

D. Extraction 401

Chapter 401 The Orders

Clyde, from the Order of the Illustrious Liquidators, was an enigmatic and revered figure among Mystic Arts Practitioners.

He hadn't died yet and was still actively working for the Order, but his life and achievements were already being studied at the Academy of Mystic Arts.

Clyde was born with an innate connection to the Mystic Force. From a young age, his raw talent and unyielding determination set him apart from his peers. He possessed an uncanny ability to manipulate and bend the formed Mystical Forces, which was considered a top-class Mystic Arts.

Among his most legendary feats was the Battle of the Ebon Citadel. It was during this fateful encounter that Clyde single-handedly thwarted an army of Dark Sorcerers, turning the tide of the war. His mastery of illusions, or what he would like to call Reality Manipulation, left his enemies bewildered and disoriented, rendering them helpless in the face of his onslaught.

What was even more admirable about him was that he wasn't accepting a high position in the government or even in the Order just so he could stay in the field, accomplishing difficult missions that normal Shamans or Mystics couldn't handle.

If you ignore his hobby of wearing a red frock coat and red trousers, Clyde was a beacon of hope and inspiration for aspiring Mystic Practitioners.

Alex's eyes lit up as he recalled Clyde... Thanks to his father, he had acquainted himself with this legendary figure.

"Does it mean that he already captured Clovis Skye?" Alex muttered in a soft voice.

"Mhm? Did you say something?" Foster asked.

"Ahh... It's nothing. Thank you for your reminder, Foster. I can't disappoint Sir Clyde, so I'll have to work hard." Alex said as he waited for Foster to leave the training ground before triggering the Magic Circle that could summon the armed Golems.

At the dockyard of Maynard City...

"We're finally leaving this place..." Clare muttered as she boarded the Airship that they'd waited several hours because of numerous delays. Of course, she was with her partner, who also felt relieved after stepping onto their Airship.

Teresa and Clare, members of the prestigious Order of the Untainted Sentinels, possessed not only remarkable skills but also a captivating beauty that mesmerized those who crossed their path.

Dressed in their signature white trench coats and wielding matching white umbrellas, their appearance exuded an air of elegance and grace.

Several passengers immediately took notice of their presence and made way for them.

"How long before we return to Melthorn City?" Teresa asked.

"It should be six to eight hours, so we have plenty of time to rest..." Clare said as she entered their cabin.

For the past year, they weren't just completing missions assigned to them by the Order of the Untainted Sentinels.

During their free time, they would tirelessly search for clues regarding Clovis Skye, a mysterious young man who seemed to have received teachings from an exiled Bishop of the Church of the Fortune Goddess.

Well, despite their relentless efforts, he remained elusive for a long time, leaving them with a sense of frustration and intrigue.

However, their persistence finally paid off when their commissioned Seer from Maynard City delivered long-awaited news. They were informed that the man they had been seeking would make an appearance at the Roaring Summit within the year. He would appear during a huge event where many people gathered.

This immediately minimized their choices.

The Roaring Summit doesn't have many huge events... After they removed some small events that would take place at the summit, they were left with one event. It was the Twelve Academies Competition, a gathering of the most talented mages from various academies.

"To think that it would be the same venue for the very first Competition..." Claire muttered.

The news from the Seer had truly stirred excitement within Teresa and Clare. It was an opportunity they couldn't afford to miss. Not only would they have a chance to witness the intense Competition, but it also presented a potential breakthrough in their search for Clovis Skye, a young man they couldn't dismiss because of his ability to see through the Divine Sense and even remove it.

Clare couldn't contain her curiosity and questioned Teresa. "Are we really going to attend the Competition? Are we not going to cause some problems with the balance of power there?"

They still had a mission they had to do, but if they went to the Competition, it meant that they had to give them up. It may stain their record, so she wanted to ask Teresa once again.

Furthermore, the presence of two elite Untainted Sentinels might threaten the people from the Dark Arts Academy and Psychic Arts Academy.

Teresa nodded, her eyes gleaming with determination. "Of course. Let's approach the Directors and request an official invitation. Whether we become part of the security detail or even judges, it doesn't matter. Our main goal is to freely roam some areas near the summit and keep our eyes open for any sign of that elusive boy. In any case, we both wanted to see that nostalgic event..."

The two of them had also been part of the Competition when they were in their sixth year to their ninth year in the Academy.

At that time, there were only Ten Academies participating in the event since the Dark Arts Academy and Psychic Arts Academy weren't recognized by the Association of the Harmonious Path yet.

"Do you think that Clovis will be there as a student or just an audience for the competition?" Clare asked out of nowhere.

Teresa paused for a moment as she removed her uniform and hung it on the coat rack.

Feeling more comfortable, she sat on the side of her bed before answering.

"I also thought that he would just be there coincidentally during the Competition. He could be on a mission or even on a vacation. However, it was too good to be true. So I think that he might be there as a participant... After all, the prophecy from the Seer made it seem like he would accomplish something big in that event."

Teresa said as she used her Divine Sense to sense her surroundings.

Her Divine Sense had already gotten a lot stronger, and she was confident that she'd find Clovis the moment he entered her 100-meter Magic Zone.

Chapter 402 The Contests

Vale had no idea that his acquaintances from the Order of the Illustrious Liquidator and the Untainted Sentinels would be attending the Competition.

Nevertheless, he probably wouldn't mind even if he learned about it unless they were from the Order of the Oracle Hivemind.

Furthermore, he was quite confident that they hadn't connected him to the Masked Devil, so even if he got recognized, they wouldn't be hostile to him.

'Mhmm? Is it about time?' Vale thought as he heard Yvaine reminding him of the appointment he had made.

A week had already passed from the inter-academy Competition, and with Maya, Philip, Crystal, and Luna, he will participate in the Twelve Academies Competition.

Today,? Vale and Maya would get to know a few of their Seniors in the Branch. This was due to the fact that they will be participating in the large Competition for the first time. They would receive advice, tips, and tricks to win as a Ritualist in the Competition.

Vale felt excited at this since they would meet Anderson Powlett, Thelma Cameron, and Cassie Welsh, who were renowned figures who had previously participated in the Twelve Academies Competition. Vale knew that their guidance and advice would be invaluable as he prepared for the upcoming event. After all, he had seen their battles in the Recording Crystals in the Archive Room!

Vale would certainly like to meet them, especially Anderson Powlett, who was able to create a floating Magic Circle! This man didn't need to use a tedious process of making a Magic Circle using silver powder to start a ritual!

He only needed 3 seconds to summon this mysterious Magic Circle, followed by a Prayer that could last for 5 seconds, and he would be able to summon a Mysterious Entity's eyes that could petrify almost anyone.

