80% and has an effect that is about half of the Earth Eclipse Potion. Additionally, this potion is greatly compatible with Dark Arcanists, unlike the Earth Eclipse Potion. Alright... I'll show you how it's done."

Soon, the class buzzed with anticipation as the Professor moved gracefully to the front of the room, where a table laden with ingredients awaited. He began to explain the process step by step, detailing the properties of each ingredient and the precise measurements required.

Midway through his explanation, Professor Alexis paused and turned to the class. "Now, can anyone tell me if the ingredient called 'Glowroot' can be replaced with something else while retaining the desired effects?"

The class was a bit surprised by the unexpected question. Nevertheless, their minds started to race as they searched through their memories about the ingredient that was mentioned.

They all know that Glowroot could enhance blood flow circulations, but aside from it, they couldn't think of any raw ingredient that could replace it in this concoction.

Vale hesitated for a moment, not wanting to appear presumptuous. He waited for someone else to speak up, but when no one did, he raised his hand.

Professor Alexis noticed Vale's raised hand and nodded in his direction. "Yes, Vale, what do you think?"

Vale took a deep breath before speaking. "Professor, the Glowroot can indeed be replaced with an alternative herb called 'Lumina Fern.' It possesses similar properties and could enhance the potion's effects even further."

Professor Alexis' eyes gently nodded and replied. "There are three ingredients I could think of, and the best replacement is indeed the Lumina Fern... Very well, could you elaborate on the preparation and properties of this herb?"

While Vale's classmates were still surprised that he got the correct answer, Vale remained unfazed by the question as he gathered his thoughts.

Drawing upon the memories he had extracted, Vale described the Lumina Fern in detail, explaining its unique properties and the proper method of harvesting and preparing it. He offered insights from

the alchemists whose memories he had absorbed, providing a comprehensive understanding of the herb's potential.

Of course, Vale wasn't just showing off for answering the Professor's question.

What he wanted to happen was to gain trust with the memories he had extracted.

Apparently, he had extracted so many memories from the corpses before, and there was some contradicting knowledge from them, so a part of him was telling not to trust it fully.

After all, the memories he got may appear genuine from their perspective but might differ from reality.

Professor Alexis listened attentively. He first doubted that Vale could adequately explain his answer, but his skepticism gradually gave way to fascination.

"Vale, your knowledge of the Lumina Fern is impressive. However, that ingredient is indeed quite rare in the western region, so we'll have to use the Glowroot for now."

The Professor then paused momentarily as he suddenly had an idea. "Do you want to take the lead and continue with the concoction? I will guide you on what to do."

Vale didn't hesitate and accepted the challenge. In any case, they will be doing this later in their practical activities, so he might as well go first to test his skills.

A sense of excitement and responsibility welled within him as he gathered the necessary ingredients and followed the Professor's instructions in the precise measurements and techniques.

With each step, he drew upon the memories of the Alchemist's past, making his movement fluid, and he could even recall what to do without the instructions guiding him.

As the potion took shape, the classroom was filled with a fragrant aroma. It was a testament to the successful fusion of ingredients and Vale's perfect continuation of the potion making...

The potion shimmered with a vibrant energy, hinting at its remarkable potency.

Professor Alexis surveyed the class, his eyes gleaming with satisfaction. "Well done."

Vale's classmates exchanged astonished glances. They didn't expect that Vale had talent in Alchemy!

"V-vale... Are you going to the Alchemy Branch too?" Jody Lumbarde, the member of the Academy Publication Committee, asked in exasperation.

If Vale was in the same Dark Arts Branch as her, she felt that there was no way she could show off her skills! Although she also had talent in alchemy, she didn't believe she could equal Vale.

Her question had also alarmed the other students as most of them didn't want to be overshadowed by Vale's talent!

Chapter 369 The Mission

"Ahh..."

Vale didn't expect such a question, but he could understand what they were thinking.

He then paused for a moment, meeting Jody's gaze.

'I guess it doesn't matter if they know my plans now...'

Well, they were probably thinking that if they all attended the same branch of Dark Arts, they would constantly be compared to him.

With this in mind, he decided to address their thoughts honestly.

"No, Jody..." Vale replied calmly. "I will choose the Dark Magic Branch."

Jody and the other students exchanged surprised glances. They had expected Vale to pursue Dark Alchemy, given his exceptional skills in the activity just now.

Vale could see their shocked faces as they were probably thinking how he wasn't capable of choosing the right path.

Nevertheless, he had reasons for his decision.

Professor Alexis also looked at Vale with curiosity and asked.

"Interesting... I thought that we'd meet again in your sixth-year Alchemy Class. Why did you choose the Dark Magic Branch? Why not the others? I heard that you're quite talented in other branches... Professor Lucius even thought you'd take the Essential Corruption Branch, considering how you seemed interested in the Evil Creatures. Professor Harrison also mentioned that you'll be a great Ritual Master. You even summoned a Dark Spirit, right?" Professor Alexis asked.