Soon, Vale and Maya met at the garden's entrance and exchanged glances. They were both excited to meet their seniors and arrived almost an hour early from the appointed time.

As the sun cast a warm glow over the East Pavilion Garden, Vale and Maya's anticipation grew.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Soon, they heard some heavy footsteps. A group of people were approaching the pavilion.

It was Anderson Powlett, a tall and imposing figure, approaching them with a confident stride. His piercing gaze met Vale's, and a knowing smile played on his lips. "Vale Chambers, the prodigious talent of our Branch. It's a pleasure to finally meet you..." Anderson greeted, extending his hand in a firm handshake.

Vale returned the gesture, feeling a surge of admiration for the senior mage. This man actually has 9 filled Spell Lights already.

"The pleasure is mine, Mr. Powlett. I've heard great things about your performances in the previous competitions."

Anderson then shifted his gaze to Maya. "I heard a lot about you from your older sister. Hehe... I'm sure you'll surpass her achievement by participating this early."

Thelma Cameron appeared next, her radiant smile lighting up the garden. Her eyes sparkled mischievously as she looked at Vale.

"Ah... Vale, we've finally met. I heard a lot about you from Nadine." Thelma said with a flirtatious wink, causing Vale to be stunned. Maya, on the other hand, seemed to know Thelma already.

'What did Senior Nadine tell her?' Vale silently thought.

Cassie Welsh, who appears calm and composed, joined the group with an air of serenity. "Vale, Maya, I hope you guys weren't waiting for long..." Cassie remarked, her voice carrying a soothing tone.

Soon, the group gathered under the shade brought by the pavilion as they chatted about the Twelve Academies Competition.

"To be honest, I'm a bit worried since the Ritualists during this Academic Year wouldn't normally possess decent fighting capability until they reached the 7th-year or 8th-year once you started learning about the Fusions. However, I heard that you guys defeated all the Necromancers in the same year, so I guess your Darkness Manipulation had already reached the late stage of Elementary Realm." Anderson said, as this was also Cassie and Thelma's thought.

They were indeed surprised that two fourth-year students of their Branch got 2 of the five spots for the big Competition.

"We were lucky, Seniors. None of our opponents learned their branch-exclusive spells yet." Vale answered with a smile.

However, his answer just shocked the other three.

"Wait, are you telling us that you already learned one of our Branch-Exclusive Spells?" Thelma asked in shock.

"Hey, isn't that a bit too fast?" Cassie followed as she only learned her first Branch-Exclusive Spell in her sixth year!

"Ahem, we were just lucky, Seniors." Vale said.

"Yes... Master Sherah taught me a few tricks to immediately accommodate another Spell Model in my body. If you want to learn it, I could ask my Master about it." Maya added that she didn't mind telling the truth.

The Senior Students exchanged glances as they thought that they already knew their skills according to the reports they heard. However, it seems that they still underestimated these two.

"Impressive! Is it the Soul Swap or Spirit Shatter?" Anderson asked.

"I learned the Spirit Shatter, Senior." Maya answered as she turned her head to Vale with a complicated gaze... She wanted to add that it was not effective against Vale, who had such a monstrous Life Strand. If she knows that this Spell wouldn't work well, against those with higher Life Strand, she would rather learn the Soul Swap instead.

"I actually learned the Shadow Gate, Senior... Why did you not ask about that Spell?" Vale replied, stunning the three.

"V-Vale... The Shadow Gate is the hardest one to learn. We only learned this Spell in our eighth year. How did you do that?" Thelma asked as her eyes brightened up. She looked at Vale, filled with interest, as she had never expected that a junior in her batch would have such a great talent.

Vale was stunned as he realized that the difficulty of those Spells was actually different from each other. Well, he indeed spent a lot more contributions to obtain the materials he needed to record the Shadow Gate Spell.

"It's probably thanks to my Special Physique, Senior. In any case, do you think that learning this Spell would help us win the Competition?" Vale asked.

This time, it was Anderson who answered.

"Of course! There are seven types of contests, some of which are further divided into groups or individual run. Do you know these contests?"

Maya nodded and answered.

"Yes, Senior. They are Labyrinth of Secrets, Mirage of Wonders, Clash of Champions, Spectacle of Talents, Tower Ascension, Monster Hunter, and Trial of Skills."

Chapter 403 The Contests (2)

Vale smiled at the names of these contests.

In simple words, the Labyrinth of Secrets was a maze challenge. The maze was filled with traps, puzzles, and enemies that required the use of specific escape, detection, or movement arts to finish. The winner was the one who could escape the maze first or the one who could go the farthest in the allotted time.

The Mirage of Wonders was an illusion challenge. This contest has an individual run and a group run. In this challenge, the contestants must break the illusions and find the treasure that the organizers had prepared. Apparently, to ensure that the students would be excited about this, the organizers would always place low-grade or even mid-grade Royal Rank Mystical Items as a reward. This wasn't even part of the real awards to be given to the winners. Of course, it was also a tactic to promote the sponsors of this Competition.

The Clash of Champions, on the other hand, was just a duel tournament. It was a bracket-style tournament between two students from different academies, using their arts to fight against each other. The winner was the one who could defeat, incapacitate, or force the opponent to surrender. What was exciting about this was the fact that it had a group competition. There would be a three-versus-three tournament as well. However, the one who joined the one-on-one tournament could not join this mode of Competition.

Nevertheless, the Spectacle of Talents has the most modes in the contest. It has three ways: they could participate in Solo, Double, or Triple. Well, in this contest, they only needed to use their Arcane Arts to create a spectacular show. The performance would then be judged by a panel of experts who evaluate the creativity, skill, and harmony of the performers and their art.

"Senior, do you think we'll only excel in the Spectacle of Talents?" Vale asked jokingly. As a Ritualist, their Ritual Arts could indeed become beautiful if they wanted to join this contest.

Furthermore, if Vale used his Shadow Gate, it could really attract the audience and the judges since he could advance this Shadow Gate Spell to Advanced Realm. Once advanced, he could control it to create a huge Gate when activated.

"Haha! Of course, not... The Shadow Gate is more suited to the Labyrinth. However, I think that having this same spell could be very good in the group battles... As you already know, the Shadow Gate requires a darkness-cursed item, a magic circle, and a short incantation. It may seem tedious but once summoned, it could basically guarantee the victory of your team."

This sudden suggestion surprised Vale and Maya.

"This... How was that possible?"

"That's a bit confusing, Senior."

As they learned from their Professors, the Shadow Gate was simply a technique to create a portal to the Shadow Realm, a dimension shrouded in darkness and horror. In their mind, they could only use it for travel, hiding, or even exploration once they got stronger.

They had no idea how it would be good to use in a group battle.

The three Seniors smiled knowingly after hearing their confusion. It seems that they also had a similar idea when they were younger.

This time, it was Cassie who had cleared their confusion.

"The Shadow Gate can also be a place for a pre-made Ritual Setup."

As soon as Vale and Maya heard this, they no longer needed a lengthy explanation.

Their eyes lit up in realization as they indeed didn't think of that.

"If that's possible... Then it's really awesome!" Maya said in delight as she looked at Vale.

"Yes... It feels like cheating. The enemies would certainly do their best to stop such a ritual from happening. It would be tough protecting Vale while he tried to open the Shadow Gate. Furthermore, he must at least reach the middle stage of the Elementary Realm to at least accommodate 2 or 3 pre-

made Ritual Setups." Thelma added as she seemed to be reminiscing about the previous tournaments she attended.

Vale immediately thanked his seniors for such a great suggestion.

Then, the three of them continued discussing what they could do when competing with other contests.

What interested Vale the most was the Tower Ascension. As its name suggests, they had to clear the trials of each floor until they reached the top of the Tower. It was quite similar to the Dark Soul Tower.

What was even more interesting about this was that no one had ever cleared this Competition. There were ten floors in this Tower, but the highest they could ever reach was just the eighth floor.

"Unfortunately, this Tower can only be entered alone. It's not a group contest. Furthermore, all levels of students will enter the same Tower as it can simply adjust the difficulty level of each trial depending on the person who had entered." Anderson explained.

He further informed them that the Tower could only accept 20-year-olds and below, so most students from eighth year and above couldn't attend this Competition.

"Yes... This is also probably the other reason why they decided to accept 4th-Year and 5th-Year students in the Competition. They probably wanted to have a higher chance of clearing it this year." Thelma added.

Vale nodded in understanding since this was the first he had heard of this limitation.

"I didn't know about. They should've done this earlier... or better yet, send third-year students too." Vale said.

However, Cassie shook her head at this. "That would be too dangerous. There are cases that which the Soul and Spirit of the contestants would be permanently damaged in this contest. Furthermore, your equipped Mystical Items could also be lost in the Tower."

Maya's eyes widened after hearing this. "W-what? It's that dangerous? Are there cases where people died in that contest?"

"No one has died yet since the Tower can expel you. However, you can be in a near-death state... Luckily, there will be plenty of healers that will be waiting for you, so any type of injuries you can get from that Tower can be healed." Anderson said, but Maya wasn't comforted at all.

Meanwhile, Vale looked even more serious. He already had a hunch that this would be dangerous, considering how the Headmaster was willing to give up his shadow if he won this contest. However, he didn't expect that the danger could be so.

After a few moments, Vale sighed and replied jokingly.

"I guess I'll just focus on the Monster Hunter event."

Chapter 404 See for Yourself

The Monster Hunter event, as the name suggests, was a thrilling competition in the Twelve Academies Competition. It aimed to test the skills of the participants in hunting down and defeating creatures deemed as monsters by the organizers.

These battles took place in various settings, such as cages or specially constructed environments that resembled the natural habitats of the monsters.

Furthermore, this event held significant importance as it attracted a large audience of commoners or non-practitioners, including some rogue practitioners who couldn't attend any Academy.

The Arcanists who participated in the Monster Hunter event symbolized power and strength to them. The spectators eagerly anticipated witnessing these dangerous monsters being vanquished by the skilled Arcanists.

On the other hand, the Trial of Skills was another contest in the Twelve Academies Competition, but it catered to a more specific audience. This contest focused on testing the knowledge, wisdom, and critical thinking abilities of the participants. Only those involved in research, crafting, or alchemy would likely find enjoyment in this contest. It required a broad range of information and emphasized mental prowess rather than relying solely on Arcane Spells.

"The Monster Hunter event in the sixth-year and seventh-year batch is no easy task if you want to take on the monster alone." Anderson responded to Vale with a chuckle.

"They usually pit us against fierce opponents like Rhilma or mutated animals caused by some mysterious corruption. Dealing with them can be quite challenging since no specific Arcane Path holds a clear advantage. As a fourth-year student, they'll probably arrange similar creatures for you."

"Rhilma? So it was like that. I haven't met them yet. I wonder if the Academy is keeping some of them." Vale asked as he recalled that the Academy has the Serenity Hall where they could imprison an Evil Creature.

"Unfortunately, the Academy doesn't keep those creatures for long... They'd normally be sent to various classes in the higher years to be used as experimental subjects. Unlike the Evil Creatures that could survive using Arcane Energy, the Rhilmas have strong desires to eat human flesh." Thelma added.

Vale nodded at this since, based on their studies, these creatures would indeed die after a few weeks if not fed properly. However, he didn't think too much of them before since their professors emphasized that if the animals that were mutated were only cats, dogs, rabbits, or any smaller ones, they wouldn't really pose any threat to Arcanists like them.

Only those commoners who don't have guns or weapons could probably die from those creatures. Furthermore, these mutated animals would rarely appear, typically in places with a high Arcane Energy concentration, triggering their mutation.

Naturally, such mutations are not a common occurrence. There have been numerous instances of groups of animals being exposed to Arcane Energy without displaying any signs of mutation. It almost seemed as if the mutations were random or limited to only a select few animals, much like how only a few individuals possess the inherent "talent" to become Arcanists.

The group continued discussing the matters that they had to look out for during the Competition. This includes their set of Spells, the Mystical Items they could bring, the Potions and Pills they could use, and the importance of the duration and cooldown of their Phantasm State.

This type of conversation was also happening to the other three students in their batch who were selected to participate in the Competition. Philip Hoffman and Crystal Ravinie from the Dark Magic Branch and Luna Moon from the Necromancy Branch had also met their seniors in their Branch and started sharing their experiences.

Finally, Anderson gave his final advice to Vale and Maya.

"Are you guys aware of the Elite Rankings in our Academy?" Anderson suddenly asked.

"Yes, Senior. I heard that only fifth-year students and above can enter the Elite Ranking." Vale replied since he knew that they could only have a class for Mock Battles in their fifth year.

"That's right... However, because of the changes, I heard that the Headmaster can allow the five of you to test your strength by challenging the Rankers in the Academy. I suggest that you take this opportunity." Anderson chuckled as he looked at the two's expression.

"Can we really do that?" Maya's eyes were filled with excitement since if she managed to enter the top 100, she could earn 1 Contribution Point monthly!

It was better than nothing, but at the very least, he could have a chance to challenge the 90th rank to increase it by 1.5 Contribution Points per month.

"Haha! Of course! However, the two of you have to be careful. Maya, I know that you're incredibly strong, especially with your incredible control of Darkness Manipulation Spell and with your special set of Dark Spells, but that would be tough against the Rankers."