It appears that these Professors would talk about him during their break times.

Vale's classmates also had the same question, so they all looked at him, waiting for an answer.

Vale wryly smiled at this and answered after some thought.

"While Dark Alchemy is fascinating, it is not the path I wish to explore. I have personal reservations about the other branches as well. Necromancy, for instance, is a branch I find rather unpleasant... I don't think I could work on this branch for the rest of my life. Then, the Essential Corruption Branch doesn't align with my unique physique... And as for the Rituals Branch, I don't believe I would excel in ceremonies or incantations."

To be honest, his second option was the Essential Corruption Branch. However, because he heard that their bodies would need to absorb a certain type of corruption to excel in this branch, he had to give up. After all, his Incorruptible Body would not allow him to absorb this type of corruption.

The class nodded at Vale's words, each of them processing their own thoughts and aspirations within the realm of Dark Arts.

Some of them started rethinking the path they planned to take.

With the discussion concluded, the class ended, and Vale's daily life at the Academy continued.

In the days that followed, Vale immersed himself in his study, especially in the Magic Circle Class and Twelve Arcane Paths Class.

The Magic Circles Class wasn't too difficult for him, thanks to the memories he extracted... But since it was only a fragmented memory, he couldn't excel in the class. At the very least, the memories allowed him to understand the principles of the Magic Circles quite easily.

On the other hand, the Twelve Arcane Paths Class was what he was really excited about. He could finally learn more about the other Arcane Paths. This would be a good preparation for him before the Twelve Academies Competition.

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Two months had flown by, filled with intense studies and newfound friendships.

It was finally time for Vale to embark on the mission he had promised to Celina Vermont. Their objective was to search for a rare artifact in a distant town, a task that was filled with questionable details. Nevertheless, Vale was not going to back down... Especially with the current Divinity Points that he had.

'Let's see what kind of trap you've set for me.' Vale thought as he felt unafraid of what Celina was about to do.

With his current strength, he could only think of a few people who could match against him.

They were Bounty Hunter Sherman, Headmaster Jean, Alchemist Isaac Vermont, and Professor Gale Evans...

Sherman was just too unfathomable, and he couldn't even measure his strength.

Headmaster Jean, on the other hand, has a piece of his Shadow. One thing he learned in the Academy was that you should not trust a Dark Arcanist who has a part of you. Whether it was your hair, blood, or even your favorite item that has a close connection to you, it could be used to curse you or even bind your soul with it.

Perhaps, even if Vale knows he could be stronger than the Headmaster, he wouldn't dare to fight against him until he got his Shadow back.

As for Alchemist Isaac Vermont, Vale knew that he could get in trouble going against this man. He was a walking biological weapon, after all.

Perhaps if he wasn't restricted from using his poison and many other alchemical products, he would be able to deal with Sherman. Unfortunately, he was inside the Academy and had to limit what he could bring out in the battle.

Soon, Vale and Celina completed their preparations as they also signed their Binding Magic Contract.

To expedite their journey, they boarded an Airship that would swiftly carry them to their destination.

As the Airship glided through the clouds, Celina skillfully maintained her facade, ensuring that Vale remained oblivious to her true intentions.

'Let's see what will you do... I know you're not an idiot. You've probably prepared some things and thought you'd be safe with that contract and that Dark Spirit of yours...' Celina contained her laugh as she looked at the sky.

Unbeknownst to Vale, Celina had secretly assembled a team of Arcanists from her family posing as innocent passengers and mercenaries on the Airship.

Their mission was to capture Vale and bring him under Celina's control, to mold him into her Personal Shadow Knight, as they had discussed in their previous conversation.

"Hmm?" Vale suddenly felt something was off as he realized that the atmosphere within the Airship had changed.

'A Magic Circle was activated?' Vale thought to himself as he spread his Magic Zone. Then, he activated his Divine Sense and realized that the Airship was actually filled with Arcanists from various Arcane Paths!

'So her surprise isn't in the town. It's actually in the sky. It seems that this girl can't wait, huh...'

Suddenly, without warning, the calm air was shattered as the disguised mercenaries or Arcanists sprang into action, revealing their true colors.

Soon, Vale and the unsuspecting passengers found themselves caught in the midst of a ferocious surprise attack.

"Vale! Help me!" Celina shouted as Vale saw a couple of mercenaries was about to capture her.

#### Chapter 370 Not Yet Over

Vale's instincts were sharp, and he quickly realized that something was amiss.

'Aren't you the one who set this up?' Vale frowned at Celina's acting.

He knew that this ambush was too suspicious, and he could only think that Celina was merely playing the victim, and her cries for help were nothing more than a ruse.

However, he didn't have the time to confront her as he made a split-second decision to prioritize the safety of the unsuspecting passengers.