Anderson then shifted his attention to Vale. "Vale, I know you have ridiculous strength and vitality. You also have a decent Ghost Hand Spell. However, the Rankers are on a different level. Especially those in the top fifty. Even with my skills, I can only reach the Rank 79 in the Academy."

"Senior, I heard that the top 50 were all 10th-year students with a handful of 9th-year students... May I know what's special about them?" Vale curiously asked.

He had seen a few battles of the Elite Rankers in the Archive Room, but aside from not knowing what Spells they were using, he didn't think that they were that special, considering how he was even able to defeat the Previous Headmaster.

After all, even if the Previous Headmaster was already old and weakened, he should still be quite strong. Unless, of course, Charles Blackwood was in a bad condition, and his forte wasn't in actual head-on combat but rituals or crafting.

Maya also learned forward as she was curious about it.

This time, however, it wasn't Anderson who answered.

Cassie looked at the two and thought of an idea.

"I think that instead of telling you two, it's better if you see for yourself... How about challenging your Seniors in a duel? This way, you'll see the difference between the rogue Dark Practitioners and the ones educated by the Dark Arts Academy."

As Cassie suggested this, Thelma immediately raised her hand.

"Me! Let me do it! Vale, you're a member of the Battle Arena Committee, right? I'm sure you can reserve an Arena. I can allow the two of you to fight me simultaneously. I'm Top 88 in the Ranking, so I have to give this handicap..."

Chapter 405 Special Spell?

Vale didn't think lightly of her, although he was pretty much confident that he could win against any of his seniors.

After all, he had a Dark Spirit, various Arcane Spells, and powerful Mystical Items, including Planar Spells, in his arsenal. If he still loses against other students, it would probably be because he lacks experience or he was being complacent and wouldn't go all out.

"Alright, Senior. Let's do it. I will arrange the third Arena for today. It's free for two hours. That should be enough." Vale said after looking at the time.

After confirming this, they no longer stayed in the Pavilion and entered the Arena Hall.

There weren't many students in the Hall. Some of them were waiting for a battle to start, and some were even doing their assignments or self-study here.

"Vale, do you think it's a good idea for us to work together?" Maya questioned, expressing her uncertainty about the decision they had made. They hadn't yet collaborated in combat, so there might be some challenges when it came to coordinating their spells.

"You're right... I'm not sure how we'll be able to synchronize our efforts, but perhaps this is a great opportunity for us. After all, we'll eventually need to work together since we're in the same class and will be participating in the Competition." Vale responded, feeling confident that he could adapt to Maya's abilities.

"Alright... I'll give you two three to five minutes to plan your strategy. Don't be shy!" Thelma interjected upon overhearing their conversation. Vale and Maya gladly accepted the offer, taking advantage of the time to discuss their tactics while also waiting for the Referee to arrive.

"Vale! It's been a while since you proposed a duel arrangement." exclaimed a member of the Committee who had just arrived. It was Bailey Saxon, the former Corner Judge of the First Arena, who now served as a Referee for the Third Arena.

"Senior, we appreciate you coming... We're just engaging in a friendly battle to prepare for the Competition..." Vale replied to the cheerful senior from their club.

He then explained their situation before they prepared Arena.

Soon, the students and the Referee gathered at the center of the stage.

"Alright! The rules remain the same. However, since this is a friendly battle, we won't have Corner Judges overseeing the match... Vale Chambers and Maya Featherstar versus Thelma Cameron... You may now commence!" Bailey declared, signaling the start of the duel with a wave of his hand.

"Come at me! Don't hold back!" Thelma shouted at the two after seeing them waiting for her to make a move.

Maya's eyes gleamed with determination as she prepared to unleash her Dark Nova Spell, a powerful burst of dark energy that could engulf an area of the stage.

"I won't be holding back, Senior!" Maya answered as she also prepared to use her movement spell in case she needed to dodge a counter attack from Thelma.

Vale, adjusting to Maya's Spell, focused his energy and prepared to cast his Corrupted Chains Spell, conjuring ethereal chains that could bind their opponent. This may not be too effective against another Dark Arcanist, but it works well in restricting their movement.

Clink! Clink! Clink...

The sound of chains was heard as they charged towards the target.

"Good start!" Thelma commented.

She wanted to show these juniors the difference in their skills, so she was also not going to hold back.

With a swift motion, she unleashed her first special Spell, Terror Grasp, enveloping the Arena in a dark and menacing aura. The Spell had an eerie quality, as if two different forces were intertwining.

For some reason, Maya and Vale felt the chilling presence of Spectral Hands converging in Thelma's Spell. It was as if hundreds of Spectral Hands were trying to draw them to the Eternal Darkness!

'This...' Vale wasn't exactly sure what Spell she was using, but he could immediately tell that this was a powerful spell. It might even be at the peak of Tier 2 Spell! He was impressed by how Thelma only needed an instant to use this!

Not stopping there, Thelma followed up with her second special Spell, Dark Illusion. The air around them grew thick with darkness as an enigmatic mist shrouded the battlefield.

"Not good..." Maya gritted her teeth as she felt that her control with her Dark Nova Spell had disappeared.

Vale had the same problem as his Corrupted Chains were disintegrated just like that...

'What an interesting Spell...' Vale commented in his mind as he started to struggle to maintain his focus.

Maya was in the worst situation as she found herself trapped in a bewildering illusion!

The battle took a sudden turn as Maya found herself unable to defend against the onslaught of the Dark Illusions. If this continues, the Illusions would break her mind and eat her Soul!

It seemed like all hope was lost.

Vale, however, managed to secretly activate his Spell Dispersion, which provided him with a momentary reprieve from Thelma's onslaught. This also helped Maya for a brief moment, stopping the Referee from saving her.

However, after the Spell Dispersion was deactivated, the Dark Illusion continued bombarding his mind or vision!

If not for his absurdly high Spirit Strands, he would be immediately affected.

'No wonder she's in the Ranking. With these two spells, she could go ahead and smack her opponent to death.' Vale thought as he readied to break the Spell using the Previous Headmaster's Cane or what he would like to call Black Flame Cane because of its emblem.

"Alright! That's enough!" Anderson suddenly said as he saw that the two fourth-year students were just resisting the Spells thrown by Thelma and not counter-attacking.

Thelma nodded at this, as she was also not planning to continue injuring them.

Bailey naturally announced the end of the battle.

'Oopss---'

Vale immediately held back from using the Cane as he also ordered Yvaine to leave Thelma's shadow. That's right... Yvaine was already inside Thelma's Shadow, ready to attack.

Whom~

Yvaine's menacing figure wearing a huge Shadow Cloak appeared and floated towards Vale.

Seeing the Dark Spirit leave her Shadow, Thelma's words were stuck in her throat...

"T-that... Did it just leave my shadow? Vale, you--" Thelma stammered.

Even Anderson and Bailey hadn't expected that.

"Unbelievable! I never expected you to withstand Thelma's Spell Fusion! I thought you guys were helpless..." Cassie exclaimed, her eyes wide with surprise and curiosity, as she gazed at Vale.

Chapter 406 Reminder for Future Spell Fusion

"Are those Spells the result of Spell Fusion?" Vale asked, his curiosity piqued, while Maya's eyes widened in realization.

Anderson smiled at their reaction. "Indeed. What you faced today was not just a powerful Dark Spell. It was the outcome of Spell Fusion."

Vale and Maya exchanged glances, their curiosity growing. They knew that Spell Fusion was a technique that could only be learned in their 8th to 10th year.

"Could you tell us more about this Spell Fusion, seniors?" Vale inquired, confident that their seniors were considering educating them about this Spell Technique, given that they had already witnessed its power.

"Of course, but let's not discuss it here." Cassie replied.

Their seniors invited them to leave the Arena, and they headed to the cafeteria to have a more detailed discussion about what Thelma had done to them.

Once their meals arrived, Anderson began explaining the true nature of Thelma's spells.

"The first Spell she used, Terror Grasp, was a fusion of Spectral Hands and Fear Stream. And then she followed it up with the fusion of Darkness Coil and Blind Apparition, which created the Dark Illusion that trapped Maya in that nightmare..."

"Incredible... Is the fusion permanent, senior? Does it mean we can no longer use Spectral Hands or Fear Stream once we've fused them for the Terror Grasp?" Vale asked, his curiosity getting the better of him as he hadn't come across any detailed reviews of Spell Fusion.

"Unfortunately, no... Once you've fused spells together, you can no longer use the individual spells. Understanding the fusion process will shed light on why." Cassie answered.

"That's correct... Two spell models are combined to create a new and modified spell model, rendering the old ones unusable." Thelma added.

Anderson emphasized the immense significance of Spell Fusion, highlighting its potential to amplify their abilities and stressing the importance of mastering this technique. While they might not be able to utilize Spell Fusion in the upcoming competition, they needed to be cautious, as Elemental Arts Academy introduced this concept much earlier to its students.

As Vale and Maya learned about the early introduction of Spell Fusion in the 8th year for Elementalists, they couldn't help but feel a sense of unfairness. They questioned why they had to wait for four more years to learn this technique in the Academy.

"Isn't that unfair to us? Why are the Elementalists allowed to start fusing their spells earlier?" Maya voiced her dismay, her disappointment was evident.

Vale shared the same sentiment, feeling the weight of the long wait ahead before he could learn Spell Fusion.

It was eight long years! It was quite a lengthy period!

Anderson responded, wearing a helpless smile on his face. "Haa~ We share your thoughts, Maya... However, our Spell Fusion is different from the other Arcane Paths. It is far more dangerous and puts a greater strain on our bodies. You've already experienced the peril of Darkness Possession. The other Paths don't have to go through that. Just from that aspect, you can see that our Path is distinctive."

Cassie chimed in, trying to lift their spirits. "Well... Don't be too disheartened. Our Dark Spell Fusion is undoubtedly much stronger than the other paths. By the time you graduate, you'll be able to learn how to fuse three Dark Spells, while the other Arcane Paths would already be content with fusing two Spells." Her words carried a sense of pride in being a Dark Arcanist.

Vale and Maya finally accepted this as they continued to ask questions.

"So it was like that... May I know some other combinations of Spells? I currently have Dusk? Imprisonment, Ghost Hand, Corrupted Chains, Spectral Hands, and Moonlight Curse." Vale asked in excitement as he was hoping that his current Spell would have decent combinations for a fusion later on. If not, he would have to consider which Spell he should record first.

However, as he thought that his seniors would enthusiastically give advice about which Spell he should fuse someday, they all looked at him as if he was a monster.

"Vale, you have recorded the Shadow Gate, Darkness Manipulation, Light Absorption, and one more movement spell. That was already a total of nine Dark Spells! Are you sure that it's fine?" Maya suddenly asked, leaving Vale speechless. She was worried that Vale would not have enough Spell Lights for the Shadow Soldier and the other two Branch-Exclusive Spells.

Indeed, Vale had forgotten about that. He even felt smart excluding the Spells from the Malefic Branch.

He then immediately thought of a reply.

"Ahem... I was just lucky since I had more Spell Lights than the others. I'm sure Seniors had already seen others with more Spell Lights than me."

Anderson and the other two immediately gathered their thoughts as they nodded to Vale.

"You're right... I remember that Lesley had 10 Spell Lights when she was only in her 7th year. However, you're still amazing, Vale."

"Incredible... If you actually learned the Dark Mist Spell, you can fuse it with Ghost Hands and create an Ethereal Darkness Prison. Mhm... Let me think for a moment." Cassie muttered as she tried recalling the Spell Fusions in their lessons.

"Well, you'll know it soon, Vale. Don't worry. Almost all of our Spell can be fused with another Spell. That's another reason it's only being taught in our 8th year." Thelma added.

"Wait! I remember now. Dusk Imprisonment and Ghost Hands work as well. They can be fused to create a Dusk Grasp Spell. You also mentioned that you have Moonlight Curse and Spectral Hands... There's a great fusion for that Spell, and it was being used by Rank 75, who had beaten Anderson twice. It's called Lunar Touch... It's quite a terrifying Curse Spell." Cassie immediately added.

Thelma's eyes lit up after hearing this.

"Ahh! That was right. It's Anderson's mistake to fuse a difficult Dark Spell together, so he's having a hard time advancing his Rank. He had become weak against Curse Spells. Remember, Vale and Maya, if you want to advance your Rankings someday, you need a stronger curse than your opponent or a better anti-curse spell."

Chapter 407 The Roaring Summit

Vale then continued receiving advice from his seniors.

It was Cassie who was mostly giving advice. She informed him that his Spectral Hands and Corrupted Chains could be fused to create a new Spell called Chain of Souls. She further explained that it was a spell that conjures chains of dark metal that wrap around and pierce the enemy. Then, darkness would emerge from the chains and attack the enemy's soul, weakening and paralyzing them.

It was such a powerful Spell, but Vale only has one Spectral Hands Spell!

Apparently, he also likes the last Fusion Spell that Cassie recommended.

It was the Ghost Hands, Spectral Hands, and Moonlight Curse that could actually be fused to create a Moonlight Specter!

"Right! This Moonlight Specter Spell is really powerful. Unfortunately, no one learns this Fusion Spell since the Ghost Hands and Spectral Hands had to reach the Advanced Realm before you can fuse them with the Intermediate Moonlight Curse. It would take you years for that to happen." Cassie added, expressing her opinion on this difficult Fusion Spell.