It seems that these mercenaries weren't holding back at all and trying to make this a real ambush. Other passengers had already perished!

'They really don't value other people's lives.' Vale thought as he proceeded to subdue the enemies.

With a swift motion, he unleashed his Spell Dispersion spell, a powerful ability that could neutralize and destroy incoming spells. The air crackled with energy as the spells of the Arcanists and mercenaries were shattered into nothingness, their magical attacks rendered useless.

"W-what?!"

"Is it the Runecaster's Anti-Dark Magic Rune?!"

"Not good!"

The Arcanists, taken by surprise at Vale's unexpected display of power, momentarily faltered. They couldn't even tell how he did it.

"Is that your doing?!" One of the mercenaries near Vale asked in frustration as he tried to activate his Spell again.

However, Vale simply smirked as he drew his Stormbringer to cut the man's arms! It was such an unexpected attack from a student of the Dark Arts Academy!

They have never considered that their target could wield a sword! Furthermore, Vale did it so swiftly using his Shadowblade Dance...

Their confidence wavered as they realized they were facing an opponent who couldn't just dismantle their spells easily but also fight them with a sword!

If they couldn't use their Spells, they would have to fight in physical combat, which they weren't prepared for!

"He can't do it repeatedly! Use your Spells once again!" One of the mercenaries in the crowd shouted. He seemed to be the leader and was closely paying attention to Vale's movements just now.

He could tell that Vale was an expert swordsman similar to the Knights he knew.

'This is not going well... Why is he even wielding a sword?!' He thought to himself, frustrated with this discovery as this wasn't in their briefing!

He couldn't help but glance at Celina's direction for giving them incomplete information. However, she also seemed confused since she had never seen Vale using a sword!

'How can he do this?!' Celina stood in shock as she witnessed Vale's ferocious attack.

Nevertheless, they couldn't give up just because of that.

As the battle continued, they confirmed that Vale could only use his Spell Disrupting Technique for a certain period of time. Although it was difficult to fight against him, it allowed them to at least have some chance to fight against him.

As for the Dark Spirit that they expected to appear, it hadn't shown itself at all!

They were told that Vale's strength would heavily rely on this Spirit, but it was nowhere in sight!

The mercenaries were caught off guard as the Mystical Items they equipped were meant to deal with Vale's Moonlight Curse, Ghost Hands, and Dark Spirit!

Seizing the opportunity, Vale swiftly moved through their ranks, using his nimble movement to incapacitate them one by one.

The Arcanists, surprised by Vale's agility and combat prowess, were unable to mount an effective defense.

They underestimated his abilities, never expecting him to possess such skill in spell destruction and close-quarters combat.

Thud!

As Vale incapacitated the last of the Arcanists, a feeling of triumph washed over him. He had even "saved" Celina from the Mercenaries without his knowledge because he was too focused on using his Shadowblade Dance to cut down his opponents.

Just like that, Vale had successfully eliminated the immediate threat, ensuring the safety of the innocent passengers on the Airship.

'As expected, not showing my true skills in the Academy was the right choice...' Vale thought as he also realized that the enemies were prepared to deal with his known skills.



It was a good thing that Celina only knew that he was just an outstanding student and didn't think that his level was already the same as First-Class Arcanist or even better.

Vale then summoned his Ghost Hands to Extract the dead and unconscious people around.

At this time, the guards who were previously locked up by Formation Arts had freed themselves and immediately went to Vale's side.

"Thank you for saving us, young Arcanist. I'm Gene Henry, the Vice Captain of the ship. I didn't know that the people we've picked up in Bellmourn City were criminals." Gene said, relieved that the situation was finally resolved.

There were a total of 25 criminals on the ground. They were either dead or unconscious because of Vale's attacks.

"It's fine... Please treat the injured, and I suggest that we immediately land." Vale said as he spread out his senses to ensure no enemies were hiding around.

Gene, on the other hand, agreed to Vale's suggestion.

"Yes! I've already informed the captain of the situation here. We should be landing on the next town immediately."

At this time, the ship's crew members started helping the victims. However, one of them went to the Vice Captain's side and reported that the communication system was still down.

Vale didn't think much of it since they would be landing soon, so he tried looking for Celina.

He immediately saw her being treated by one of the crews of the ship, and looked miserable.

Vale wanted to confront her and question her motives, but suddenly, he heard a slow, mocking clap from behind.

Clap... Clap... Clap...

Vale's senses heightened, and he spun around to face a strong foe.

The man in front of him was unnoticeable from his Divine Sense, and his Magic Zone didn't pick up his energy fluctuation either.

A mixture of apprehension and adrenaline coursed through Vale's veins as he locked eyes with the mysterious figure. It was clear that this opponent was no ordinary Arcanist or mercenary.

As the clapping ceased, the stranger's lips curled into a sinister smile. "Impressive, young Arcanist. Your little display of power certainly caught my attention."