"Indeed. Most of the Spell can be fused with only Elementary Realm or Intermediate Realm mastery, but some spells require Advanced Realm mastery... If you think about it, it would feel like it would be a waste since an Advanced Realm Spell is already a strong spell, even without any fusion. Removing two Advanced Realm Spell will require a dedication and a strong heart." Thelma commented with a chuckle.

Normally, it would take at least five or more years to get an Advanced Realm Spell. In normal cases, it would certainly feel bad if you had to give up two of them.

"What about me, Senior? Aside from the Spirit Shatter and the Academy-Exclusive Spells, I currently have Dark Nova, Spirit Hand, and Dark Claw... What do you think I should record next for a better fusion? Right, I also have 29 Spirit Strands at the moment, so I can record Tier 2 Spells already." Maya asked with excitement.

"Well... I'm sure you can ask your older sister for advice, but I can also help you..." Anderson replied as their discussion lasted for another half an hour before they separated.

Vale and Maya felt really thankful to the three as they didn't just learn about the Twelve Academies Competition but also the future that was awaiting them.

"Vale... What do you think about the Fusion Spells of the other Academies? Do you think we can deal with that if we face them in the duel tournaments?" Maya asked seriously as they walked in the hallway leading to the student dormitories.

She may not have done her best in the duel against Thelma, but she could tell that even if she used her Featherstar Physique's ability, she would struggle to defeat the Senior with those two Fusion Spells.

Vale simply smiled at this as he recalled the pieces of advice they received a while ago.

"It doesn't matter... Just like what they told us, the fusion spells of other Paths weren't that great since they had it easy. Senior Anderson even mentioned that Elementalist's Fusion Spell was something like Frosty Gale... A fusion of Ice Wall and Wind Blade Spell... They're not as scary as the fusion of our Dark Spells." Vale replied with confidence. They even heard that the Fusion Spells of most Holy Arts Practitioners weren't meant for battle.

"Don't think too much of it. Just think of them using a stronger spell. If we have better Spells, we don't have to worry."

Maya wryly smiled at this, but she understood what Vale was trying to tell her.

"Alright. Let's do our best in the competition."

Avery's eyes fluttered open as the first rays of sunlight filtered through his window.

It was the day he had been eagerly anticipating for months - the start of the Twelve Academies Competition.

"Are we finally at the summit?" Avery muttered to himself as he stretched his limbs.

He couldn't help but feel a surge of excitement as he realized that it's already morning. Today marked the beginning of a grand event that would test the skills and abilities of young arcane practitioners from all over the kingdom.

Avery, a young man with blond hair and piercing blue eyes, was a fourth-year student at Lakrine, the prestigious Academy of Summoning Arts.

Among his peers, he held the esteemed reputation of being the best in his batch. What set him apart was the extraordinary nature of his summoning abilities. While most students could summon objects like swords, shields, or everyday items, Avery had managed to summon something far more remarkable - a Silver-Haired Ape. This impressive feat had earned him recognition and admiration among his fellow students and teachers.

As he rose from his bed and wore his academy uniform, Avery couldn't help but hold his Grimoire and pose like he was about to summon his Silver-Haired Ape...

"Kekeke... This is awesome." Avery tried suppressing his laugh as he felt really cool doing this.

After appreciating his elegance, he then stepped out of his cabin to visit the deck of their Airship.

They were headed to the Roaring Summit, the majestic location where the Twelve Academies Competition would take place.

In this Airship, he was together with all the other students from Lakrine who will be participating in the event.

As he stood outside, Avery soon caught sight of the island where the competition would unfold. It was a breathtaking sight.

"Awesome... I'm so lucky that the competition rules have changed. It's perfect." Avery muttered as he saw a huge city perched atop a lofty plateau.

As their Airship got near, they could see that the city bustled with activity, its streets filled with visitors, patrolling guards, and practitioners of arcane arts from all walks of life.

However, as their Airship was about to descend, a sudden shift in the atmosphere caught his attention. The once bustling streets had also fell into a hushed silence, and a sense of unease hung in the air.

"What's this Aura?" Avery muttered as his gaze shifted towards the sky, where a dark airship emerged from the horizon, casting an ominous shadow over the city below.

Chapter 408 Mysterious Lady?

"W-what?!"

"Pirates?"

"The City is under attack!"

"Fool! We are in the fifth largest city in the Kingdom. No pirate would dare to attack this place."

"It must be an eccentric visitor or something."

Whispers of concern rippled through the crowd as people exchanged worried glances.

The sight of a dark airship emanating a chilling aura fueled their anxiety, and thoughts of impending danger raced through their minds.

Avery's heart skipped a beat as he, too, was momentarily taken aback by the foreboding presence.

"Do not panic. We are not under attack."

Suddenly, they heard one of the Professors at Lakrine Academy announce his findings calmly. He was Professor Klein and was known for his capability of summoning five Spiritual Beasts at the same time.

Avery also noticed that Professor Klein had his Grimoire summoned already, and his eyes were glowing with yellow light. It means that he summoned the powers of his Phantom Eagle, the Eagle Sight, to investigate the situation.

Hearing their Professor's voice, they certainly calmed down a lot as they looked at the Airship with curiosity.

Soon, as the Dark Airship loomed closer, the distinctive emblem on its hull became visible. It was none other than the Airship of the Vermont Academy, the renowned Academy of Dark Arts.

'That looks cool...' Avery couldn't help but comment in his mind.

The Airship that their academy was using was still the same for the last two or three decades. However, the ones that the Vermont Academy uses looked pristine and filled with power.

It doesn't look like a passenger airship at all... It seemed as if it was ready to engage in war, which Avery appreciates a lot.

"Alright... Stop dawdling at them. We can disembark now." Professor Klein said as he closed his Grimoire, leading the students in front.

However, after the students disembarked, Professor Klein went to a corner and discreetly reopened his Grimoire, a faint glimmer of anticipation in his eyes.

Professor Klein then whispered an incantation as he summoned forth his trusted companion, the Phantom Eagle. The majestic creature materialized, its ethereal form taking shape beside him. With a mere flick of his wrist, he sent the Phantom Eagle soaring into the sky, its keen eyes scanning the surroundings with unparalleled precision.

As the Phantom Eagle circled overhead, Professor Klein tapped into its heightened senses, seeing through its eyes and hearing through its ears.

Each flap of its wings carried it closer to the individuals sent by the Vermont Academy, allowing him to gather information in secret.

He observed them carefully as if he were searching for something.

After some time, he felt satisfied with his investigation and canceled the summoned beast.

"Their Headmaster is indeed here."

Geraldine Walsh, a fourth-year student from Kildare, the Knights Academy, was in her hotel room when she felt the sinister aura permeating the air. The arrival of the dark Airship from the Vermont Academy ignited a fire within her...

As the chilling presence settled around her, Geraldine's grip tightened on the hilt of her sword. Memories of her sister's tragic fate at the hands of a rogue Dark Arts Practitioner resurfaced, fueling her resentment towards those who delved into the Dark Arts.

To her, they were all tainted by the same darkness, regardless of their individual intentions or affiliations. It doesn't matter if they came from a prestigious academy or were practicing it in their basement; they were all evil to her.

"I will teach all of you a lesson..." Geraldine muttered through her gritted teeth.

Her eyes burned with fierce determination, her red hair seeming to flicker with an inner flame.

Unable to contain her restlessness, Geraldine decided to leave her hotel room. The bustling city felt calming for her. It offers some distraction from the tumultuous emotions swirling within her.

"Whew~"

As she immersed herself in the vibrant atmosphere of the city, she felt her raging heart starting to calm down.

She observed the diverse array of people, practitioners and non-practitioners alike, going about their daily lives, each absorbed in their own way of life.

Although her anger towards the practitioners of Dark Arts remained steadfast, Geraldine couldn't help but acknowledge the complexity of the world around her.

She knew that not everyone from the Vermont Academy shared the same malevolent intentions as the rogue practitioner who had taken her sister's life. However, the pain and grief she carried made it difficult to differentiate between friend and foe.

"Haa~"

Geraldine sighed as she could only hope that she could control her emotions in the competition.

As she was thinking of returning to her hotel room to meet with her classmates, she noticed a figure seemingly out of place amidst the vibrant surroundings.

It was a remarkable young lady as her hair was a striking mix of white and black. She seemed to be looking at the candies and pastries sold by the hawkers.

At first glance, she appeared harmless and beautiful, but Geraldine's instincts immediately sensed something amiss.

A disgusting aura emanated from the young lady.

'This Aura... I can't be mistaken...'

Geraldine was certain that this young lady was a Dark Arts Practitioner!

Her hand instinctively tightened around the hilt of her sword, her immediate reaction to cut through the Dark Arcanist!

However, as she prepared to strike, a suffocating aura suddenly locked onto her, rendering her motionless.

"W-what's going on?!"

Surprised by the unexpected turn of events, Geraldine found herself unable to move, trapped under the weight of this mysterious girl's power.

The young lady finally looked in her direction. She was frowning and seemed baffled by the situation.

"Miss, have you mistaken me? I'm sure it's our first time meeting, but your killing intent is definitely directed at me." She remarked, her voice carrying an air of intrigue.

"I... It's a mistake... Are you the one causing this? I don't intend to attack you..." Geraldine replied, her voice tinged with a touch of uncertainty. "Please, stop... I just made a mistake."

The young lady's expression softened, and she let out a gentle sigh. "Ah... Right, it's my Spirit. She felt your killing intent so..." She explained, her words laced with a hint of apology.

"Ahem... Miss Lotus, stop suffocating her. She might die..." She whispered, directing her attention towards an unseen presence.

Chapter 409 Blocked

"Ahh—"

As the suffocating Aura dissipated, Geraldine felt a wave of relief wash over her, allowing her to breathe freely once again.

The tension in the air gradually eased, and she found herself able to move, though her hand still clutched the hilt of her sword. She looked at the mysterious lady, her eyes filled with a mixture of caution and curiosity.

"I apologize... I just reacted like that after sensing your Aura. It's my mistake." Geraldine said as she calmed down. She then released her grip to the hilt of her sword.

"I don't mind it. I'm sure you know some hateful Dark Arcanists... I was also like that. Ah, are you going to participate in the Competition?"

"Yes! I'm Geraldine Walsh, a fourth-year student at Kildare Academy. Are you here to participate as well?"

"Oh, so you're a Knight! No, I'm only here to watch. I'm not a student of Vermont Academy. I'm Denise White... Good luck to your Competition..." Denise said as she waved her hand and prepared to leave.

"No, I'm not a Knight... But I will become one someday. Once again, I apologize for my actions a while ago." Geraldine said as Denise left the place.

After Geraldine could no longer see the mysterious lady, her expression eased up as she felt that she just survived an encounter with a beast...

'I'm sure that she was talking to a Spirit... Tsk. A rogue Dark Arts Practitioner with a Spirit I couldn't sense... That girl is dangerous.' Geraldine commented in her mind as she realized that Dark Arcanists are truly on a different level.

Denise White wasn't even from the Academy, but a Knight like her was already made helpless by a summoned spirit! This would've never happened if she faced young practitioners of other Arcane Paths!

Geraldine helplessly smiled at this as she realized that avenging her sister's death was easier said than done.

As the Airship of the Vermont Academy approached the Roaring Summit, the students onboard, a total of 45, felt excited while some felt nervous. Thirty-five of them were participants, while the other ten students were here to assist them in various ways.

Among them, Vale Chambers couldn't help but notice something peculiar.

The students from the 8th to 10th year, who were representing their Academy were not among the top 30 in the Elite Rankings.

This realization puzzled Vale, but fortunately, Maya was there and explained that those elite students had accepted important missions for the Dark Arts Faction, which probably held greater significance than individual achievements in the Twelve Academies Competition.

Vale wasn't sure what kind of the mission was, but he didn't think too much of it.

"Mhmm?"

As their Airship drew closer to their destination, Vale couldn't help but notice the attention they garnered.

"That's a lot of Spells targeting us..." Vale muttered as he felt numerous spells scanning over their Airship.

There was even a surveillance eagle, likely part of the city's security measures, observing their arrival. Anyway, they paid little mind to the presence of these people, as their actions were quite expected given the nature of the Competition and the chilling Aura emanating from their Airship.

Upon disembarking, they were warmly greeted by officials from the competition organizers.

The officials led them to the hotel where they would be staying until the start of the Competition. It was clear that not all academies had arrived yet, as the Competition was still two days away.

As Vale set foot on the ground, he felt a strange sensation wash over him.

It felt familiar, yet he couldn't quite place it.

"Vale? Are you alright? Don't be too nervous." Philip said as he patted Vale's shoulders.

"Ahh... It's nothing. I probably felt uncomfortable with those Magic Zones sweeping over us." Vale replied.

As he walked with the group, he pondered if the thing he felt had something to do with Master Heinz's disciples or perhaps the enigmatic Creation Ring. He brought the Timepiece and the Stormbringer after all.

Vale smiled at the thought but dismissed it as the excitement of being in a new city. Unlike the industrial cities in the central part of the kingdom, this place felt fresh and invigorating, with a gentle breeze that brought a sense of tranquility. It was completely different from others, with smog covering the entire city and the noise created by trains and factories.

Just as Vale thought they would reach their hotel room without any further interruptions, a group of individuals clad in white robes abruptly blocked their path.

"Mhmm?" Vale's eyes widened as he looked ahead.

To his surprise, two figures among them looked familiar. It was Clare and Teresa, the Untainted Sentinels he had encountered before!

'Not good!'

Instinctively, he hid behind Philip and others as he tried not to act to gather attention.

They might be capable of using their Divine Sense, but if they have the same level of Divine Sense or if he has a higher level than them, they shouldn't notice his presence.

"Aren't they Untainted Sentinels? Why are they blocking our path?" Philip muttered in curiosity as he looked ahead.

Vale couldn't help but feel curious as well.

"Are they here to cause trouble?"

He then looked at the Headmaster Jean and six other Professors who were leading their group and felt that there shouldn't be any problems.

Headmaster Jean looked at the five people blocking them before taunting them with a smile on his face.

"Are you here to ask for help? I heard that a lot of Untainted Sentinels died in your recent operation..." He provocatively remarked, his words laced with a hint of mockery. He was well-informed about the recent events and the perilous circumstances surrounding the Sentinels.

The leader of the group, an old man, responded with a seemingly innocent smile. "That's funny, Headmaster Jean. I'm just here to take a look at your students. You see, we want to make sure that none of them are carrying a disease..."

His words struck a nerve among the students, and their sense of pride and dignity was challenged.

"What did you say?!" A tenth-year student among them bravely conveyed everyone's reaction.

It was evident that this treatment was not extended to students from other academies participating in the Competition. Even the more experienced students who had previously taken part in the event had never encountered such disrespect.

Chapter 410 Unfathomable Rich Kid?

Headmaster Jean narrowed his eyes, a mix of anger and disbelief etching across his face.

It wasn't just the tenth-year student who felt disrespected by the plans of the Organizers of this event. In the previous competitions they attended, they never had to go through such an inspection.

"Old Fletcher... An inspection to check for disease? You must have gone senile..." Jean retorted, his voice dripping with sarcasm. He also signaled for his students to calm down and let him handle the situation.

The old man chuckled, his amusement evident. "Hahaha! It was an order from the top! The Association asked us to see if we can purify you all if you are carrying a disease. As you know, your students will be meeting the students from the other 11 academies. Furthermore, the third princess will be participating in the Competition... So, as you might have expected, this Competition will be a lot different from the previous ones because many royalties will be attending this event. We want to ensure their safety." Old Fletcher explained.

Upon hearing this, the Headmaster and students realized that the old man might be speaking the truth and wasn't intentionally making things difficult for them.

After all, if the royalties are really involved, then it would be a different matter.

Nevertheless, it doesn't mean that it would feel better to them.

"Before you proceed to your rooms to drop off your luggage, allow us to perform a simple Inspection Spell to check your bodies..." Fletcher said, glancing at the students behind Headmaster Jean before revealing a creepy smile.

The students exchanged glances, as they couldn't hide the frustration on their faces.

Headmaster Jean reluctantly agreed to the inspection, realizing that resistance would only lead to further complications. However, he made it abundantly clear to the members of the Untainted Sentinels that they were strictly limited to using Inspection Spells and nothing beyond that.

After some time, Headmaster Jean sighed.

"Very well... You can inspect them. However, you have to ensure that you'll only use a Spell to detect whether they have a contagious disease or not... I will be watching you. If I see you doing something that could harm my students, I won't care whether you're following someone else's orders. You will be the one to pay the price." Headmaster Jean responded, his voice laced with authority.

The members of the Untainted Sentinels nodded in apparent compliance, masking their true intentions.

"Ahem... Of course. You can watch us. We aren't here to cause trouble. In any case, we're confident that the students in the Holy Arts Academy wouldn't need our help to defeat your students in the Competition. Keke..." Fletcher said with a laugh.

After they assured the Headmaster that they would adhere to his request and utilize the designated Inspection Spells, they immediately prepared their spells.

They seem like they are doing nothing wrong. However, behind their facade of compliance, they harbored ulterior motives.

Alongside the Inspection Spells, they planned to covertly utilize their Divine Sense and Arcane Appraisal abilities within the confined range.

Their aim was simple: it was to gather valuable information on the students, believing that they could do so without being detected by the Headmaster or anyone here...

By obtaining this information, they could provide the Holy Arts Academy with a significant advantage in understanding their competitors in the upcoming Competition.

It was a calculated move, accomplishing the inspection mandated by the royals while simultaneously gaining tactical insight.

'Kekeke...' Old Fletcher couldn't help but chuckle as they started activating their Spells.

Whom~

As the members of the Untainted Sentinels spread out their Divine Sense and Arcane Appraisal, they began meticulously assessing the strengths and capabilities of the students. Their spells allowed them to delve into the essence of each student's magical aptitude, discerning their inherent abilities and potential. They carefully observed and noted their findings within their minds. They were looking for exceptional talents or unique attributes that the students may have.

After all, they couldn't be complacent. The students of the Holy Arts Academy were expected to defeat the Dark Arts Academy, so they could not mess this up. They had to ensure that the Dark Arts Academy didn't have anything that could threaten them.

"Mhmm?"

However, amidst their thorough evaluations, an unexpected anomaly emerged.

One particular student, a young male, appeared to be impervious to their spells. Despite their powerful Divine Sense and Arcane Appraisal, this particular student remained elusive, undetectable to their probing abilities.

'Did I get weaker? Impossible... I'm only inspecting a kid. Is it a Mystical Artifact? But only Sovereign Rank can stop my ability. There's no way he's carrying that.'

Old Fletcher and the other Sentinels exchanged perplexed glances, a sense of intrigue and curiosity mingling with their confusion.

Just by exchanging glances, they could tell that they were also troubled to sense the limit of this young man. However, if they use the Spell to confirm whether he has a contagious disease or not, it actually works really well!

The Disease Inspection Spell tell them that he wasn't carrying any form of disease!

It was a rare occurrence to encounter an individual who could resist their powerful Arcane Appraisal Spell. Furthermore, three of them could use the Divine Sense, but they all had the same result.

Questions swirled in their minds, fueling their determination to uncover the truth behind this enigma.

The five Untainted Sentinels discussed their plans using their telepathy as they acted as if they were still using their Disease Inspection Spell.

What made this student different? How did he shield himself from our scrutiny?

These were the questions in their minds.

However, they couldn't discuss for too long.

"Is it still not done? You guys have gotten really weaker... I guess that incident about your Sentinels wasn't without reason." Headmaster Jean suddenly said as he reminded them of the incident where several Sentinels died in their operation.

"That's enough, Headmaster Jean. Those Sentinels have died because of the rogue practitioners of your Darkness Path. Hmph... We're done inspecting them." Fletcher said as he paused for a moment.

He then shifted his glance to one of the students before he continued.

"However, that young kid with black hair must step forward."